

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN BUDGETARY MONITORING AND
EVALUATION IN AN INFORMATION AGE: A CASE OF FETAKGOMO-TUBATSE LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo declare that the dissertation titled "THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN BUDGETARY MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN AN INFORMATION AGE: A CASE OF FETAKGOMO-TUBATSE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY", which I hereby submit at the UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO for the purpose of Master of Public Administration and Management in the Faculty of Management and Law is my own work and that all the sources used or quoted have been cited and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been previously submitted for any other degree at any other institution.



Signature

Date

DEDICATION

In memory of my late maternal grandparents, Sekwakwalala Bizaar (Mahlogoane A'Mahlogo) and Ramathabatha Annah Mowa (Mologadi A'Raisibe) who have been constant sources of support and inspiration during the challenging times of my life. While I had hoped that you would live longer to witness me reach my academic milestones, I know you are smiling down on me from heaven. Thank you for your unconditional parental love and care.

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ABSTRACT

Deepening participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in a local municipality is crucial to improve transparency and accountability in the use of public funds. Participatory governance warrants the provision of meaningful, purposeful and empowering opportunities and spaces for the engagement of residents in the affairs of a municipality. Despite being advocated as an effective mechanism for promoting good governance, particularly when implemented in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, participatory governance remains a neglected area of emphasis in local municipalities. This qualitative case study investigated the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality.

The objectives were to assess the ward committee members' and municipal officials' understanding of participatory governance and its importance in the context of municipal governance; examine the scope of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the municipality, the associated benefits and barriers to implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes, and develop insights into the effectiveness and use of ICTs in information dissemination and accessibility in relation to the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews and open-ended qualitative questionnaires were used to collect primary data from municipal officials (N=8) and ward committee members (N=10). Non-probability sampling techniques (i.e., purposive and snowball sampling) were used to select the participants. Tesch's eight-step descriptive data analysis technique was utilised to analyse the textual qualitative data gathered. This research report provides the main findings and conclusions based on the objectives that the study aimed to achieve.

Recommendations are made to strengthen the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality and opportunities for future research.

KEY CONCEPTS

Effectiveness, Participatory governance; Budgetary monitoring and evaluation; Information age; Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BME	Budgetary Monitoring and Evaluation
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
FTLM	Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDPU	Integrated Development Plan Unit
LED	Local Economic Development
LEDTU	Local Economic Development & Transformation Unit
LG	Local Government
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMC	Member of Municipal Council
MOs	Municipal Officials
PG	Participatory Governance
PPU	Public Participation Unit
WCMs	Ward Committee Members

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The deteriorating state of financial health of the local government in South Africa remains a major concern for the national government, taxpayers and residents (Glasser & Wright, 2020; AGSA, 2018/19; Ncgobo & Malefane, 2017). Although municipal financial allocations accounted for 13% of the total revenue distributed by the Treasury in the fiscal year 2019/2020, a number of municipalities remain in serious financial distress (Statistics South Africa, 2019/20). Financial mismanagement and unlawful misappropriation of funds are often cited as the main causes of municipal financial distress. However, ineffective budgetary monitoring and evaluation practices and disregard for residents' engagement in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes remain an important but often neglected area for attention in local government (Pieterse, 2019; Mello, 2018; Garcia-Sanchez, 2012). As effective and efficient service delivery continues on a serious downward spiral in a variety of cash-strapped municipalities, residents' demands for transparency and accountability in the use of municipalities' finances have only increased (Ledger & Rampedi, 2020; Mathiba & Lefenya, 2019; Ryan, 2019). Nonetheless, the growing calls for facilitating meaningful residents' engagement in municipal affairs, particularly in budgetary monitoring and evaluation seem to go unheeded within local municipalities. The situation as it persists represents a breach of their legal obligations to improve participatory governance (Section 195 (1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996). This comes despite the recognition that deepening participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation is crucial to ensure residents' rights to meaningful engagement in municipal governance are realised (Forde, 2020; Malemane & Nel-Saunders, 2020; Ricciardelli, 2017).

On that note, this study attempted to investigate the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age in the case of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality. In the following sections, the researcher provides a background of the study, addressing the global historical and current perspectives of participatory governance, the contention between the perceived and actual benefits and challenges that hinder the deepening of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. The statement of the problem raises context-specific concerns about the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality. In addition, the research objectives and questions formulated to guide this study are described, including the significance and rationale of the

study. Key concepts central to this study, including effectiveness, participatory governance, budgetary monitoring and evaluation, and the information age, are operationalised. Finally, ethical considerations that influenced the behaviour and conduct of the researcher in conducting this study are discussed, explained, and their applicability in this study is clarified.

1.1.2 Source and background of the study

This section provides a general overview of this research study. It provides the context of the research topic under study and its importance (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). This section has been written from general to specific and is based on a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. It describes the background gap of the research topic under study and provides the conceptual basis of this study (Eastery-Smith, Jaspersen, Thorpe & Valizade, 2021). Sidek, Kamalrudin, and Deris (2019) agree that the background of the study clearly outlines the root of the research problem, the interests of the researcher in conducting the study, and the gaps that exist in previous studies that attempted to address the research problem. With that said, the source and background of this study is as follows:

The reorganisation of local government after 1994 heralded new changes in municipal governance structures (Gumede & Sipholo, 2014). Essential was a fundamental shift from a top-down, centralised decision-making approach to a more inclusive and people-centric approach (Ntliziywana, 2017). The result of this paradigm shift was the emergence of participatory governance as a mechanism for engaging citizens in public governance structures. Participatory governance represented a breakthrough to advance the engagement of citizens in public decision-making processes (Modise, 2017). Embodied in creating meaningful spaces and opportunities for citizens to influence and share control over decisions affecting their lives, the inefficiencies of participatory governance strategies have become apparent.

The majority of citizens are continually disempowered and alienated from engaging in informative exchanges with state institutions about decisions affecting their destiny (Gumede & Sipholo, 2014). This situation potentially marginalises citizens' voices and reduces them to passivity, making them consumers of readily-made decisions rather than co-governors in public institutions (Quick & Bryson, 2016). This situation is complicated by the lack of effective responsiveness within public institutions to embrace and implement participatory governance by strengthening partnerships with citizens and maximising their engagement in decision-making processes (Masiya, Davids & Mazenda, 2019). Therefore, participatory governance has little practical meaning for many citizens, as it offers limited meaningful opportunities to engage in public decision-making as empowered citizens. This situation is all too typical of the local sphere of South African government.

Twenty-seven years after the reform of South Africa's local government, progress in deepening participatory governance in municipalities is still significantly slower. Opportunities for inclusive decision-making are rarely forthcoming and presented to residents, except in the case of irregular and fragmented consultations, which are considered to encourage participatory governance (Mbhele, 2017). On the whole, this current situation underscores the apparent increasing disconnect between residents and decision-makers in municipalities. It further raises serious concerns about increasingly alienating residents' engagement in municipalities' affairs (Tshoose, 2015). At first glance, the failure of municipalities to integrate participatory governance into all facets of decision-making seems to be the result of institutional neglect. According to Matebesi and Botes (2017), the lack of interest and capacity to invest resources (i.e. effort, time and money) in actualising participatory governance threatens to thwart the creation of spaces for residents immersion in municipal governance structures. As such, there appears to be little understanding of the importance and benefits of participatory governance and knowledge of how participatory governance can be put into practice within municipalities (Modise, 2017; Tshoose, 2016). Nowhere is this limited understanding of the essence of translating participatory governance into practice more evident than in municipal budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

Notwithstanding the growing calls for meaningful engagement of local residents in budgetary monitoring and evaluation to oversee the effective, efficient and economical use of public fiscal resources (AGSA, 2018/19), little practical change continues to be seen in this respect. Attempts by local residents to exercise oversight, foster transparency and accountability from municipal officials appear to be severely curtailed from within municipal governance structures (Marais, Quayle & Burns, 2017). Access to timeous, accurate and reliable information, being an indispensable asset needed for informed engagement in budgetary monitoring and evaluation remains a significant challenge for local residents (Mathews & McLaren, 2016). This situation is permitted to subsist though parallels the responsibility bestowed unto local municipalities to find innovative ways to broaden residents' access to pertinent information and put into action best participatory governance practices.

In budgetary monitoring and evaluation, however, the need to truly engage local residents through provision of the right information, in the right format, at the right time and for the right purposes cannot be overemphasised (AGSA, 2018-19). It should be regarded as an essentiality to prepare, capacitate and/or empower residents for informed and meaningful engagements (Sekgala, 2016). Nevertheless, there has been a paucity of exploration on what information needed for meaningful engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation is accessed by residents and furnished by local municipalities. Attributed to this situation may be the inconsistencies in acknowledging the role of local residents in budgetary monitoring and evaluation (Mathews & McLaren, 2016). This is so because there is dearth of

consensus on 'how wide to open the window' for effective residents engagement; an observation that further undermines the actualisation of the local residents constitutional and social rights to participate in the affairs of the municipalities.

In order to give effect to the rights of local residents to be effectively engaged in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, a shift in paradigm is warranted within local municipalities. There has to be a rethink and redefinition of the relationship between municipalities and local residents. Circumstances that sustain the exclusion and disregard of local residents' views and inputs in budgetary monitoring and evaluation need to be understood, challenged and revised. This is the gap in research literature that this study seeks to fill in order to deepen participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The statement of the research problem advances the need for the study. It expresses the researcher's main intent by creating the rationale for undertaking the research inquiry (Sidek, Kamalrudin & Deris, 2019). More precisely, the statement of the research problem should describe and justify the need for investigating the identified issue or problem. According to McNabb (2018) the statement of the research problem has to present, in a clear and succinct manner, the significance of the study. Thus, implicit to a good statement of the research problem, as Rubin and Babbie (2017) suggest, is the positioning of the study within the on-going larger literature. Therefore, the researcher has to indicate the manner in which the study fits in or expatiates on what is already known. To do this, it becomes imperative that the researcher provides the narrative hook through a lead-in statement indicating key controversy on the study topic (Creswell, 2013); justify the problem by describing deficiencies in literature or evidence and indicate how the study will benefit the audience (*i.e.* participants, researchers, stakeholders, policy makers and/or fieldwork practitioners). On that note, the statement of the research problem for this study is as follows:

Since the reforms within local government decades ago, participatory governance is still lauded as an innovative strategy to entrench inclusive residents' engagements in public decisions making (Munzhedzi, 2021; Van Der Walt, 2017; Xavier, Kamendantora, Jarbandhan & Nel, 2017). However, evidence indicates that while efforts have been expended to institute participatory governance in municipal governance structures, it seems to be working poorly. Local municipalities appear to be failing, despite being a legislative requirement, to encourage and rally residents for meaningful engagements in matters of local government (Piper & von Lieres, 2016). Many of the residents possess no adequate information which translates into knowledge of the processes and workings of municipal governance machinery (Marais, Quayle & Burns, 2017; Matebesi & Botes, 2017; Quick & Bryson, 2016), thereby inadvertently

being excluded from imputing their voices in decisions making. Consequentially, residents become disabled to ensure that municipal officials are answerable for their decisions which at times serve to aggrandise their own interest rather than the public.

Of great concern, however, is the dearth of effective responsiveness on the part of local municipalities. The increasing interests among local residents for effective engagement in public decision making have not been met with equal and satisfactory responses (Matebesi & Botes, 2017; Ntliziywana, 2017). Limited evidence exists on how local municipalities integrate best practice strategies to serve and promote meaningful residents engagements in decision making processes. This situation is in contrast to the local municipality's developmental role that necessitates the creation of spaces for residents' inclusion in all matters of municipal governance (Gumede, 2021; Naidoo & Ramphal, 2018). Significantly, the role of local municipalities as espoused within their developmental mandate should not only cease with provision of information as a valuable resource to inform and engender active engagements. The municipalities need to assume a supportive role to create opportunities for residents' meaningful engagements. Nevertheless, the significance and benefit of implementing participatory governance in practice seems to still be misunderstood within local municipalities. Hence, the growing concerns among local residents of participatory governance being implemented haphazardly or left up to chance.

In the context of budgetary monitoring and evaluation, no empirical data is readily available on how participatory governance is integrated and implemented in practice (Mathews & McLaren, 2016). Despite being widely implemented in other developing countries (*i.e.* Brazil and India) in a different form such as participatory monitoring and evaluation (Mujuru, 2018; Murei, Kidombo & Gakuu, 2017), lesser attention has been expended by local South African researchers to reveal the nature and extent of its applicability and benefit for local municipalities. Thus, the functionality, benefit and effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in local municipalities remain largely under studied and poorly documented. Hence, so far, there is only limited specific evidence on circumstances (*i.e.* contextual and otherwise) for effective participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in South Africa's local municipalities.

To overcome this gap in literature, this mixed method case study intent to investigate the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality. The primary intent of this study is to reveal insights into the nature and scope of budgetary monitoring and evaluation; to examine the degree of awareness on the rights of local residents to engage in budgetary monitoring and evaluation and assess how these rights are being implemented in practice. The guidelines that the researcher will develop and proffer for use within the

local municipality will be crucial to enhance participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Against this background it is, therefore important to indicate that the overarching research question this study intended to answer is:

“How effective is participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality?”

1.3 MOTIVATION/RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The rationale for the study proffers the researcher’s motivation for conducting the research study (Maree, 2020). The researcher’s motivation or reasons for undertaking a research inquiry may be personal, academic and professional (Hamid, 2018). Therefore, Gray and Grove (2021) suggest that, in writing the rationale for the study, the researcher should describe the circumstances that prompted the conception of the study and the practical benefits likely to be accrued from studying the identified research problem. For the purpose of this study, the researcher’s motivation for conducting this research inquiry has been personal, academic and professional.

The increasingly evident demands by local residents for meaningful engagements in municipal budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes are heralding a new governance approach within local municipalities. This situation, as not exceptional within the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality, suggest that local municipalities need a new understanding of the mechanisms appropriate for meaningfully engaging local residents in budgetary monitoring and evaluation decision making process, as traditional methods of irregular consultations have seldom accomplished enough. In this regard, it was both an opportunity and obligation (responsibility) as a local resident and youth leader actively involvement in socio-economic development initiatives in the local municipality to conduct this study in order to proffer appropriate guidelines for use by the municipal officials to enhance the standard and improve the quality of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, particularly in this information era.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A research study needs to be worthwhile (Damaskinidis & Christodoulou, 2019). It has to be feasible and demonstrate precisely the definite need for its undertaking as well as the possibility to yield clear and

specific benefits (Hamid, 2018). In this regard, the researcher had to establish the utility of the study by outlining the anticipated outcomes (*i.e.* the end product and not findings). To determine the value of this study, the researcher indicated how the study will enrich the subject knowledge, contribute to problem resolution and development of good practice, inform policy making and engender future research interests (Damaskinidis & Christodoulou, 2019; Denscombe, 2012; Kumar, 2008).

This study aimed to develop and proffer guidelines through which participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation can be understood and enhanced in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality. Conceived in this era where residents demand increased engagements in municipal decision making processes, this study is crucial to reveal the degree and efficacy of responsiveness by the local municipality. Acknowledging that participatory governance should be an integral tenet of decision making processes in local municipalities little was understood on challenges and opportunities for its implementation in practice. As this study proceeded from an inclusive view of municipal officials and ward committee members, it intended to capture maximum variation of perspectives on awareness of the constitutional and social rights of residents to be meaningfully engaged in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Examining these varied perspectives yielded convergent and/or divergent views which were crucial to developing in-depth insights pertaining to perceived and actual benefits associated with participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

Recognising the mostly ignored appraisal of the indispensability of access to timeous and accurate information to foster informed residents' engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, this study sought to reveal perceptions on utility of information to this process, how it is furnished and degree of its relevance and ease of understanding for the local residents. The accrued end-product will encourage municipal officials and ward committee members to rethink and renegotiate their engagements with residents aimed at providing them with opportunities and accurate information to empower them to partake meaningfully in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. In turn, local government authorities will endeavour to make resources (*i.e.* fiscal) available to capacitate municipal officials and ward committee members through in-service trainings to ensure inclusive residents engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Subsequently, comparative analytic studies can also be conducted in the future to ascertain the variations and rationale for residents' engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in urban and metropolitan municipalities (*i.e.* category A municipalities) in South Africa.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Research aim

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) refer to the research aim as the overarching goal of the research study. It represents the researcher intention for embarking on the research inquiry expressed in a single and succinctly phrased statement. According to Doody and Bailey (2016) the essence of the research aim is to provide a focal point for the study. However, Gray and Grove (2021) point out that a well-formulate research aim should be descriptive in nature and provide the contextual significance of the study being conducted. In other words, the research aim should clearly indicate what the researcher aspires to accomplish and how such aspirations as proposed in the study will be realised. In this regard, it can be argued that without a precisely constructed descriptive research aim, the coherence of the research study will be placed in jeopardy.

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

1.5.1 Research objectives

Gray and Grove (2021) define research objectives as “clear and concise declarative statements expressed in the present tense to specify the reasons for conducting a research inquiry.” Doody and Bailey (2016) assert that research objectives should specify, as invariably written in a task-oriented manner, the results or outcomes the researcher envisage. In other words, it is the research objectives that should indicate the type of knowledge sought by the researcher and the measures to be utilised in determining the accrual of the knowledge needed. As Ratan, Anand and Ratan (2019) assert research objectives must precisely state what is to be done by the researcher and how to know when the intended goal has been accomplished.

Furthermore, research objectives should be decided upon in consideration of the available resources and time to ensure their accumulation (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2021). Without properly developed and focused research objectives, a research inquiry is bound to fail. Owing to the different research approaches researchers follow namely qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods, the nature (abstractness), focus and number of research objectives are likely to differ (Gray & Grove, 2021). Qualitative objectives are broad and open-ended to allow for detailed investigations of the issues concerned while quantitative objectives are more focused on establishing associations (relationships), comparisons and predictions between several variables or individuals (Maree, 2020). In this regard, research objectives can seek to explore, describe, explain, predict or evaluate the phenomenon under study.

The objectives of this study were:

To assess municipal officials and ward committee members understanding of participatory governance and its significance in the context of municipal governance

To examine the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

To develop an in-depth understanding of the benefits and barriers linked with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

To develop insights into the

- Efficacy of information dissemination and accessibility regarding the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation
- The degree of ICTs utilisation towards enhancing timeous dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions are critical tenets of a research inquiry. This is so because undertaking a research inquiry is about finding answers to specific research questions. More precisely, a research question denotes the main question the researcher seeks to answer through data gathering (Maree, 2020). According to Ratan, Anand and Ratan (2019) research questions represent the researcher intent to investigate and seek answers to an identified problem. They are crucial, as Gray and Grove (2021) indicate, to enable the researcher define the scope and provide clear direction for the research inquiry. Put correctly, research questions are essential to reveal the researcher ideas and position the research inquiry because they seek to point out what the researcher aims to accomplish by conducting the study. Doody and Bailey (2016) agree that research questions are important to aid the researcher solicit information pertaining to the research problem.

However, formulating well-grounded research questions is no small feat. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) state that formulating well-thought through research questions is an iterative process that necessitate continuous consultations with subject experts, perusal and review of literature pertinent to the topic being investigated (Nakano & Muniz Junior, 2018). Nevertheless, Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2020) proposes that research questions should not be too broad or too narrow defined rather be clearly stated and aligned with the scope of the inquiry. In this regard, it is clear that a research question that is specific and precisely constructed can help the researcher decide on the research design, population and

nature of data required. With that being said, the researcher should understand and decide on whether the study seeks to answer either the “*what*” question which is concerned with descriptions, “*why*” question which seeks for explanations or “*how*” question which focuses on a quest for an intervention to effect change (Rwegoshora, 2014).

The research questions that were posed to the target population are as follows:

- What are the municipal officials and ward committee members understanding of participatory governance and its significance in the context of municipal governance?
- What is the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality?
- What benefits and barriers are linked with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality?

How effective is the dissemination and accessibility of information regarding the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation?

What is the degree of ICTs utilisation towards enhancing timeous dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation?

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Nalzar (2012:1) regards concepts as “intellectual representations of some aspects of reality that is derived from observations made from phenomena.” They are abstracted ideas about the phenomenon the researcher intent to study. Aptly put, concepts assign and/or articulate meanings to specific properties of the phenomenon being investigated by describing and specifying what the researcher seeks to study and how the phenomenon intended to be studied will be measured (McGregor, 2018). Being the epistemic conditions that constitute conceptual meanings essential to present ways of thinking about specific things (Rwegoshora, 2016), concepts capture the researcher’s ability to relate distinct thoughts to one another in terms of their rational inferential patterns (Jaccard & Jaccard, 2020).

In a research inquiry, as McGregor (2018) points out, concepts aid the researcher organise his/her experiences of the world and facilitate a comprehension of the phenomenon under study. For instance, a theoretical definition of a concept purport to state the meaning of the concept in a specific theory whereas an operational definition explicate what the researcher does to capture evidence of the particular concept in the intended study (Jaccard & Jaccard, 2020). Key concepts in this study include

effectiveness, participatory governance, budgetary monitoring and evaluation, information age and local municipality.

1.7.1 Effectiveness

According to Burches and Burches (2020) effectiveness is considered to be a measure of success proffered by the relationship between outcomes accrued to the ones planned to be accomplished. Mwai, Namada and Katuse (2018) indicate that effectiveness is concerned with doing well what an individual or an entity (institution) has proposed to do. In this study, effectiveness refers to a negotiable process through which the local residents and the local municipality are actively engaged to determine the outputs (results) and outcomes (effects) of budgetary monitoring and evaluation to the extent that residents perceive their engagements as meaningful, acceptable and empowering.

1.7.2 Participatory governance

Participatory governance, as defined by Lovan, Murray and Shaffer (2017) entails a governance strategy that seeks to empower citizens to utilise the resources of the state to make decisions on matters that directly concern them. According to Geibel and Heb (2018) participatory governance involves a regulatory framework in which the task of running public affairs is not solely entrusted to government and the public administration but include cooperation between state institutions and civil society groups. For the purpose of this study, participatory governance refers to the collection of institutional and organisational plans that inform, guide and structure the interactions of local residents and municipal officials to craft order, lessen conflicts and realise collective benefits in decisions making.

1.7.3 Budgetary monitoring and evaluation

The concept budgetary monitoring and evaluation constitute of three separate, interrelated and interdependent sub-components namely budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. Viewed in the context of the 'public' (related to government and the people), budgeting refers to a process mainly concerned with acquisition and utilisation of fiscal resources for meeting specific goals and/or purposes that are in the public interests (Holzer & Schwester, 2016; Lustig, 2018). Defined by Zwane and Mzini (2016:352) monitoring denotes a "routine, on-going, internal activity which is used to collect information on a programmes activities, outputs and outcomes to track its performance."

Sikhosana and Nzewi (2019:478) further posit that evaluation is a "systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results" intended to ascertain the relevance of the activity, assess the accomplishment of objectives, efficiency,

effectiveness, impact and sustainability. In this vein, the concept budgetary monitoring and evaluation as used in this study, refers to an internal, continuous and systematic process which integrate the inputs and feedback of the public in gathering and analysing data on the outcomes and impact of budget utilisation.

1.7.4 Information age

According to Hajnal (2018) information age refers to an era where information is a perceived commodity that is widely generated, disseminated and easily accessible through the use of information and communication technologies. Robinson, Schulz, Dunn, Casilli, Tubaro, Carveth, Cheng, Wiest and Dodel (2020) define information age as a period of intense information generation accelerated by enormous use of mobile digital technologies and social networks. In this study, information age refers to a period characterised by exponential use of internet-connected information and communication technologies (ICTs) through which increased volumes of messages are disseminated and exchanged for assimilation, correlation and understanding.

1.7.5 Local municipality

According to the section 155 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1994 the local municipality is defined as a category B municipality that shared municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a category C municipality within whose area it falls. For the purpose of this study, the aforementioned definition of a local municipality had been used to refer to the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics denote principles for evaluating conduct and/or behaviour as right or wrong, good or bad (Nowell, Morris, White & Moules, 2017). According to Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) ethics are standards of right and wrong which prescribe what humans ought to do in certain circumstances. In research inquiries, ethical considerations are established guidelines that define the researcher conduct. They serve to evaluate the (un)acceptability of the researcher conduct when undertaking the research inquiry and protect the participants against any arbitrary abuse or harm (*i.e.* physical, emotional, psychological exploitation). Thus, the researcher has to constantly scrutinise the integrity of his actions when undertaking the study and ensure the participants are not subjected to actions or behaviours that undermine their humaneness (Berg & Lune, 2017). This adherence and/or conformity to research ethics are crucial to enhance the credibility of the study findings. Ethical considerations that are pertinent to and shall be given apex priority in this study includes participants informed consent, anonymity and

confidentiality, protection against discomfort and harm, principle of benevolence (fair treatment), respect for human dignity and researcher's competence.

1.8.1 Permission to conduct the study

The permission to conduct this study was sought and obtained from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) (**Annexure A attached**) and the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality (**Annexure C attached**).

1.8.2 Participant informed consent

The concepts informed and consent are interrelated, yet have distinct meanings. With regard to being informed, Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) state that the researcher should disclose to participants the study's intent, the manner in which data will be gathered and what consequences (if any) there could be. Included in this regard, as Berg and Lune (2017) suggest, should be the level of commitment anticipated from the participants, ways in which data will be used and reported as well as disclosure of the researcher identifying details. This information, as furnished and clearly explained to the participants, should be used to seek their consent. That is, they should be afforded an opportunity owing to availability of this information to decide to participate in the study voluntarily or decline to get involved (Nowell *et al.*, 2017).

In this vein, the researcher provided the participants with an information sheet explicating the rationale for the study. The contents of the information sheet were delineated clearly for ease of understanding and contain no complex academic or professional jargons. In addition, an informed consent form was provided for completion and attestation (signed) by participants who give active verbal affirmation for their interests to participate in the study.

1.8.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

The terms anonymity and confidentiality are different though they engender interdependent meanings. Akaranga and Makau (2016) point out that anonymity means the participants' identities are not known to the researcher. This is made possible particularly by use of quantitative data collection methods such as anonymous surveys. With confidentiality, the researcher is au fait (knows) with the participants true identities. However, the participants shared data or responses are de-identified with their true identities kept confidential by the researcher. On this note, Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) assert that in instances where the researcher uses face-to-face interviews, confidentiality and not anonymity should be guaranteed.

In this study, no participant had his/her real identities disclosed to any person or institution not associated with this study. Further, the real identities of the participants did not appear anywhere in this final research

report. That is, only the use of pseudonyms was made to describe participants' responses or accounts (processed data) of the phenomenon being investigated. Inextricably linked to the latter, the researcher safely secured the participants information as expressed and captured in the audio-tapes (raw data) in a secure locked cabin at his workplaces.

1.8.4 Protection (avoidance) against discomfort and harm

Research participants should be protected from discomfort and harm (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Motloba (2019) indicates that harm signifies not only that the participants may have been wronged rather their specific interests have been underrated and ignored. However, the underlying expectation is that participants should not be subjected to circumstances that expose them to psychological, physical, emotional and economic risk, discomfort and harm (Berg & Lune, 2017). In this regard, researcher are obliged to treat participants with fairness and most importantly eliminate, reduce or solicit professional resource to help participants who may somewhat be adversely impacted through participation in the study. In other words, the research process and study findings should not justify the means to an end for disregard of participants' right to protection while involved in research inquiries (Motloba, 2019).

With that being said, the risk level in this study was minimal. This is so because the study sought not to be intrusive by delving into the participants personal lives but aimed to capture their accounts with regard to the issues being investigated. Further, participants were permitted to omit or refrain from answering questions which they found uncomfortable. Nevertheless, the researcher ensured that the participants' responses including the audiotapes and transcribed material were protected from access by unauthorised individuals or institutions. This is important in that participants may fear losing their jobs or being perceived as disloyal to their institutions when their responses are accessed and found to be shedding a different perspective from that held and fostered within and by their institutions.

1.8.5 Principle of beneficence

Beneficence is concerned about 'doing good.' Although the use and meaning of beneficence as a concept is subjected to a myriad of interpretation, in research inquiries it necessitate that researcher conduct studies that promote the public good. In other words, research studies should have at their core the expressed need to improve people's lot (*i.e.* improve their wellbeing or circumstances). In addition, beneficence bestows unto researchers the duty or obligation to act in the best interests of those studied as crucial to enhancing the credibility of their research processes and subsequent findings (Motloba, 2019).

With regard to this study, the researcher ensured that all participants were afforded equal opportunity (airtime) to raise questions and also share their perspectives. No discriminatory or prejudicial

connotations were permitted from either the researcher or participants in their interactions. Moreover, participants' responses were accurately captured and represented in this final research report. Thus, no fabrication or falsification of participants' accounts occurred. On the same note, the researcher ensured rigor in the research process including methods (techniques) used and subjected the final research report to external examination for scrutiny and review. A copy of the final research report was also furnished to the local municipality wherein the study was conducted including providing participants with the précis document of the study findings.

1.8.6 Researcher's competence

Researchers' competence, as embedded in their knowledge and skills, is vital for conducting credible research inquiries. According to Rossouw and Niemczyk (2016) researchers should possess adequate capacity to competitively embark on quality research studies that has the potential to bring about significant change in society. Importantly, researchers should endeavour to network and collaborate with the public including their institutions or organisations in conducting research studies that promote the public good (Motloba, 2019). Thus, Niemczyk (2018) concurs that competent researchers should be able to respectfully and ethically undertake rigorous research in diverse contexts and ensure that their study adds meaningful contribution.

In the context of this study, the researcher received substantial training in social science research methodology and the field of public administration and management. The advanced training received and knowledge accumulated through contact sessions complimented by rigorous independent learning has never been important for the researcher in this regard. Further, this study was conducted under supervision of a subject expert. This was crucial to afford the researcher an opportunity to learn to independently undertake a research inquiry while afforded further supervision to ensure that the rigor of the research process is enhanced and adhered to.

1.9 OUTLINE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study

This chapter provided a detailed exposition of the research problem including the source and background of the study and statement of the problem. The purpose of the study was expressed by means of succinctly delineated aim and objectives. Included also had been an explication of the main research questions and an explication of significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter entailed the browsing, locating and retrieval of print and electronic documents and other pertinent literature in academic databases such as Sabinet, SAepublications, EBSChost, Science Direct and Google Scholar in order to identify, examine, synthesise and critically discuss diverse aspects relevant and related to the phenomenon under investigation. Significantly, the reviewed literature provided insights into the nature and complexity of the identified problem and helped set parameters (scope) of this study.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

A concise description of the selected research design and utilised research methods which provides a goodness of fit in eliciting pertinent responses from the participants and ensure accrual of trustworthy answers were outlined in this chapter. In the same vein, an explication of the rationale for the use of selected research design and research methods was also included.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation of findings

This chapter presented a qualitative analysis of empirical data accrued by means of triangulated data collection protocols and interpretational meanings attached to and derived through data gathered and analysed.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions drawn from the analysed and interpreted data including the resultant recommendations are presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this research study were to assess municipal officials and ward committee members understanding of participatory governance and its significance in the context of municipal governance; examine the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality; develop an in-depth understanding of the benefits and barriers

linked with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality; develop insights into the efficacy of information dissemination and accessibility regarding the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation and the degree of ICTs utilisation towards enhancing timeous dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

This chapter presents a review of empirical and theoretical literature which served as a beginning point from which this study's objectives were formulated and pursued. To obtain an understanding of key issues pertaining to participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age, a rigorous thematic review of South African documents and other relevant international literature was conducted. The reviewed literature was premised on a thorough perusal of journal articles (peer-reviewed publications and unpublished articles), prescribed books, tabloid publications (print and electronic) and legislative documents sourced from scholarly databases that include SAepublications, Google Scholar, Lexus & Nexus, Juta, Science-Direct, Eric and EBShost. Importantly, an exposition of the theoretical framework on which this study is based on is provided.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016) theories are integral to research inquiries. They are “sets of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that present systematic views of phenomena (Kivunja, 2018:45).” In essence, theories help explain, predict and represent the phenomenon being studied (Saldana & Omasta, 2017). Collins and Stockton (2018) indicates that theories can aid a researcher observe, understand, explain and make sense of the issues under study. Johnson and Christensen (2017) posit that the inextricable link between theories and research cannot be disputed. However, the blueprint (plan) that a researcher chooses to select pertinent theories on which the intended study will be premised is referred to as the researcher's theoretical framework. That is to say, a theoretical framework represents the researcher's selection of a theory or theories on which to examine, synthesise, structure and support the intended study to better understand and make sense of the data gathered regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Kivunja, 2018; Saldana & Omasta, 2017).

2.2.1 Rational choice institutionalism

Municipalities are integral public institutions established and/or created by laws. The laws within which municipalities execute their assigned responsibilities constitute formal rules that establish contractual relations between themselves and those being served (Reddy, 2018). That is to say, the legislative framework within which municipalities function informs, shape and guide the behaviours and conduct of

municipal officials through incentives and sanctions. These incentives and resultant sanctions are meant to create order, lessen conflict and ensure the realisation of mutual gains (Farrell, 2018). These ideals are central to the rational choice institutionalism.

This theoretical approach is significant to understanding how the interaction between municipalities and citizens should be structured in pursuance of the public good. This theoretical approach advances, for instance, that all actors in public institutions should comply with the set institutional rules; execute their obligations and responsibilities attached to their public positions in the best interests of the public (not aggrandise their own selfish interests) and be held to accountable for decisions and actions (Czada & Windhoff-Heritier, 2019). Such accountability, as rational choice institutionalism puts forward, should be enforced by the principal (*i.e.* parliament or political cabinet) to make the agent (a public institution) act or behave in the manner in which the principal would appreciate (Farrell, 2018).

For the purpose of this study, the use of rational choice institutionalism is pertinent to understanding the manner in which participatory governance including its significance and benefits are construed by actors (*i.e.* municipal officials and ward committee members) within local municipalities. It will further help the researcher understand, through capture of the participants' accounts, the circumstances that influences the implementation and subsequent effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. This is so because in spite the legislative requirements placed on municipalities to encourage the involvement of communities in matters of local government and ensure that residents rights to have access to information on the state of affairs of municipalities including their finances municipalities continue to fail in honour of and compliance with these legislative provisions (Section 152 (1) (e) of the Constitution Act 108 of 1994; Section 16 (1) of the Municipal Systems Act; Section 5 (1) of the Municipal Systems Act).

Viewed within the rational choice institutionalism, these behaviours and conducts of non-compliance to formal institutional rules within local municipalities should be sanctioned because of their defective and costly nature. Thus, when municipalities as public agencies and officials within them fail to cooperate with residents owing to interdependent nature of their relationship, remedial measures need to be invoked to enforce compliance and sanction defection through legally recognised means.

2.2.2 Theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour

These theories derive their origin from the works of Fishbein and Ajzen (2010). Central to the theory of reasoned action is the relationship between individuals' beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviours. According to this theory of reasoned action, an essential and accurate determinant of behaviour is behavioural intention that is ascertained by attitudes and subjective norms towards the behaviour in

question (Abraham & Sheeran, 2017). On the other hand, the theory of planned behaviour proposes that attitudes and subjective norms must be directly measured through perceived behavioural control. On this note, this theory advances that an individual's motivation is influenced by the level of difficulty of a specific behaviour and the perceived extent of success or failure when performing a particular activity (Armitage & Christian, 2017).

Applied in the context of this study, these theories are crucial to enhance an understating of the motivations or lack thereof within local municipalities towards instituting participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, they are pertinent to aid explain the degree to which officials within local municipalities perceive their competence towards ensuring residents easy access to accurate and timeous information through the use of information and communications technologies. That is to say, if the essence of instituting participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation is not recognised within local municipalities or a dearth of technical know-how exists among municipal officials, they may be less motivated, disengaged and unlikely to implement participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation as well as engage with innovative information and communication technologies to accelerate dissemination and access of information essential to enhance meaningful residents engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, particularly as informed and empowered residents.

2.3 IN SEARCH FOR THE MEANING AND SCOPE OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

According to Xixin and Yongle (2018), participatory governance appears to be a less understood area of governance. It remains a grey area in the literature and continues to be seen as synonymous with participatory democracy and public participation (Marshall, 2021). However, Muse (2016) relates participatory governance to participatory democracy. This author defines participatory governance as a form of democratic governance in which the interests and activities of the people are involved in the day to day running of government. Closely related, thereto, is the definition offered by Enaifoghe and Adetiba (2019) whereby participatory governance is put in the same purview as public participation. In this regard, participatory governance is considered to be a process through which the public become involved in agenda setting, decision making and policy formulation in an organisation. These myriad of meanings attached to participatory governance tends to overshadow its integral meaning and scope particularly in municipal governance systems.

In this vein, Johnson (2013) contends that participatory governance is distinct from participatory democracy and public participation. This author indicates that participatory governance is more than mere or token participation. It is about constant and continuous deliberation, consultation and discussions with

citizens with the end goal of ensuring their empowerment and enabling their oversight of decisions and actions of public officials. This view of what participatory governance actually entails differs from the interpretations offered by Muse (2016) and Sebola (2014). With that said, these differing views do not, in any way, consider the contributions made by these scholars as insignificant. They indicate, however, a gap in literature wherein participatory governance is defined and given meanings that are representative of the views of those tasked with putting strategies for its actual implementation. This implies that without adequate capture of perspectives of those representing local communities on what participatory governance actually means for them, it will continue to lack clarity and meaning for local communities. It becomes imperative as the researcher in this study suggests that efforts be expended towards revealing the manner in which participatory governance is understood within municipal governance structures. This endeavour is pertinent to this study as the researcher holds that soliciting the perspectives of both municipal officials and ward committee members on what actually participatory governance means will be essential to gaining in-depth understanding of how it is perceived in local municipalities.

2.4 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

According to Carcaba, Gonzalez, Ventura and Arrondo (2017), participatory governance needs to be integrated into the governance aspects of public institutions. This is so because participatory governance is an essential component of good governance. However, Xixin and Yongle (2018) indicate that though participatory governance has long been recognised as an essentiality in governance structures across public institutions, its implementation and efficacy remain doubtful. Attributed to this paucity of effective implementation of participatory governance, as Johnson (2013) points out, is the limited understanding within public institutions governance structures on the distinction between participatory governance and mere consultation. More precisely, participatory governance is more than consultation or mere involvement in the affairs of public institutions. It is a multifaceted process that warrants that citizens are provided with pertinent information about the workings of public institutions (Dutu & Diaconu, 2017). Such information should be furnished to citizens with an expressed intent to empower them to better understand and become enlightened to take part in decision making processes. Govender and Ramodula (2020) further state that effective and meaningful participatory governance can only be truly realised in public institutions when the public begin to consider themselves, owing to being empowered, as in its true sense, as co-governors but not clients of the public institutions.

In a similar vein, Rajkotia and Gergen (2016) emphasise that participatory governance necessitates that citizens perceive themselves as stakeholders in public governance structures. That is, not as passive recipients of decision making processes that appear, at face value, to be soliciting their active involvement while covertly working against their need for empowerment. This is so because through citizens' effective

and meaningful engagements in the affairs and decision making processes of public institutions, the support that the latter's decisions and resultant outcomes would receive shall undoubtedly be commendable (Enaifoghe & Adetiba, 2019). That is to say, as Gustafson and Hertting (2016) assert, participatory governance should be paired and implemented inextricably with empowerment.

This assertion accentuates that recognising and attending to the information and empowerment needs of residents must be given utmost priority if meaningful participatory governance is to be realised. Importantly, Altschuler and Corrales (2013) point out that though citizens were likely in the past to think of themselves as having no authority to engage in matters that impact on their lot, today they are more likely to think of themselves as co-owners of public institutions. While Enaifoghe and Adetiba (2019) are aware of the apparent dichotomy of citizens thinking of themselves as either co-owners or clients, mirrors only a half of the story. Hence, this study posits that the dearth of empirical data on the meanings that citizens ascribe to participatory governance, especially in the context of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is a great concern that warrants a systematic inquiry.

According to Xixin and Yongle (2018) issues of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation has become topical in public institutions in recent times. That is, it continues to engender considerable interests as the demands for accountability and transparency are ever-growing. Despite the growing public interests, an understanding of what the benefits of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation actually are diverges broadly and has become vastly subjective. Nonetheless, participatory governance is considered crucial towards giving citizens a voice and control over matters that has the potential to improve or change their lot. It is that dimension, as Carcaba *et al.* (2017) points out, through which citizens become aware of their need to make a difference.

2.5 PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE POST-1994: A SOUTH AFRICAN DIMENSION

The emergence of participatory governance in the South African context was heralded by changes in systems of governance post-1994 democratic elections. Owing to the exclusion of citizens' engagement in the affairs of public institutions pre-democracy, entrenching participatory governance became a significant endeavour for the new public administration (Govender & Ramodula, 2020). Citizens' engagements in public institutions governance structures emerged as an ideal transformative mechanism to foster transparency and accountability in public institutions. This recognition of the essence of creating spaces for citizens engagement in governance structures, as Altschuler and Corrales (2013) suggest, indicated a significant shift in paradigm from an top-down exclusionary approach to public governance towards a human-rights approach. Matebesi (2017a) concurs that a move towards participatory

governance in South African public institutions represents a monumental exercise that added a new dimension to the concept of participatory democracy.

According to Rajkotia & Gergen (2016) the acknowledgement of the significance of participatory governance meant that citizens' engagement in the affairs of the public institutions was to be integrated in all realms of governance. This is so because participatory governance had the potential to guide public decision making and ensure that citizens' voices are included in public decisions. To be more precise, Lekala (2019) assert that participatory governance was an innovative strategy to offer citizens opportunities to partake in public decision making in order to own up to the decisions taken and work diligently towards their implementations. Thus, participatory governance is perceived within the South Africa's public governance structures to be a suitable mechanism for empowering citizens.

Matebesi (2017b) indicates that though participatory governance is expected to be entrenched within public institutions governance structure, there is still little known on how it is being implemented in the local sphere of government. This paucity of information on its implementation in the local sphere of government is a great concern considering the legal requirement for local government to institute participatory governance in matters of its governance. Furthermore, the nature and scope of participatory governance in local government, especially in local municipalities remains unknown. Skenjana, Kimemia and Afesis-Corplan (2017) consider this situation to be problematic given that local municipalities, as the feet and legs of national government, are ideally positioned owing to their closeness to citizens to promote participatory governance.

2.5.1 Positioning participatory governance within the local sphere of government

South Africa's local government has been the last sphere of government to undergo significant changes post the democratic dispensation. This sphere of government assumes a developmental mandate in its new role of being an implementing agent of the national policies (Taaibosch & Van Niekerk, 2017). Central to the changes in the nature of local government has been the concerted efforts by the national governments' to foster responsiveness within municipalities (Tshoose, 2015). The argument is that within their more inclusive, people-oriented and development-focused role, municipalities will transform or evolve from focusing only on provision of basic services to changing their governance structures (Quick & Bryson, 2016). This transition was purported to eliminate barriers that prevent citizens from engaging meaningfully in the affairs and decision-making processes of municipalities. According to Matebesi and Botes (2017) this changes in the role of municipalities coincided with increased concerns and discontentment within communities regarding constant exclusions and suppression of their voices in municipal decision making processes. These challenges, as expressed by communities, are in contrast

with the national government agenda to redress the injustices of the past which excluded the majority of citizens particularly Black Africans from actively and meaningfully engaging in public governance structures (Themba & Selepe, 2020).

Maropo (2018) indicates that the status quo within municipalities warrants a change amidst growing demands by citizens to be meaningfully engaged and have access to information on how municipal decisions are being made. According to Reddy (2018) this period marks a turning point in municipal governance. Aptly put, this era influenced a shift towards participatory governance with the promise of transparency, accountability and participation as its main core components (Ntliziywana, 2017). Importantly, participatory governance became a legislative requirement that citizens be positioned at the centre of all decision making processes in municipalities. This repositioning of citizens engagements as a priority in decision making processes became an essential tenet of the developmental role municipalities had to adopt and integrate in their governance systems (Nkuna, 2016). The White Paper on Local Government (1998) requires municipalities to commit themselves to working with residents in a quest to discover innovative ways to meet their empowerment needs. To achieve this objective, Maropo (2018) points out, that municipalities need to collaborate with and make certain that residents are involved in municipal decisions making. However, Xixin and Yongle (2018) state that the essence of collaborating with residents will not be sufficient within municipalities.

On this note, participatory governance became a significant measure to promote meaningful collaboration between citizens and municipalities. This situation, these researchers suggest, will continue to occur unless accompanied by a concerted effort to adopt and integrate mechanisms effective to encourage such collaboration. However, Matebesi (2017) notes that the shift within municipalities towards participatory governance has not achieved its intended outcomes. This is despite an emphasis which continues to garner momentum within local government for municipalities to transform towards more inclusive residents engagements. Of great concern, however, is that participatory governance seems not to be well understood as an essential measure to foster meaningful collaboration between citizens and municipalities within local government. This is consequent to the dearth of empirical data on how accurately are municipalities implementing participatory governance in their institutional systems. Nevertheless, Lekala (2019) contend that there appears to be insufficient comprehension within municipalities with regard to their developmental role in promoting participatory governance. As Matebesi (2017a) further posits, it remains unknown whether the nature of changes the municipalities underwent resulted in significant changes in their power structures. In order to determine the effectiveness with which municipalities implement participatory governance in their decision making structures, Koma

(2018) suggests that examination of the role of municipalities within their developmental framework particularly in promoting participatory governance in its affairs be undertaken.

2.5.2 The significance of participatory governance in municipal governance structures

Participatory governance is considered to have potential benefits for the overall governance in public institutions. When implemented effectively, Wilson, Wampler and McNulty (2018) proposes that participatory governance could yield desired results for inclusive citizens' engagement and give legitimacy to public decisions. Weidenstedt (2017) points out that inclusive citizens' engagements, as central to participatory governance, can enhance confidence in citizens to claim their rights while offering them opportunities, knowledge and capabilities to influence decisions that affect their lives. This is so because participatory governance is regarded as a synecdoche of good governance. More precisely, Gustafson and Hertting (2016) state that the essence of participatory governance is that it encourage the voices of citizens to be heard.

Furthermore, participatory governance has the benefit when implemented carefully and thoughtfully within municipal governance structures to foster transparency and accountability. Given Roelofs (2019) assertion that municipalities continue to fall short on achieving transparency and accountability, instituting participatory governance within their structures can help redress deficiencies in governance. However, there continues to be little knowledge within South Africa's local municipalities on what benefits and significance is attached to participatory governance. With this dearth of empirical data on either the perceived and actual benefits of participatory governance for local municipalities, ascertaining the effectiveness of efforts expended towards realising the benefits of participatory governance in local municipalities will continue to prove challenging for communities being served.

2.5.2.1 Participatory governance as an empowerment avenue

Gustafson and Hertting (2016) perceive participatory governance as inextricably linked to empowerment. This view is shared by Modise (2017) who indicates that participatory governance cannot be dissociated from its empowerment nature. In this vein, participatory governance cannot be considered effective and meaningful if it does not seek to consciously bring about improvement in citizens understanding of the state of affairs in their municipalities. This signifies, as Gustafson and Hertting (2016) suggest, that the institutionalisation of participatory governance in municipal governance systems should be directed towards enhancing citizens' capabilities to actively engage in, negotiate with, influence and hold accountable municipal officials pertaining to decisions taken which are in the public interests. However, Chaudhuri (2016) argues that, in as much as participatory governance continues to be implemented haphazardly and left up to chance in public institutions, its essence in empowering citizens to exercise

sufficient oversights will have no deep implications. This is so because the inextricable nature of participatory governance and empowerment seems to be a greatly contested ideal in municipalities.

However, Muse (2016) indicates that barriers that impede empowerment of citizens to engage meaningfully in the affairs and decision making processes of municipalities are countless. They include the dearth of easier access to information pertinent to municipal decisions making (Marais, Quayle & Burns, 2017); perceptions among municipal officials and public representatives of the essence of inclusive decisions making and non-compliance to legislative requirements for including citizens in municipal governance systems (Matebesi & Botes, 2017). These barriers, as Taaibosch and van Niekerk (2017) points out, are detrimental to affording citizens with opportunities to act as co-governors and partners in decisions as well as initiatives that seek to entrench their engagements with municipalities.

According to Ntliziywana (2017), this situation prevents citizens from attaining requisite skills and competencies critical for their contribution to the common public good within municipal governance. Further, it is in contrast with the increasing demands by citizens to be capacitated to influence their future through unrestricted but legitimised access to decision-making processes in their local municipalities. Nevertheless, Quick and Bryson (2016) state that opportunities for citizens engagements are seldom offered within municipalities owing to perceptions of citizens not been adequately skilled to comprehend and add value to decisions and processes through which such decisions are made.

2.6 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Municipalities are public institutions (entities) that operate within a set of laws and are guided by policies to carry out their functions aimed at improving the welfare of citizens. The enacted laws and policies specifically formulated for local government empower the sphere of government to carry out its constitutional mandates as set out in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Constitutional Act 108 of 1996. The purpose of local government-oriented laws and policies is to provide a framework for a democratic, accountable, and pro-development system of local government. Participatory governance, although not always operationalised as such in some of the laws and policies, is a prerequisite for effective implementation by local municipalities. Its primary purpose is to provide opportunities and spaces for citizens to participate meaningfully and purposefully in the affairs of local government. This section reviews laws and policies that regulate local government and require them to promote participatory governance in all governance issues.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996

As the bedrock of public administration, Section 195(1)(e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 (hereafter the Constitution) provides that citizens should be encouraged to participate in policy-making. Although this section may be considered restrictive in its provision to encourage public participation in policy making, interpretation as such may be erroneous. This is because the Constitution, as the country's supreme law, requires that public institutions work to redress past wrongs. Past injustices also include the requirement that previously excluded and marginalised citizens, who had no say in the governance of public institutions, be proffered with opportunities and spaces to engage. This aspiration is consistent with the developmental nature of post-apartheid local government. Section 152(1) (e) of the Constitution also gives new impetus to the issue of encouraging community participation in local government affairs.

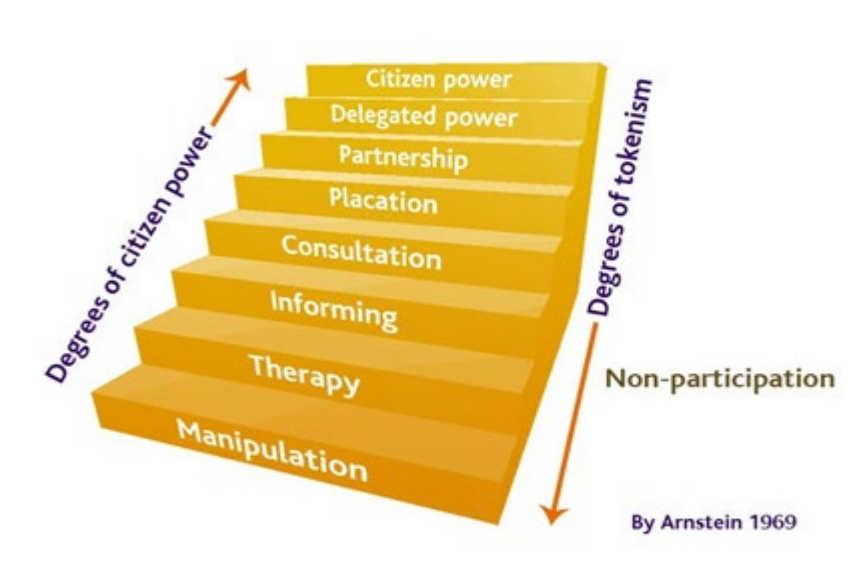
The Municipal Systems Act 33 of 2000

In addition, the Municipal Systems Act 33 of 2000 draws the attention of local authorities to the need to encourage public participation in local municipalities' affairs. Chapter 4 of this Act is devoted to public participation, with emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of members of local communities in relation to their participation in local government affairs. The interchangeable use of the central concept of involvement and consultation in the legal framework of public participation is problematic when reduced to participatory governance. This is because, at first glance, these concepts can give the impression that even mere consultation, involvement or even participation, despite their depth and empowering nature is acceptable and can be viewed as participatory governance, which is wrong. For example, the concept of participatory governance appears in Section 16 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. However, there is no adequate operationalisation in the section referred on what participatory governance actually is and whether it differs from involvement and consultation, which are considered mechanisms to encourage public participation.

Although it prescribes what local authorities must do to promote the achievement of public participation goals; The Municipal Systems Act 33 of 2000 has several disadvantages. It is silent on how public participation should be encouraged and implemented. In other words, it leaves the discretion to the municipalities. However, this discretion left to the municipalities is not exercised in good faith in some municipalities. This means that public participation has not yet been fully implemented in some municipalities. Strictly speaking, it is still misunderstood and is still in its infancy, in which the fulfilment of the obligations laid down in the laws is not realised. A further implication is that the decision as to whether public (or community) participation has taken place is made by the municipalities, regardless of whether it was made to the satisfaction of the community members involved. More specifically, the question is

whether the engaged community members are satisfied with the purposefulness, meaningfulness, and empowering nature of the public participation process being undertaken. These arguments about what should actually be considered public participation, involvement, consultation or engagement in the municipality can be understood within Arnstein's (1969) proposed ladder of participation presented below.

Figure 2.1 Arnstein's Ladder of Participation



Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation shows how public participation is likely to have different meanings for different people. For example, on the top rung of the ladder is citizen control. This means that residents are allowed to take part in the affairs of the municipality. However, the extent of their involvement is limited as decision-making powers are still retained by municipal authorities. In terms of delegated powers, residents are given some delegated powers to participate and make decisions, while municipal authorities ultimately control and fund the decision-making process. In partnership, on the other hand, residents have significant influence on the decision-making process, but the responsibility for the decision remains with the municipality. Placement represents a situation where the residents are asked for advice, but symbolic changes are made. When residents are consulted (consultation), they are given information and are asked to comment, but their views may not inform the final decision and no feedback is given as to why their advice was not considered. In addition, to inform means that the residents are informed about the municipal programs, but their opinions are not taken into account. In terms of therapy, residents participate by learning about what is already happening or what has been decided. And at the bottom of the ladder is manipulation. Manipulation is deception in which false opinions or information is given to residents by their representatives, with the residents inputs being used only to further the existing agendas of the manipulators.

Another dimension of encouraging public participation in local communities is the use of the ward committee system as specified in Section 42 of the Municipal Systems Act 33 of 2000. Notwithstanding the importance of the ward committee system in deepening local democracy through public participation, the effectiveness of the system in this respect has been the subject of widespread criticism. Ward committees are considered impartial in the performance of their duties and lack the capacity (i.e., expertise) and willingness to act without undue influence to represent the voices of the communities that are their constituencies.

White Paper on Local Government (1999)

Because of the inextricable link between laws and policies, the former influencing and guiding the formulation of the latter; several policy measures are available to give impetus to the promotion of public participation. One such policy is the White Paper on Local Government (1999), which calls on municipalities to encourage the active participation of citizens at several levels: as voters, citizens, consumers and end-users and organised partners. Of relevance to this White Paper is the need for municipalities to encourage citizen participation in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, among other things. Therefore, the crucial question for this study is how effectively the municipalities have succeeded in engaging the residents in the budgetary monitoring and evaluation in accordance with the provisions of the White Paper on Local Government (1999). In particular, with a view to providing local residents with timely, accessible and accurate information to promote transparency on how efficiently, effectively and economically public funds are used (Section 195 (1) (b) and (g) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996). In addition, the promulgation of the eight (8) Batho Pele Principles (translated as People First), specifically consultation, provision of information, and openness and transparency, is a material departure from an exemption that barred the majority of local residents from participation in the local government affairs prior to the arrival of the new democratic dispensation.

2.7 CHALLENGES OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Participatory governance, as shown by previous studies, is advocated throughout the local government context as crucial to increase citizens' participation. This implies that the benefits of integrating participatory governance in local government affairs are widely recognised. Despite the potential promise of participatory governance in promoting good governance in local government, its implementation falls short of its promise (Buss & Galanti, 2018). In addition, there is a broader diversity of viewpoints on the difficult issues that plague participatory governance in South African local government. According to Wegenaar and Wood (2018), discourses on participatory governance often fail to reflect the challenging

realities of local government. Richardson, Durose and Perry (2019) call these difficult realities tyrannies of participatory governance. The primary argument in this context is that certain patterns of thinking about participatory governance, particularly in local government, continue to dominate how it is articulated, understood, and implemented. More specifically, evidence suggests that participatory governance in local government has major obstacles that require adequate attention. This section examines the three most commonly reported obstacles to participatory governance in South African local government. They include the pursuit of legitimacy, the contentious nature of leadership in participatory governance, and the tensions between proponents of bottom-up and top-down participatory governance approaches.

The pursuit of legitimacy within local government

Previous studies examining the level of trust between elected representatives and residents related to local government reveal a growing pattern of distrust and disconnection (Trondal & Pinheiro, 2022; Fung, 2015). Elected representatives, most of whom are at the higher levels of local government structures, are perceived by residents as unrepresentative, less independent and tainted by the formal politics of their political parties (Gaventa & Barrett, 2012). Hence, it is argued that they neglect the marginalised voices of their constituencies and represent their particular interests, mostly self-serving and/or partisan-oriented. These perceived or actual perceptions of the majority of citizens have reduced their trust in elected representatives. In this regard, the legitimacy that these elected representatives have gained in recent years as a result of their involvement in local government is eroding (Rasanga, Badibanga & Ulimwenga, 2022). As a result, participatory governance is being pursued as a mechanism within invited spaces to complement representational democracy in local government (Pearce, 2011).

On that note, participatory governance is seen as compensating for electoral inflexibilities by delivering high levels of targeted, information-rich representation (Disch, 2011). This viewpoint offers a challenge to participatory governance since it is perceived as an overcorrection to representational democracy's flaws. As Richardson and Durose (2013) and Hansard (2013) explain, this perspective puts participatory governance at the mercy of elected representatives seeking legitimacy while undermining the same process that they should be advocating for. Specifically, they promote and advocate for participatory governance as providing more inclusive representation while devaluing citizens' voices in decision-making and making participatory governance less effective through their particularistic interests (Chapman & Lowndes, 2014).

Contentious nature of leadership in participatory governance

The question of which form of leadership is geared towards participatory governance remains controversial in local government. According to Polk (2015), leadership should be distributed within participatory governance, including powers to participate in decision-making. In contrast, several researchers argue against Polk (2015) view that leadership and the powers associated with it cannot be distributed or delegated through participatory governance (Head & Alford, 2015; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013). These different perspectives on the type of leadership that must be exercised to align with participatory governance have been detrimental to the usefulness of participatory governance in local government. Furthermore, these perspectives are believed to play an essential role in the delayed willingness within local government to give participatory governance the importance and space it deserves to ensure citizen participation. Nevertheless, Durose and Richardson (2016) argue that a facilitative leadership style is preferable to participatory governance. This is because facilitative leadership creates spaces for discussion rather than excluding open discussion. This leadership style is perceived as conforming to the ideals of participatory governance as it is based on values such as hearing different voices and pooling expertise collectively (Bussu & Galanti, 2018). The implications behind the lack of consensus about the nature of leadership in participatory governance add to the challenges it faces in South African local government.

Tensions between proponents of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' participatory governance approaches

Another challenge confronting participatory governance is the debate over whether top-down or bottom-up approaches to participatory governance are inherently beneficial or harmful. When seen in the context of the historical prevalence and preference for top-down approaches, these tensions illuminate how participatory governance is viewed in local government (John, 2014). Although the reform of local government after 1994 called for a bottom-up strategy as essential to guaranteeing citizens' engagement in local government affairs, the top-down approach was not eliminated. These approaches' proponents are constantly engaged in a tug-of-war, with each side extending their arguments for and against the other. Hence, the top-down approach is seen as consensus-biased and unsuitable for establishing participatory governance, as well as being neither truly inclusive nor just. According to Brenner, Marcuse and Maye (2012), this approach has failed to bring prosperity to the marginalised citizens and is insufficient to address current governance concerns in local government.

Atkinson, Dorfler and Rothfub (2018) also agree that the top-down approach has failed to deliver on its promises of democratisation and that bottom-up approach associated with participatory governance

should be followed instead. In other words, because bottom-up approach pushes for cooperative arrangements, it has a stronger potential to influence governance practices. Wegenaar and Wood (2018) support this viewpoint, arguing that a bottom-up approach is more effective at mobilising citizens' participation and active dormant participation. As a result, this approach should be prioritised as a driver of meaningful citizen participation and engagement, as well as a critical response to perceived top-down governance failures (Dean, 2018). In light of this, it has been suggested in a number of earlier studies that the current governance structure in South African local government are part of the challenges that plague participatory governance.

2.8 SITUATING PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE WITHIN BUDGETARY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Budgetary monitoring and evaluation remains a significant tenet of municipal functionality (Fourie, 2019). As an essential phase in the public budgeting process, central to budgetary monitoring and evaluation is the need to ensure that public money is utilised effectively, efficiently and economically. Pauw, Woods, Van der Linde, Fourie and Visser (2009:1-3) defines public money as "money which is owned publicly, in the context of the state and to which benefit the public is entitled." With this being said, municipalities are invariably anticipated to execute their assigned expenditure responsibilities financed through public money with as little wastage and misappropriation as possible (AGSA, 2018/19). Further, the municipalities should ensure that the outcomes for which the public money received were intended for are constantly monitored and evaluated. However, the shocking state in which municipalities' finances are currently raises great concern for local communities who continues to bear the brunt for substandard services delivery consequent to evidenced misappropriation of public funds in municipalities (Ncgobo & Malefane, 2017).

Owing to this situation, municipalities have seen a rise in demands for transparency and accountability in how public money and subsequent decisions informing its utilisation are made. As Glasser and Wright (2020) accurately puts it, citizens are constantly demanding to know where the money goes and to what benefit has the public money been to improving their welfare through effective services rendered. Thus, Ncgobo and Malefane (2017) further adds that citizens demands for meaningful engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation can no longer be regard as optional for municipalities. This situation implies, as Sikhosana and Nzewi (2019) suggest, that municipalities should treat citizens engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation as an essentiality whose perpetual ignorance undermines the very nature of citizens inclusion in municipal decisions making. In this vein, the significant role of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation becomes even more important.

According to Muthomi & Thurmaier (2021) the institutionalisation of participatory governance within the context of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is crucial to enabling citizens to exercise oversight and enforce accountability to ensure efficacious use of public money. However, Kumagai, Sruti and Helene (2019) indicate that little research has been undertaken to explore the nature and scope for citizens' inclusion in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Further, there is dearth of empirical information on the benefits that citizens' inclusion in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes provides for citizens and municipalities alike. Consequentially, the budgetary monitoring and evaluation black-box appears to remain closed for citizens to see and know how it works.

2.9 THE UTILITY OF TRANSPARENCY IN BUDGETARY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Transparency is an integral tenet in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. According to Shaw (2016) transparency denotes openness and full disclosure. In budgetary monitoring and evaluation, transparency signifies that citizens are entitled to regular disclosures on the state of public finance in their municipalities. That is, citizens should have access to pertinent information from which an understanding of the decisions taken regarding the use of their public funds and the resultant outcomes will emerge. As Fourie (2019) indicates, transparency in budgetary monitoring and evaluation serves to encourage municipalities to make information on the impacts and outcomes of budgetary utilisation freely available and directly accessible to those citizens who will be affected by decision made. This view puts forward the argument that in making decisions that are centred on use of public money, public institutions should provide sufficient information to citizens pertaining to their decisions in ways that makes the information easily understandable (PAIA, 2000).

If regular disclosures on public funds utilisation are made to citizens during budgetary monitoring and evaluation, Dutu and Diaconu (2017) indicate that benefits will abound for municipalities. That is to say, the better the citizens are informed of the state of finances in municipalities, the more adequately they will comprehend the budgetary and resource limitation faced towards achieving specific goals set by the municipalities. In this vein, transparency becomes crucial considering that municipalities' allocated resources are not invariably sufficient to address all problems communities encounter in a specific time period (Glasser & Wright, 2020). For this reason, ensuring openness and full disclosure regarding how municipal finances are utilised and what outcomes have been accomplished and what impacts on people's lives have been will be important to achieving transparency.

Despite the requirements placed on municipalities to ensure transparency in their decisions, especially when public funds are involved, little is known on how wide the window is open for citizens to engage in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Put more accurately, few empirical studies have been conducted

to reveal insights into how regular disclosures are been made to citizens and the nature of the roles they play in budgetary monitoring and evaluation with reference to fostering transparency.

2.10 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN BUDGETARY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Accountability is concerned about responsibility and liability. According to Nkuna (2016) accountability denotes an obligation placed on the holder of trust to give account or explain one's actions or decisions to an authority and accepts the subsequent consequences thereof. For municipalities, upholding accountability in budgetary monitoring and evaluation has never been important. Municipalities need to be accountable to citizens for the outcomes and impact of their budgetary utilisation. This signifies, as Sikhosana and Nzewi (2019) point out, that citizens are adequately informed of the extent and appropriateness with which financial integrity is fostered and results achieved. However, Auditor-General (2018-19) states that accountability in how public funds are utilised remains a significant challenge in municipalities. Compounding this situation, as Glasser and Wright (2020) proposes, is the lack of created opportunities for citizens to exercise oversight on municipalities budgetary monitoring and evaluation outcomes and impacts. In this regard, citizens remain less empowered in the absence of their meaningful inclusion in budgetary monitoring and evaluation to put sufficient checks and balances on the decisions and actions of municipal officials and thereby hold them accountable for decisions and actions involving public money.

Tufte (2017) indicates that municipalities are cognisant of the legal and ethical requirements bestowed unto them to be answerable to the public and accept consequences for decisions involving use of public money that are contrary to public interests but self-serving. Despite this obligation, municipalities have been failing to engage citizens in budgetary monitoring and evaluation to co-jointly monitor and evaluate budgetary outcomes and impacts. According to Ncgobo and Malefane (2017) in instances wherein citizens are engaged in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes, limited knowledge exists on what is the nature of their engagement and their expressed contentment with being engaged in the process. It is for this reasons that this study intends to examine the nature of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in order to comprehend the scope of citizens involvement and level of contentment with the processes entailed. According to Dutu and Diaconu (2017) this endeavour is essential as the situation in municipalities regarding citizens engagement in budgetary monitoring and evaluation needs to be revealed, understood and addressed promote not only accountability but foster transparency as well.

2.11 ISSUES IN BUDGETARY MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Budgetary monitoring and evaluation is crucial in the context of local government to assess and determine what is working and what is not working, how results are achieved and what impact is achieved. Most importantly, budgetary monitoring and evaluation, when properly implemented, can be a feedback mechanism leading to an understanding of the cost-effectiveness of municipalities' programs to inform improvements. Although budgetary monitoring and evaluation is a powerful tool that can be used to better prioritise, achieve specific outcomes and increase their impact, it suffers from many problems. This section addresses the issues pertaining to budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the South African local sphere of government.

Partial implementation of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

South African local government is believed to have the ability to conduct budgetary monitoring and evaluation to improve governance and performance (Govender, 2013). As postulated by Latib and Goldman (2012), this local sphere of government has quality systems for monitoring and evaluation. However, the available budgetary monitoring and evaluation systems are not widely and fully used within local government. More specifically, there is a partial implementation of these systems to ensure effective budgetary monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impact. The perceived complexity of budgetary monitoring and evaluation systems is cited as the main challenge hindering their full implementation (Mello, 2018). Similarly, Stolyarenko (2016) argues that the full implementation of budgetary monitoring and evaluation systems is hampered by the overlapping scope of activities included in their processes. Therefore, Mpehle and Kanjere (2013) argue that joint efforts should be made within local government to coordinate budgetary monitoring and evaluation activities to avoid duplication of effort.

Furthermore, previous studies have argued that delayed acceptance and resistance to change within local government is hampering efforts to fully implement budgetary monitoring and evaluation systems. Resistance can be shown in many ways, including partially implementing the systems or passively accepting their usefulness, resulting in delayed implementation (Dlamini & Migoro, 2016). However, it should be determined how best to ensure the uptake of such innovations, either through implementation support or through training to avoid resistance due to fear of change. Inextricably linked to the problem of resistance to change, as Mello (2018) argue, is the culture of compliance that is becoming the antidote to full acceptance and implementation. Specifically, the challenge in this regard is that budgetary monitoring and evaluation is not fully implemented, but implemented purely as a compliance measure to address negative findings and punitive remedial actions.

Lack of competence and competency among officials in budgetary monitoring and evaluation

The lack of competence and competency among the officials who carry out budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the municipalities is cited as the main problem to ensuring the effectiveness of the process. Although the terms competence and competency sound the same, they have different meanings. Competence denotes the ability to understand action-oriented knowledge, or a general ability to perform tasks at a basic level (De Wet & Van der Waldt, 2013). On the other hand, competency includes the ability to perform specific tasks in which the person responsible for performing the task has been trained (Bhatnagar, 2016). In this context, Kariuki and Reddy (2017) argue that officials who carry out budgetary monitoring and evaluation in local government must have sufficient knowledge, skills and competence required to carry out the relevant activities. However, Govender and Reddy (2014), when examining the impediments to the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in local government in general, found that the competence and level of competency officials in local government have is insufficient. Knowledge is limited, particularly among local government officials who perform tasks related to monitoring and evaluation.

In contrast, Adams (2012) points out that the issue of the skills gap among officials involved in monitoring and evaluation processes in local government is a recognised issue that has long been treated with disdain. Although this author does not explain how the skills gap has been treated with disdain, Alsharif (2014) and Bhatnagar (2016) argue that the skills gap stems from officials' dearth of willingness to engage in concerted efforts at continuous learning and reskilling. This view is supported by Van der Waldt (2020) who points out that the implementation of skills audits in municipalities is void. Reviewing skill shortages and implementing remedial action, Olumuyiwa (2015) argues, is also hampered by the lack of internal systems to track and determine the extent to which learned skills are being implemented in the workplace. This implies that although concerted efforts have been made and financial investments made available within the municipalities to improve the competence and competency level of officials in relation to carrying out budgetary monitoring and evaluation, the integration of lessons learned into practice is challenging (Chagunda & Chakaipa, 2015). De Wet and Van der Waldt (2013) therefore claim that enforcement systems that should be implemented in municipalities to ensure that the integration of learning into practice is actually carried out, such systems are not available.

The high politicisation of the local government environment, as indicated by Adams (2012), further complicates and makes enforcing the attainment of an acceptable level of competence among officials involved in monitoring and evaluation processes more difficult. Chagunda and Chakaipa (2015) therefore

argues that local government's problems in ensuring effective budgetary monitoring and evaluation are multi-faceted and no one-size-fits-all approach can work to address them simultaneously. This author's recommendation is to look at each of the issues individually and in the specific context of the environment in which budgetary monitoring and evaluation is being conducted. Therefore, Van der Waldt (2020) argues that incentives for acquiring appropriate skills and competencies must be given priority within local government as a mechanism to encourage officials to be up to date with the relevant knowledge in their specific roles and to engage in continuous and further learning to hone the skills required to excel at their specific tasks.

Poor collection, recording and management of information

Accurate information is an essential part of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. This is because budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes yield information that needs to be collected, captured and managed effectively. The effectiveness of the process, in turn, is also influenced and informed by the adequacy of the information collected, recorded and managed (Presidency, 2013). Therefore, Paul Olumuyiwa (2015) points out that decision-making about the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation depends on the quality and relevance of the information used (Matsiliza, 2017). Hence, accurate and useful information must be made available to all stakeholders involved in the process to determine the adequacy of its outcomes and impacts. However, municipalities seem to have problems with proper information management. According to Kariuki and Reddy (2017), municipalities often have limited capacity to collect, capture and manage information specifically for budgetary monitoring and evaluation purposes. This view finds support in the Auditor-General's report (2018/19) that information management in municipalities remains a serious issue, adversely affecting budgetary monitoring and evaluation, as well as auditing purposes to determine how effective, efficient and economically public funds are used. With this in mind, it is not surprising that the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation are poorly assessed in a large number of municipalities.

Makgahlela and Nsibirwa (2021) argue that the poor state of information collection and management in municipalities is hampering efforts to exercise oversight and hold officials accountable. This is because accurate information on outcomes and impacts of the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process is critical to determining how the specific goals set by the municipality are being met and how they are impacting the communities served. Similarly, Kariuki and Reddy (2017) point out that the challenges of adequate information collection and management in municipalities are not new but have been a recurring problem. This problem stems, as the author points out, from the greater reliance within municipalities on paper-based forms of information collection, capturing and management. Although several studies

criticise the mentioned way of information collection, capturing and management as obsolete, Makgahlela and Nsibirwa (2021) suggest that municipalities need to examine paperless alternatives for information collection and management.

In this vein, it could be assumed that the opposite of paperless alternatives is the use of information and communication technology-based methods for information collection, capturing and management. Smith (2012) agrees that with the advent of widespread ICT use, municipalities should explore and seek to capitalise on the opportunities ICT can offer to improve their information collection, capturing and management processes and systems. However, it appears that a large number of municipalities, particularly local municipalities, are lagging behind in realising the benefits of ICT (Chisango & Lesame, 2017). More precisely, they seem to be lagging behind when it comes to embracing the benefits of digitalisation and adapting it to their specific context. This situation, taken as a whole, raises problems for enhancing the effectiveness of budgetary monitoring and evaluation in local government in South Africa.

2.11.1 The role of audit committees in budgetary monitoring and evaluation

Audit committees are set up in municipalities as independent advisory bodies within the meaning of Section 166 of the Public Financial Management Act 1 of 1999. They play a crucial role in promoting good governance. More specifically, these committees are responsible for ensuring the effective, efficient and economical use of public funds in the municipalities (Dlamini, Mutambara & Assensoh-Kodua, 2017). To achieve this goal, audit committees seek to enhance the credibility of local government by promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in the use of public funds (Dodo, 2017). Despite the abundance of available literature and official government documents on how local government audit committees should discharge their responsibilities, the effectiveness of these committees remain a contentious issue. This means that there are different perspectives on the effectiveness of the audit committee in different municipalities. The diversity of these perspectives indicates that while guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of the committees are available, the accuracy and veracity of the manner in which they are considered effective does vary. Hence, Erasmus and Matsimela (2020) argue that when determining the effectiveness of the audit committee in local government, no one-size-fits-all approach leads to a fair assessment. This means that researchers attempting to undertake this endeavour must consider the contextual factors or circumstances within a particular municipality that impede the effective execution of the communities' functions and responsibilities.

Nonetheless, previous studies indicate that audit committees in municipalities, particularly local municipalities, face a variety of challenges that hamper their effectiveness. These prior studies point out some of the challenges these committees face in many municipalities, despite their classification and locality (Dlamini, Mutambara & Assensoh-Kodua, 2020). In this sense, Mazibuko and Fourie (2013), examining the work of audit committees, found that they do not have sufficient powers, which is not consistent with the assigned oversight function. However, Erasmus and Coetzee (2018) deplore the lack of required skills among the members of the audit committees, especially when looking not at practical experience but at the possession of relevant qualifications. These authors' argument is that committee members should have a combination of significant experience and required qualifications, which are critical to enable them to perform their functions with merit. This assertion finds support in Dodo (2017), who argues that although experience and qualifications are vital in this regard, audit committee members must engage in on-going learning and training on a continuous basis to hone their skills in the face of changing methods and circumstances in the context of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Kinyondo, Pellizo and Umar (2015) approach the issue of audit committee members' skills from a different perspective, one that is often the least considered in local municipalities. Such is the composition of the audit committees and the politically charged environment in which they operate.

According to Mazibuko and Fourie (2013), the effectiveness of audit committees and their failure can be traced back to the way in which they were composed from the start. The highly politicised environment in which local government is carried out makes the work of the audit committees challenging, if not difficult. As several studies report, audit committees are formed either knowingly or covertly by politically oriented individuals (Kinyondo, Pellizo & Umar, 2015). These individuals tend to advance their political party agenda by not fulfilling their assigned responsibilities on the committees with impartiality. Andersen (2015) points to examples of audit committee members failing to report impartially wrongdoing when it is committed by their allied political party comrades. This argument suggests that although audit committee members are required by law to be independent, they do not always act independently without undue influence. Similarly, Motubatse, Ngwakwe and Sebola (2017) argue that the lack of open communication between the municipal council and the committee hinders their work to promote accountability and integrity. This situation, as Jones and Beattie (2015) point out, becomes more apparent when the municipal council delays or fails to address or implement audit committee recommendations on reported violations or transgressions.

Importantly, Andersen (2015) points out that the effective execution of their duties (i.e., audit committees) depends not only on their relationship with the municipal council, but also on whether reports and agendas are presented in a timely manner when needed, and how accurately the information they contain

has been recorded. As previous studies show, poor information and record keeping remains a serious problem in municipalities, adversely affecting the work of audit committees in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. These challenges facing audit committees in local government are not insurmountable. It appears that the willingness and desire to provide the necessary support to improve the effectiveness of audit committees is lagging behind in some local municipalities (Motubatse, Ngwakwe & Sebola, 2017). Therefore, as Jones and Beattie (2015) point out, researchers need to gain insight into context-specific circumstances that affect the effectiveness of audit committees or contribute to their failure to carry out their activities. With this in mind, it is worthwhile for researchers to also determine whether the challenges faced by local government audit committees are comparable to the problems faced by municipal public accounts committees (MPACs).

2.11.2 The role of Municipal Public Accounts Committee in budgetary monitoring and evaluation

Municipal public accounts committees are entrusted with the exercise of oversight functions in the municipalities. The primary focus of these committees is to strengthen compliance with the provisions of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003. Hence, within the meaning of Section 79 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, they are appointed to oversee the functioning of the Section 80 Committees (Mofolo & Adonis, 2021). Although the MPACs serve as the basis for oversight functions to ensure compliance with the use and accountability of public funds, the effectiveness of these committees still leaves much to be desired, as malevolence plagues them (Sebola, 2015; Fourie, 2014). In other words, these committees are still struggling in certain municipalities to carry out the statutory mandate for which they were formed. For example, the vast amounts of money these municipalities have improperly invested in the now-closed VBS mutual bank is a case in point of MPACs being ineffective in carrying out their oversight functions (Mofolo, 2020). Although this one example cannot be used as the sole measure of committee effectiveness, it merely demonstrates the lax oversight that may prevail in other municipalities where committees exist. However, unlawful and flagrant violations of the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act 56 of 2003, which guide municipalities in the use of public funds, continue to occur.

It is of great concern that all of these transgressions and violations in ensuring effective, efficient and economical use of public funds entrusted to local governments negatively affect and undermine the role of municipal public accounts committees. This is because these committees were formed in response to a common perception that the culture of unaccountability is rife in South African municipalities (Thornhill, 2014). The challenges that MPACs face in municipalities are numerous. Myeni and Mvuyana (2015) point out that political contestations and disputes in municipalities impair the committees' ability to exercise oversight. Because, as Fourie (2014) states, these committees are not sufficiently supported by the top

levels of the municipality to carry out their oversight function. They are constantly being undermined as in some cases reports are not submitted to the MPACs to carry out their functions and when they are given they are not provided in a timely manner.

Additionally, Myeni and Mvuyana (2015) also bemoan the municipalities' perception that MPACs are ineffective, while the politically charged environment in which they exist and operate is toxic and fertile ground for a lack of transparency and accountability. As Thornhill (2014) suggests, this situation is reflected in the disregard and contempt with which the MPACs' recommendations are not heeded and implemented in the municipalities. This undesirable situation is attributed to the lack of enforcement powers of the committees, such as the power and authority to make recommendations, ensure that they are implemented and take remedial action against non-implementation of their recommendations (Mofolo, 2020; Sebola, 2015). As a result, municipal public accounts committees are partially paralysed. As such, there are calls within local government to give MPACs the power to enforce compliance with their recommendations in municipalities.

2.12 DISSEMINATION AND ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION ON BUDGETARY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The utility of information in budgetary monitoring and evaluation need no introduction. According to Marais, Quayle and Burns (2017) information can be a primary strategic asset for citizens and municipalities. It can be an integrating agent that links the interests and expectations of citizens with communicative responses from municipalities where such interests and expectations are owed (DTPS, 2017). However, it is the manner in which information pertaining to budgetary monitoring and evaluation is disseminated and accessed which can significantly influence the realisation of transparency and accountability. That is, the ability to recognise the essence of information in budgetary monitoring and evaluation is a direct consequence of the ability to appreciate the value of information. Hence, for citizens, access to accurate, reliable and timeous information is essential to make informed decisions about the affairs of the municipalities for the common good of their communities. In the same vein, disseminating and making access to information easier for citizens can enhance their meaningful engagements in budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

However, there is minimal evidence on the nature, scope and relevance of information disseminated and accessed by residents seeking to partake in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in municipalities. It is not known, as Dutu and Diaconu (2017) points out, how the utility of information related to budgetary monitoring and evaluation is appreciated by residents and municipalities alike. Further, the ease of dissemination and accessibility of information crucial to enhance and enlighten citizens on the outcomes

and impacts of budgetary monitoring and evaluation has not been adequately established in municipalities. For municipalities, the inescapable growing demands for transparency and accountability in budgetary monitoring and evaluation require an urgent rethink on how and what information is disseminated and accessed by residents. This situation calls for municipalities to be adept to adapt to increasing demands for accurate and timeous information on outcomes and impacts of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. To achieve this objective, it is imperative for municipalities to tap into the potential of information and communications technologies prevalently linked to and used in this information era to accelerate dissemination and access to accurate and timeous budgetary monitoring and evaluation information (Okeke-Uzodike & Dlamini, 2019).

Nevertheless, municipalities appear to be ill-prepared for this challenge. They seem to lack the capacity to respond effectively to citizens' demands for timeous and relevant information on budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Wirtz, Daiser and Binkowska (2018) argue that residents have become highly-networked and seek to have access to information without limitations of time, space and cost of access. That is, the use of information and communication technologies have permitted residents in municipalities to access information required for meeting their information needs with ease (Mzekandaba, 2017). Nevertheless, no empirical evidence comes forth on how local municipalities have been able to tap into the benefits of information and communication technologies to enhance timeous dissemination and access of pertinent information to residents on budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

Thus, it can be argued as Sibanda and von Solms (2019) suggest that municipalities may be failing on their awareness of the implications of information age on its functionality, particularly in ensuring timeous information dissemination and access to residents. To reverse this situation, municipalities would need to align their information systems to tap into the benefits of information age. This shift will be necessary not only to ensure that residents are informed to engage meaningfully in budgetary monitoring and evaluation but will aid transform and ready local municipalities to face the challenges of the fourth industry revolution (4IR).

2.13 CONCLUSION

Participatory governance, as a concept and practice, is widely used but remains contested and misunderstood in public governance structures. In its frequent use in literature, participatory governance is inextricably linked with and considered synonymous to participatory democracy or public participation. This dearth of clarity on what participatory governance actually means does engender confusion and render its practice ineffective in public institutions. However, participatory governance is about inclusive direct engagement of citizens in decision making processes within governance structures. In public

institutions specifically, participatory governance is concerned with how citizens influence and share in decision making and how their engagements enhances their capacities to shape and foster good governance. Despite this interpretation of participatory governance, it seems vital to capture its meaning through the lens of those tasked with ensuring its implementation in South Africa's sphere of local government. With the reforms within local government decades ago, participatory governance was deemed to be an ideal mechanism to facilitate residents' inclusion and empowerment and promote transparency and accountability in the affairs of municipalities.

Nevertheless, recent experiences with participatory governance in public institutions suggest that little is known about the nature and scope of its implementation in practice and efficacy. Paucity of consensus exists also on its actual benefit for public institutions and citizens alike, especially at grassroots level. In the face of increasing misappropriation of public finances within public institutions and citizens' loss of confidence in public governance structures, there have been widespread demands for participatory governance to be implemented in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Notwithstanding the essence of these public demands, no insightful lessons are proffered on how participatory governance should be implemented within budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Further, minimal empirical information exist on the institutional capacities of municipalities to embed participatory governance, as a crucial dimension of good governance, within budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, researchers need to empirically address the significant question of how to aid municipalities enhance the efficacy of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in order to induce positive impacts regarding appropriate public finance utilisation.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality. To achieve this goal, the researcher followed the qualitative research approach in this study. The constructionist paradigm, which is integral to the qualitative research approach, oriented the epistemological stance of the researcher in this study. Within the constructionist paradigm, the researcher chose to use interpretivism and hermeneutics as approaches to critically understand the participants' experiences and meanings of the phenomenon under study. The use of the exploratory, descriptive and contextual research designs gave a greater impetus to gain insights and accurate descriptions of the less defined and poorly understood topic of the study, especially in the case of the local municipality of Fetakgomo-Tubatse. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the first data set (municipal officials), while an open-ended qualitative questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the ward committee members. Two non-probability sampling methods, purposive and snowball sampling were used to select participants who met the inclusion criteria. Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher provides a detailed account of the paradigmatic perspectives adopted; research methodology and methods used and their justifications as well as strategies used to establish trustworthiness (ensuring rigor) in the research process and the study results.

TABLE 3.1	
A PRECIS OF THE STUDY FRAMEWORK	
Epistemological stance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constructionism
Theoretical perspective (Which specific approach?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretivism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hermeneutics
Research approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualitative research
Design choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory Descriptive Contextual
Methodological strategy/plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case study
Sampling techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purposive sampling ▪ Snowball sampling
Data collection methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Face-to-face semi-structured interviews ▪ Open-ended qualitative questionnaire
Data analysis method (Which analysis technique/s?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualitative data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tesch's eight-step descriptive analysis
Strategies for trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Credibility (Truth value) ▪ Dependability (Consistency) ▪ Confirmability (Neutrality) ▪ Transferability (Generalisability)

3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

Researchers have different worldviews about what counts as knowledge. These worldviews (i.e. research paradigms) shape how researchers perceive, interpret and behave in the world in which they live and want to live. More precisely, researchers' constructions (beliefs) of the world have a significant impact on how they conduct research inquiries (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In a similar vein, Rehman and Alharthi (2016) note that researchers' philosophical orientation strongly influences their decisions about what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the resulting findings of the study are interpreted. Kaushik and Walsh (2019) concur that a researcher worldview premised on their individual experience has implications for decisions that are made throughout the research process. Thus, Mind (2009) assert that the choice of a research design and methodology is influenced by a researcher own and unique experience of the world. Included in this regard are decisions about which methods are appropriate for use in the planned study; what and how data is collected and what meanings are constructed.

3.2.1 Constructionism

Constructionism as an epistemological perspective within the qualitative research approach was employed in this study. Epistemology refers to the study and explanation of how individuals know what they know. Its goal is to provide a conceptual foundation for determining what types of knowledge are conceivable and how to assure that they are both appropriate and valid (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Therefore, constructionism as a philosophical perspective considers knowledge and meaningful reality to be dependent on the experiences and practices of individuals (Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016). This implies that individuals develop knowledge from their experiences through processes of accommodation and assimilation. The accommodation process entails changing one's mental picture of the outside world to fit new experiences. Assimilation, on the other hand, is the process through which a person integrates a new experience into an existing framework of old experiences without affecting it (Levers, 2013). In this respect, it can be assumed that the experiences of the participants regarding the phenomenon being studied are shaped by interactions with their social environment. Therefore, the researcher's adoption of this philosophical position is based on the assumption that study participants tend to attach different subjective meanings to their experiences in relation to the phenomenon under-study.

More precisely, the individual experiences of the participants involved in the study regarding the effectiveness of participatory governance as implemented in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality are likely to be diverse and varied. This is because constructionism claims that reality is subjective and evolves or changes over time as the participants experience it. This means that both ward committee members and municipal officials can perceive and interpret the phenomenon under investigation in ways that are often similar but not identical. For the researcher, the emerging diversity of opinions is crucial to gaining an understanding of how participants perceive the effectiveness of participatory governance as implemented in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the local municipality. In order to understand how participants experience the phenomenon under-study and the meaning they attach to their experiences and the reality they perceive, the researcher must enter the participants' natural environments to engage in open-ended inquiry through research questions (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). However, the researcher must assess what is presented in order to determine the true facts.

As a result, the researcher believes that no single view of reality exists. In this vein, the constructionism philosophical paradigm is the right fit for this study. Nevertheless, from an interpretivist perspective, the researcher can gain insights into how ward committee members and municipal officials understand the reality they construct through their experiences of the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age.

3.2.1.1 Interpretivism

This study uses interpretivism as a theoretical stance within constructionist epistemology. The theoretical position that informs the study technique and offers a backdrop for the process as well as the basis of its logic and standards is referred to as theoretical perspective (Levers, 2013). As the researcher seeks to obtain detailed data on the participants' interpretations and meanings of how they understand participatory governance to be effective when implemented in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality, it is logical that interpretivism is the theoretical perspective that undergirds this study. This is because interpretivism enables the researcher to comprehend the multifaceted ideals, attitudes, and views that shape the actions of the participants. Aptly put, according to Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah (2016) individuals are conscious and creative in their behaviour, and they behave consciously and create meaning in and through their activities. In this context, multiple interpretations and perspectives of the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation are likely to emerge, as the participants are unique individuals with their own and unique experiences.

In this case, for the researcher to discern participants' experiences with their reality, the researcher must understand that participants construct their reality from their experiences and social interactions. This necessitates looking at the phenomenon being studied through the views of the participants rather than the researcher (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). Achieving this goal requires the researcher to invite ward committee members and municipal officials to reflect on and describe their experiences of implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality. In this vein, the interpretivist approach allow the researcher to get a sense of the meaning the participants constructed from the experiences of their work in implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. There are several approaches within the interpretivist paradigm, including phenomenology, hermeneutics, and symbolic interactionism (Goldkuhl, 2012). The connection between these approaches lies in their emphasis on the unique importance of the meanings that individuals socially construct, of their world, and the need for the researcher to penetrate the participants' reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016; O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). This study was grounded on hermeneutics because the researcher recognises the hermeneutics as the art of interpretation. This is because interpreting the experiences of ward committee members and municipal officials regarding the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age is the primary goal of this study.

Table 3.2 Characteristics of the interpretivist approach

Attributes	Descriptions
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Purpose of the study	To develop in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality (FTLM)
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no single, but multiple realities (Dean, 2018). ▪ Reality cannot be discovered, but it can be studied and socially formed through human interaction, through which meanings of acts emerge. ▪ The researcher enters people's social and natural environments to learn more about how individuals make sense of their social world by their experiences and behaviours while engaging with others (Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016). ▪ Due to varied human encounters embodied in their own and distinct knowledge, perspectives, interpretations, and experiences, a myriad of social realities exist (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016).
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual interactions with social contexts influence how experiences are understood through mental processes of interpretation (Ryan, 2018). ▪ Researchers and participants, who are important to the study process, co-create knowledge through interacting with their natural surroundings (Dean, 2018). ▪ They are engaged in an interactive process of communicating, probing, responding, and documenting their own and others' experiences and interpretations (Goldkuhl, 2012). ▪ Data collection becomes more engaging and subjective.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Textual messages, interviews, and reflective sessions are all used to collect data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). ▪ As the researcher becomes a crucial instrument of research, research is a product of the researcher's values (Ryan, 2018).

3.2.1.1.1 Hermeneutics

The hermeneutic approach allowed the researcher to delve into the deeper meaning of the participants' experiences related to the subject of this study. It enabled the researcher to obtain dense descriptions of the multiple and varied interpretations that participants attributed to their experiences regarding the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Basically, no single participant can express the full meaning of all participants' experiences (Gillo, 2021). Although the participants' collective experiences may be an avenue for understanding their group experiences, such experiences may not be respectable to each participant's meaning and are subject to differing

interpretations (McCaffrey, Raffin-Bouchal & Moules, 2012). In this view, hermeneutics as an art of interpretation was essential for the researcher to progress from attaining sense to reference. The terms sense and reference refer to the directly explicit meanings contained in the proximate text, and non-ostensive meanings found well outside text (McCaffrey, Raffin-Bouchal & Moules, 2012).

As a result, the hermeneutic approach is relevant in this study since it allows the researcher to reconstruct narratives of participants' unique experiences and extract the various meanings of the phenomenon being examined (Gillo, 2021). This endeavour was accomplished by examining the textual data produced from the two data sets (ward committee members and municipal officials) in order to reveal the underlying meanings that needed to be revealed. Thus, the researcher's quest for multiple and complex meanings regarding the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the specific context of the Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality was aided and enhanced by the hermeneutic approach used in this study.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach equates to a research plan or framework for the research inquiry (Levy, 2017). It refers to the blueprint or planned course of action developed by the researcher to guide the decisions made that are central to the study (Grey, 2014). Qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method research approaches are the three most commonly used approaches in specific research inquiries. The distinction between these approaches is explicitly discussed by various authors. However, quantitative research is naturalistic. It assumes that there is a single reality about the world that can be measured objectively (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2014). At the heart of quantitative research is the need to establish relationships between measured variables, establishing procedures and formulating hypotheses prior to the actual study. It is deductive in nature and the researcher adopts an uninvolved, objective observer attitude (Rahman, 2014). In contrast, the mixed-method research approach involves a method of conducting a research inquiry that involves collecting, analysing, and integrating (i.e., either convergently or sequentially) both quantitative and qualitative research into a single study (Dawadi, Shresha & Giri, 2021).

The mixed-method research approach arose out of criticism that characterised both qualitative and quantitative research approaches as neither inherently perfect nor inherently better than the other (Almalki, 2016). That means they all have limitations and weaknesses. Proponents of the mixed-methods research approach argue that the limitations and weaknesses rooted in both qualitative and quantitative research can be improved by using a neutral research approach that brings together the strengths of both research approaches (Dawadi, Shresha & Giri, 2021). Moreover, they argue that the combination of

quantitative and qualitative methods provide a better understanding of the phenomena being studied and help researchers gain broader insight into their research problem (Almalki, 2016). While these claims are recognised and accepted among researchers, the use of quantitative or mixed method research approaches is not always relevant to all research inquiries.

3.3.1 Qualitative research approach

In this study, the qualitative research approach was chosen. A qualitative research approach is a systematic, collaborative, and subjective approach to describing and giving meaning to experiences (Maxwell, 2013). Words, language, and experiences are its most common associations. This research approach is less concerned with numbers, statistics, or measures. The emphasis on insights, meanings, and interpretations is at its core. The qualitative approach is used to find answers to the what, how, and why questions about the topic under investigation (Rahman, 2017). As a result, the 'how many' or 'how much' questions receive less of researchers' attention. The goal of qualitative research approach is to elucidate the meaning of a particular human experience (Daniels, 2016). This is because the personal knowledge and understanding of study participants is critical in revealing insights into the phenomenon being explored. This research approach is used whenever the phenomenon under investigation is less well known, established and understood. Both the researcher and the participants collaboratively create a social reality by engaging in an interactive process of knowledge discovery as entrenched in this research approach (Maxwell, 2013).

3.3.2 Characteristics and application of qualitative research approach

To better understand the relevance of the qualitative research approach in this study, several attributes espoused within the research approach are addressed below, along with their applicability in this investigation.

An exploratory question is always the starting point for qualitative research. Its goal is to learn more about what research participants think regarding the phenomenon under study, the manner in which they perceive it and why they do so in social contexts (Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). Because the researcher's exploratory question was: How effective is participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality, this approach was appropriate for this study. This is because the researcher needed to obtain a deeper understanding of the circumstances that have a positive or negative impact on the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the municipality.

Qualitative researchers are more interested in the social environment and links between social phenomena than in their individual characteristics (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). On this note, comprehending the perspectives of ward committee members and municipal officials on the issue under investigation could have been impossible without first understanding their distinctive social context. Furthermore, the interpretations of their experiences that are at the heart of this study could not be understood in isolation from their situations. More precisely, when their interconnections with the phenomenon of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation are explored in the context of their practices and experiences, the significance they attach to their experiences might be revealed.

Qualitative researchers are particularly interested in human subjectivity and the meaning that individuals place on their experiences. Given that reality, as defined by qualitative researchers, is neither objective nor singular, but rather socially constructed within a specific social context, this approach added impetus to this study (Cropley, 20121). This is because the researcher sought to explore the participants' multiple and varied experiences, as well as their interpretations of those experiences, in relation to the phenomenon under investigation.

Qualitative researchers are sensitive to the researcher's subjective role. Qualitative researchers see themselves as an integral part of the social process they're studying, therefore they make note of their own actions and reactions to it (Cropley, 2021). In this vein, the researcher utilised appropriate methods for eliciting information from participants. They included respecting and refraining from judging their viewpoints as correct or incorrect. The participants were also allowed ample time to share their perspectives while pertinent probing questions were asked when more information was required.

3.3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research approach

The qualitative research approach, as the preferred approach that guided the formulation of this study, offers a variety of benefits for qualitative researchers. However, this approach is not without criticism in the highly polarised areas of research, in which quantitative and mixed-methods research approaches are also favoured. There is a consensus among researchers that all of these research approaches have advantages and disadvantages (De Vaus, 2014; Flick, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). More precisely, they all have pros and cons. This section provides a tabular representation of the advantages and disadvantages of the qualitative research approach.

Table 3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of the qualitative research approach

Advantages of the qualitative research approach
<p>It has the potential to generate thick, thorough descriptions of participants' experiences and perspectives, as well as meaningful interpretations of their social behaviour in specific contexts (Ritchie <i>et al.</i>, 2014).</p> <p>It aid researchers in gaining a holistic understanding of human experiences in various circumstances (interpretivism).</p> <p>Because the basis of information in this approach is the meaning of different experiences, it has the ability to facilitate an understanding of different people's views, meanings, and experiences (Rahman, 2017).</p> <p>It allows the researcher to learn about the participants' inner thoughts and feelings, as well as how meanings are shaped by and within culture.</p> <p>The researchers collaborate and conjointly engage with the participants during data gathering and as a result data acquisition becomes more subjective and thorough (Daniel, 2016).</p> <p>The interactive character of the researcher-participant interaction asserted in this approach allows for the construction and reconstruction of different realities in which intricate issues can be easily understood (Flick, 2014).</p>
Disadvantages of the qualitative research approach
<p>Qualitative approach is been critiqued for focusing too much on meanings and experiences and not enough on contextual variables that influence the event/s and meanings sought (Flick, 2014).</p> <p>Qualitative research findings are criticised for their low reliability since they are based on no consistent and verifiable data.</p> <p>The smaller sizes used in qualitative research studies make the results less generalisable to the entire research population because qualitative researchers perceive the social world as dynamic rather than static (De Vaus, 2014).</p> <p>This approach's emphasis of the multidimensionality of the social world, with results dependent on researchers' explanations, has been criticised for being difficult and impossible</p>

to simplify insights and observations. Also, if the same study can be repeated in a different context, the same results cannot be obtained by another researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Data analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is considered to be more time-consuming, tedious and complex (Cropley, 2021).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Various authors define and explain research design in different ways. It conjures up several connotations within the realms of qualitative research inquiries. Williams (2015) points out that a research design explains the researchers' decisions about how to proceed with the planned study. It refers to a master plan that outlines the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing data. Maxwell (2013) agrees that a research design represents a researcher's decisions and rationale about who to study (i.e., units of analysis), when to study them, and where to study them. Despite the lack of a single, unified definition of a research design, there is a consensus among researchers that a good research design must enable all study components to work in harmony in order to enable a successful conduct of a study (Williams, 2015). On that note, a research design must carefully and thoughtfully define the structure within which a research inquiry is conducted, including, among other things, decisions about appropriate epistemological reasoning, methods of data collection and analysis. Therefore, without a well-thought-out research design, a research study may lack focus and coordination, which is detrimental to the overall research process including its effective conduct.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher chose exploratory, descriptive, and contextual research designs. The nature of these research designs is explained below, including their relevance and applicability in this study.

Exploratory research design

Exploratory research design is used to study a less understood phenomenon. It is suitable for researchers conducting more detailed studies where deep, rich descriptions of the phenomenon under study are sought (Creswell, 2014). Exploratory studies are conducted when a new area or topic is being investigated. This research design asks about the circumstances in a specific social or natural context in order to determine people's experiences, the meaning of their actions and to gain detailed insights into their concerns (Jongbo, 2014). It enables the gathering of more unstructured information by addressing a problematic area and responding to new concerns. In this study, the researcher explored the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the case of a local municipality. This research design was suitable for use in this study as there is little contextual empirical

evidence on how the local municipality implements participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation and how it is implemented effectively. To achieve this goal, in-depth information was sought by exploring the participants' experiences and practices. In addition, the researcher had to enter their natural environment (i.e., workplace) to become familiar with the dynamics of their particular circumstances and engage with them in the interviews as a form of collaborative effort to share their experiences, interpretations of their actions and to document the meanings of it.

Descriptive research design

The goal of descriptive research is to document and report on the phenomenon being explored without delving into the cause and effect relationship (Rovai, Barker & Ponton, 2014). It allows a researcher to characterise and correctly record the demographic patterns that distinguish the units of analysis under study from the rest. Its primary goal is to create a detailed picture of the phenomenon under investigation (Asenahabi, 2019). This includes descriptive facts about the social setting and relationships that are intrinsically tied to the phenomenon under investigation (Williams, 2015). Its application in this study allowed the researcher to accurately describe the participants' practices in terms of participatory governance implementation in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, the factual demographic descriptions of the participants helped paint a picture of who is involved in its implementation in the local municipality, as well as what their experiences have been and how they have influenced its effectiveness. Tables and graphs, for example, were used to describe the demographic data.

Contextual research design

Contextual research design requires the researcher to understand the phenomenon being studied and its meaning within its inherent and proximate contextual environment (Duda, Warburton & Black, 2020). In using this research design, the researcher focuses on describing and understanding what is being studied in its real-life or natural environments as they exist (Williams, 2015). More specifically, contextual research is conducted in an uncontrolled real-world environment free from manipulation (Flick, 2014). Therefore, the contextual research design was used in this study. The unique context used for the purposes of this study was the local community setting, where participatory governance in household monitoring and evaluation is implemented. The researcher had to understand the participants' experiences and practices in the full context in order to truly claim to understand them. Therefore, this study was contextual as it was important for the researcher to examine the context in which ward committee members and municipal officials understand participatory governance and how it is implemented in a local municipality. Additionally, the study had to be conducted in the context of the local

municipality as the research site, conducting semi-structured interviews with members of the ward committee and purposively selected sample of municipal officials.

3.5 TARGETTED STUDY POPULATION

Population involves the set of elements the researcher is interested to study. According to Tille (2020) these elements from which the study findings are to be extrapolated may include people, events or institutions. Thus, population can be defined as the entire group of individuals possessing the characteristics the researcher aims to study (Etikan & Bala, 2017). There are two strands of population namely the target and accessible population. The target population encompasses the set of individuals who meet the sampling criteria as predetermined by the researcher considering the purpose for which the study is intended (Sharma, 2017). On the other hand, the accessible population are potential participants who meet the inclusion criteria and can be accessed by the researcher during the empirical study (Ngwenya & Ramukumba, 2017). The target population of this study was composed as follows:

- All municipal officials in the Corporate Services (Public Participation Unit), Municipal Manager's Office (Integrated Development Plan) and LEDT Department in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.
- All ward committee members involved in the Public Participation Unit, Monitoring and Evaluation and LEDT Department in the local municipality.

3.6 SAMPLING

No research inquiry can be formulated to study everyone and everything in a single occasion. An appropriate selection of the study elements has to be executed by the researcher. This endeavour should be exercised in consideration of the purposes of the study (Knight & Cross, 2012), availability of potential participants willing to voluntarily participate (Creswell, 2013), sufficiency of time and fiscal resources (Tille, 2020) deemed essential by the researcher carrying out the study. These series of activities are the centrepiece of sampling. According to Sharma (2017) sampling denotes a procedure the researcher utilise to systematically identify, decide on and select set of elements to study. That is, the researcher needs to decide on who should be involved (population), who meet the specifically determined criteria for inclusion (sample), how many of the participants should be selected (sample size), what sampling design and methods to use and which research site/s are suitable to undertake the research inquiry.

3.6.1 Sample selection

Sample selection represents the researcher decisions regarding the criteria and number of participants to be included in the study as well as the methods to be used for their selection. By sample, the researcher refers to a finite part of the accessible population whose attributes and/or properties are investigated to obtain data necessary to finding answers to the key research question (Rahi, 2017). Sharma (2017) agrees that a sample involves a smaller set of participants chosen from the larger population and having the potential to yield informatively reliable responses pertaining to the issues being inquired. The inclusion of the phrase “smaller” in Sharma’s conceptualisation of a sample should be considered as referring mostly to qualitative samples. However, the sample for this study included the following:

Municipal officials involved in the Public Participation unit (PPU), Local Economic Development and Transformation department (LEDT) and Integrated Development Plan Unit (IDPU) in the local municipality.

Ward committee members involved in public participation and monitoring and evaluation processes in the local municipality.

3.6.1.1 Inclusion criteria for municipal officials

To be successful included in this study, municipal officials had to meet the following criteria:

They had to be in a permanent employment.

They had to have more than two years of practice experience in their respective roles.

Attested written informed consent was required for voluntary participation.

3.6.1.2 Exclusion criteria for municipal officials

The researcher elected to exclude municipal officials from participating in this study who met the following exclusion criteria:

Municipal officials, who are newly hired, have had less than a year of practice experience or are on internships.

Those who had not completed and attested a written informed consent form at the beginning of the empirical study.

3.6.1.3 Inclusion criteria for ward committee members

With regard to the members of the ward committees, the following criteria were applied for successful inclusion:

They had to have a sufficient self-certified understanding of the workings of the Public Participation Unit, the Integrated Development Unit and the LEDT department in the local community.

They had to be democratically elected by the residents in order to serve on the committees.

They must have served on ward committees for more than a year.

They had to voluntarily sign the written consent form to participate in the study.

3.6.1.4 Exclusion criteria for ward committee members

Ward committee members with the following characteristics were excluded from participation in this study:

Those recently sworn in to serve on the ward committees.

Those who were considered not actively serving on the ward committees by not attending the prescribed number of meetings required by their constituencies.

Those who have not completed and confirmed the written consent form at the beginning of the data collection process and not available.

Essentially, the researcher chose to include ward committee members and municipal officials who had more than a year and two years of experience in their respective roles for several reasons: Because they had the required practice experience, the researcher expected that they were not only familiar with the dynamics of circumstances in the local municipality, but also had the opportunity to exchange ideas with one another on the issues under study. In addition, a brief telephonic background check was conducted on each selected ward committee member to determine their level of engagement (i.e., active or passive) in local municipality's activities and attendance at the required number of meetings with their constituencies.

3.6.2 Sampling method

Etikan and Bala (2017) define a sampling method as a technique that the researcher uses to select the appropriate sample from which data will be extracted. Several sampling techniques are available which can be used by researchers namely probability and non-probability sampling techniques. At the crux of probability sampling techniques is the idea that all potential participants should have an equal chance of being selected for participation in the empirical study. In contrast, non-probability sampling techniques do not bid on any chance of potential participants having an equal chance of being selected (Sharma, 2017). In this study, the researcher used two non-probability sampling methods (i.e., purposive and snowball sampling methods) to select and locate additional potential participants.

3.6.2.1 Application of the purposive sampling method

In selecting a purposive sample of potential participants, the researcher, with his prior knowledge of municipal organisational structure, was able to determine that municipal officials in the Public Participation, Integrated Development and LEDT departments/units were suitable potential participants. This is consistent with the claims of Etikan and Bala (2017) that the purposive sampling method relies heavily on the researcher's judgment to select units of analysis with expected richness and relevance of information they possess relative to the issues the researcher is studying. In other words, it remained the researcher's prerogative to select, through purposive sampling, potential participants from whom much can be learned about issues related to the purpose of the study. The merit and/or advantages (positive aspects of the method) of using purposive sampling method are that the researcher is able to use their knowledge of the subjects under study to select information-rich cases (Patton, 2015).

3.6.2.2 Application of the snowball sampling method

Regarding the use of the snowball sampling method, the researcher had personally asked the interviewed participants at the beginning of the data collection process to help in finding other potential participants who have sufficient and additional relevant knowledge about the researched issues. This is because Sharma (2017) claims that in snowball sampling (often referred to as chain referral sampling), participants who are already involved in the actual study refer the researcher to some of their acquaintances who may have more information on the issues being explored. The third municipal official interviewed suggested the name of the Member of Municipal Council (MMC) for Finance and contact was sought and proffered. Therefore, as Patton (2015) suggests, the snowball sampling method is useful in situations where some potential participants are not known to the researcher. Similarly, Etikan and Bala (2017) see the benefits of snowball sampling as offering the researcher the opportunity to collect additional relevant data from potential participants that may have been omitted. However, when the researcher telephoned the suggested municipal official, it was determined by him that he was unable to participate in the study due to urgent work-related matters that explained his unavailability.

3.6.3 Sample size

Deciding on the appropriate sample size warrants a careful consideration of the study purposes, the type of data required and nature of the inquiry (i.e. whether the researcher is interested in generalising the findings or not). However, there is no universal agreement on what constitute an adequate sample size for a research inquiry (Rahi, 2017). What exist are simply guidelines on what is considered a sufficient sample in different research approaches. In qualitative inquiries, Sharma (2017) posits that ten to fifteen participants are considered sufficient while Kumar (2014) regards ten participants as adequate. In the same vein, Maree (2020) indicates that the number of participants in quantitative studies should

be large enough to allow generalisation of the findings. Ngwenya and Ramukumba (2017) concur that quantitative studies should include more participants as they are interested in measuring association and generalising findings which should be preceded by selecting samples that are representative of the whole.

In this study, the researcher had been able through the use of purposive and snowball sampling methods to locate and include ten ward committee members and eight municipal officials attached to the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality. Given the flexibility that using qualitative research approach proffered to the researcher as no fixed guidelines exist on sample sizes, the process of participants selection was continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Theoretical saturation refers to the situation when the researcher decide to stop or cease from sampling participants relevant to the study as no new categories of data are likely emerge (Aquinis & Solarino, 2019).

3.7 STUDY AREA

The researcher identified and selected the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality to be the focal point for this study.

Figure 3.1 Map showing the geographic location of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality



Source: Google-Maps

Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality can be seen on the top-right of the map of the Sekhukhune District Municipality bearing the name Fetakgomo-Greater Tubatse Local Municipality. The name has been changed as a result of the municipality's disestablishment and merger with Fetakgomo Local Municipality to establish a new municipality named Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality (FTLM). This merger took place on the 3rd of August 2016. This is a Category B municipality established in terms of the provisions of the Notice in terms of section 12 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998: Disestablishment of Existing Municipalities and Establishment of New Municipalities dated 22 July 2016 (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2016).

The municipality share borders with Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality in the Sekhukhune District, Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality in the Capricorn District Municipality and Thabachweu Local Municipality in the Ehlanzeni District Municipality of the Mpumalanga Province and Maruleng Local Municipality in Mopani District. The municipality area of jurisdiction covers approximately 4550.001105 square kilometres in size. The area is known as the middelveld because it is situated between the Highveld and Lowveld regions.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

Korstjens and Moser (2018) defined data collection as a process the researcher follows to gather data essential to find answers to the research problem. For Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2018) this process of data collection entails collecting information from participants on variable of interests to answer specified research questions, test hypotheses and assess outcomes. These definitions, though they attempt to define what data collection involves, they are limited in scope. This so because Creswell (2013) regards data collection to constitute a series of steps that include selecting the research site (specific location), deciding on the type of data required, the methods to be used to gather the data and procedures for gathering the required data.

Primary data collected

For the purposes of this study, the researcher collected primary data from the participants, guided by the formulated research questions central to this study. Primary data includes the first-hand data in the form of responses by participants in the form of verbal or narrative accounts of their experiences related to the phenomenon under study (Guest, Emily & Mitchell, 2013). This is because qualitative data takes the form of words and sentences as it mainly consists of the participants' statements about their experiences and perspectives. This type of data is mostly non-statistical in nature and is critical to answering the how and why questions (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). Thus, the collected qualitative data was gathered from primary data sources that included municipal officials and ward committee members. This means that the researcher was interested in the data that came from first-hand experiences of the participants. Similarly, Bergin (2018) claims that primary data includes unpublished raw data shared and/or collected from the participants. Moreover, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) posit, primary data tends to be more reliable and authentic as it has not been altered by anyone else compared to secondary data which is susceptible to distortion, bias and manipulation.

3.8.1 Data collection methods

Data collection methods are techniques researchers use to physically collected the empirical data (Maree, 2020). The selection of an appropriate method of data collection should be premised upon or

influenced by the type of data the researcher needs to obtain (Bergin, 2018). Thus, data collection methods cannot be selected in vacuum but should be aligned with the chosen research design and be guided by the main research question/s (Groenland & Dana, 2020). That is, the researcher should ascertain beforehand the extent to which the intended data collection method matches or fits properly with the research design. A number of data collection methods are available for use by researcher and include, *inter alia*, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups discussions, documentation reviews and observation. In this study, the researcher utilised a combination of face-to-face semi-structured interviews and open-ended qualitative questionnaires to collect the required data from the participants.

3.8.1.1 Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

Interviews denote in-person interactional encounters between the researcher and participant wherein the researcher poses questions that should be responded to by the participant (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2019). It is referred to as an interpersonal encounter because the researcher is present during data gathering and plays a role in guiding the data collection process. With face-to-face semi-structured interviews, however, the researcher made use of a semi-structured interview guide to ensure that relevant questions were asked and responded to in order to prevent the interview from going astray (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). The semi-structured interview guide, as Groenland and Dana (2020) point out, is a document prepared by the researcher before data collection constituting of open-ended questions eliciting participants' responses.

In this study, the researcher used a self-constructed semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended qualitative questions to collect data from the selected municipal officials. The researcher did not use a protocol that was already in use anywhere by adapting or adopting it for the purposes of this study. The benefit of using a self-constructed interview guide was to ensure that it addressed the specific questions that are the focus of this study. In addition, using the semi-structured interview guide for data collection was relevant and beneficial for this study because the researcher had access to the data immediately after the interviews (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). Clarity and further explanations were provided with ease because of the researcher's presence. Furthermore, the interviews remained a good way of engaging with the participants in their own setting which further enhanced the comprehension of specific circumstances regarding their context (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2019).

3.8.1.2 Open-ended qualitative questionnaire

Open-ended qualitative questionnaires were also used to collect data from ward committee members. While this data collection method is rarely used by qualitative researchers, it was significant for use in this study as the researcher faced time constraints and other logistical difficulties (i.e., participants'

geographic distance) in conducting face-to-face interviews. Although these open-ended qualitative questionnaires were compiled in English, participants encountered no difficulty in understanding the questions due to the simple, non-technical language used in their compilation. According to Eckerdel and Hagstrom (2016), an open-ended qualitative questionnaire denotes a guide consisting of a series of open-ended questions that are provided by the researcher for participants to complete at their own time and place without the researcher's presence. In this study, the distributed open-ended qualitative questionnaires were completed by the participants in a one week's time and were relatively cheaper to manage. Participants were reached over long geographic distances (Sharma, 2017). This is because it did not require constant travel and interactions with participants other than distributing for collection at the municipal manager's office and subsequently collecting the completed questionnaire. In addition, the use of open-ended qualitative questionnaires in this study resulted in a higher response rate because participants had adequate time to reflect on their responses and answer the questions as they saw fit without the researcher's presence (Barrett & Twycross, 2018).

3.8.2 Pilot (testing) study

Eldridge, Lancaster, Campbell, Thabane, Hopewell, Coleman and Bond (2016) regard pilot testing as an indispensable process in a research inquiry and equate it to a feasibility study. According to Eldridge *et al.* (2016) pilot testing refers to a process whereby the researcher undertakes a small-scale empirical study to assess the practicality and/or doability of the data collection process and efficacy of the data collection protocols. According to Fraser, Fahlman, Arscott and Guillot (2018) pilot testing refers to a miniature version of the actual data collection process in which the researcher ascertains the extent to which the process will proceed without impediments. That is, the researcher conducts the pilot tests in order to establish whether the data collection process has been planned for appropriately with no prospects of failure as well as the suitability of the data gathering protocols to yield relevant responses. To be more precise, the rationale for the pilot test is to mitigate against and reduce any chance/s of the data collection process being impeded by either the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection or the inadequacy of the interview protocols (Doody & Doody, 2015).

In this study, the researcher conducted a pre-test and pilot test of the interview protocols which was subsequently followed by a revision of some of the questions contained in the interview protocols. This endeavour was essential as the researcher made use of self-developed interview protocols. A pre-test of the interview protocols was conducted with one of the researcher's fellow postgraduate candidate. Additionally, the pilot test was undertaken with one of the actual potential participant who was not included in the actual empirical study. The rationale for the pre-test and pilot test of the interview protocols was as follows: The feedback obtained from both these processes enabled the researcher to determine the

relevance and appropriateness of the wording and order of questions entailed (Doody & Doody, 2015); scope of the protocol contents and commensurability of the questions with the allotted time for the interviews as well as sensitivity of the questions posed (Fraser *et al.*, 2018).

3.8.3 Data collection procedure

Data collection procedure involves a series of interrelated steps the researcher undertakes to have access to the research participants (Creswell, 2013). The researcher in this study followed the following procedure to locate potential participants and conduct the data collection:

Telephone and email addresses of the municipal manager were obtained from the local municipality website. A telephone contact was then made with the municipal manager, followed by a personal visit to his office to discuss the nature and details of the planned study. This effort was undertaken because the municipal manager is an essential gatekeeper in the municipality. Patton (2015) considers gatekeepers as those authoritative figures in an organisation (institution) who can grant the researcher access to research participants.

After successful face-to-face communication with the municipal manager, the researcher requested and received his written permission to meet with and contact the potential participants to obtain their written informed consent to participate in the study.

On that note, the identified potential participants (i.e., municipal officials) were personally provided by the researcher at their respective offices with detailed information sheets explaining the reasons for the study and written informed consent forms. The purpose of the information sheets provided to potential participants was to help them make informed decisions about their participation in the study.

On the other hand, the list of ward committee members was obtained from the municipal manager's office. With the assistance of the personal assistant of the municipal manager, ward committee members who met the pre-established inclusion criteria were identified.

The subsequent process of contacting identified members of the ward committees for enrolment in this study was conducted by the researcher with their prior consent obtained through the municipal manager's secretariat. These efforts have been essential to comply with the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.

Thereafter, information sheets and consent forms for the contacted members of the ward committees who have expressed their willingness and given an initial verbal commitment to participate were left in the municipal manager's office, to be collected, filled out and sent to the researcher via his email address.

The return of the completed and attested consent forms from all participants enabled the researcher to schedule interview sessions with all the municipal officials and distribute the open-ended qualitative questionnaire to the ward committee meetings through their electronic mail addresses.

The interviews were conducted with the municipal officials at their workplaces (i.e. offices) during the day. More specifically, during the hours between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on separately specified days. Similarly, the distributed open-ended qualitative questionnaires were completed on different days by the ward committee members and received by the researcher via email.

Essentially, the researcher adhered to the risk adjustment strategies (measures) to prevent the spread of Covid-19 during the personal interviews. These measures included wearing face masks, hand sanitising and maintaining social distancing. The interviews began with general ice-breaking talk before moving on to substantive issues to reassure participants and allay their unknown fears of participating in the study. Importantly, the interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants to prevent loss or under-recording of the resulting research data. In several cases where consent to the audio recording was denied by the participants, the researcher resorted to note-taking.

3.8.4 Research data management

Research data is an indispensable asset to a research inquiry. It is through access to the research data captured in the interview protocols, researcher's field notes and verbatim transcripts that analysis and preparation for research reports are possible. Thus, the researcher has to make certain that the research data is appropriately recorded, collected, organised, preserved and managed (Dunie, 2017). Hence, a good research data is that which is properly documented (recorded) and stored for ease of access. This process of managing research data as it involves a series of activities should be undertaken with merit to enhance the integrity of the study, permit future scrutiny and evaluation as well as reproducibility (Chigwada, Chiparausha & Kasiroori, 2017). Without proper management of research data, analysis may be erroneous, susceptible to distortions and conclusions drawn may fail scrutiny. Therefore, the researcher should have a clearly defined research data management plan that outlines the manner in which the data gathered or generated will be handled, protected from unauthorised access and preserved during and after the study has been completed (Claire, Cruz, Papadopoulou, Savage, Teperek, Wang, Witkowska & Yeomans, 2019).

The research data generated in this study, including the completed interview protocols, transcripts, field notes and signed consent forms, were neatly filed using physical folders to ensure ease of retrieval (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Thereafter, the records were stored in a secure lock and key cabin at the

researcher's place of work. Data sets were created, categorised and classified according to specific themes and saved in the researcher's Dropbox for ease of identification and access. Furthermore, the records containing the processed data as well as drafts of the research reports were stored on the researcher's laptop (personal computer) which is password protected. In order to prevent the possible loss of the research data due to unreliability of the technological gadgets used in this regard, duplicates of the draft research reports were made and backed up on the researcher's external computer (hard) drive. The purpose for implementing these measures was to protect the research data from unauthorised access and to preserve it for verification and to provide an audit trail (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is concerned with deciding how the collected data will be analysed to support the study objectives. It denotes a process of converting (i.e. transforming) data, which by itself has no meaning, into information in order to develop knowledge (Humble & Radina, 2019). Therefore, data analysis seeks to establish coherence and logic to the mass of data that the researcher collects. Its rationale, as Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), and Humble and Radina (2019) posit, is to trace the basic structure and essence of the phenomenon under study in order to describe, articulate and understand the data through methodical summarisation and interpretation. Several data analysis methods, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods data analysis and their respective techniques, are available for use in a research inquiry. However, the researcher chose to use qualitative data analysis method in this study. More specifically, the researcher chose Tesch's eight-step descriptive data analysis technique as described by Creswell (2009).

The decision to utilise qualitative data analysis was informed by the qualitative research design that guided the formulation of this study. The primary data collected through the interviews and researcher notes were textual (i.e. not numerical or statistical) in nature and analysed by using qualitative methods. In this context, the decision to use Tesch's eight-step descriptive analysis method enabled the presentation of the collected data in a narrative form. In addition, a qualitative analysis of the data was carried out iteratively with the data collection. This is because qualitative data analysis is an on-going, emerging, and non-linear process of systematically reducing and organising data into smaller units to reveal their properties, elements, and structure (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

The eight steps of Tesch's descriptive data analysis were applied in this study as follows:

The interview transcripts were read in full by the researcher to understand their content as a whole, and the themes that arose were written down.

Similarly, each of the interview transcripts was carefully read by the researcher while the meanings contained in the participants' responses were noted in the margins of the transcripts. The researcher decided to read the transcripts to create a list of all identified themes while grouping and classifying them into columns labelled major, unique, and leftover themes.

The compiled list of all grouped and classified themes was re-examined by the researcher to abbreviate them as codes while writing the codes next to the applicable part of the text. The coding scheme was reviewed as new themes emerged.

Following that, the researcher tried to determine the most accurate wording for the themes while categorising them with intent to establish a connection between the categories to identify shared linkages.

Each category's abbreviation was decided in the end, and it was jotted down in alphabetical order.

Thereafter, a preliminary analysis of the data was carried out, with data from each category being noted down.

Finally, the researcher documented the available data with the intention of analysing the two sets of data (ward committee members and municipal officials) separately.

In addition, two interview transcripts from each dataset were presented to a neutral candidate for the Master of Development (MDev) at University of Limpopo, who is the workplace supervisor of the researcher, to review and correlate the findings with the analysed data. The neutral master's candidate findings in this regard were correlated with the researcher's findings, reaching consensus on their adequacy and correlation with the data analysed.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

A research inquiry, be it quantitative, qualitative or mixed method, has to demonstrate rigor in its processes in order to engender confidence and trust in the subsequent findings. Understood to be concerned with a study's integrity and competence (Gill & Gill, 2020); quality of coherence and meaningful results (Frauenberger, Good, Fitzpatrick & Iversen, 2015); methodological soundness, thoroughness, precision and stringency (Eisenhardt, Graebner & Sonenshein, 2016) and appropriateness and accuracy of findings (Nowell & Albrecht, 2018), rigor should be embedded within the entire research process and not be regarded as crucial for post-hoc evaluation of the utility of the research study. Without rigor, as Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002) posit, research will lose its value, become insignificant and fictional. Thus, the researcher has to ensure that the research process espoused within the study undertaken is trustworthy.

According to Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings and de Eyto (2018) trustworthiness refers to a criterion for evaluating the significance, relevance, impact and utility of a research study. Cypress (2017:254) regards trustworthiness as “the quality, authenticity and truthfulness of findings of qualitative research.” These distinct definitions of trustworthiness attest to the dearth of and/or limited consensus on the relevance of use of the concepts trustworthiness, validity and reliability within the positivist and naturalist paradigms respectively (Maher *et al.*, 2018; Noble & Smith, 2015; Morse *et al.*, 2002; Shenton, 2004). However, Golafshani (2003) suggests that the divergent perspectives on the use of the concepts trustworthiness, validity and reliability should be set aside as they all represent the standards for differentiating a good research study from the bad.

Based on the foregoing proposition, the researcher adopted the criteria for ensuring trustworthiness devised by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and provides both an illustration and explication of the strategies adopted to ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity. The rationale for inclusion of these strategies for ensuring rigor is to enable the knowledge user/s to assess the credibility of the in-built research process and the subsequent findings of the study.

Table 3.4 Strategies for establishing trustworthiness

Epistemological standards	Strategies	How the strategies will be applied in this study
Truth value (Internal validity)	Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accurate and truthful description of participants accounts ▪ Triangulation ▪ Peers debriefing and review ▪ Member reflections (not member checking)
Consistency (Reliability)	Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear and transparent description of the research process ▪ Provision of decision trail ▪ Research supervisor and colleague to review the study findings
Applicability (Generalisability)	Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of purposive and snowball samples ▪ Data saturation ▪ Detail description of the research context/site

<p>Neutrality (Reliability)</p>	<p>Confirmability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thorough and/or detailed description of the research context ▪ Researcher's reflexivity and bracketing ▪ Audit trail ▪ Researcher's self-awareness
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3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility is associated with the truth value and equated to internal validity (Cypress, 2017). The purpose of the truth value is to establish the relevance and connectedness (accuracy) of the obtained findings. It seeks, as Noble and Smith (2015) posit, to ascertain the truthfulness, credibility and believability of the study findings. Thus, the researcher should be able to establish confidence in the findings, especially with regard to the participants and the context wherein the study was conducted (Morse *et al.*, 2002).

In order to ensure the truth value in this study, the interview protocols the researcher developed were pilot tested with one postgraduate candidate and one potential participant who did not participate in the empirical study. Peer debriefing was also undertaken through discussions with the research supervisor for three-fold reasons: First, to allow for questioning and critique of the research process and activities undertaken. Second, to permit for the review of the data analysed. Third, to enable the cross-checking of the data obtained against the conclusions drawn. Further, two participants were selected and provided with a summary of the synthesised data to reflect on and ascertain the accuracy with which it represents their expressed perspectives. In addition, the transcripts and the researcher's field notes were triangulated with pertinent literature to determine the degree of believability.

3.10.2 Dependability

Dependability is closely related to the idea of reliability (Eisenhardt *et al.*, 2016). Central to dependability is the possibility of an independent researcher reaching similar or comparable findings obtained by the researcher in this study. Thus, Forero, Nahadi, De Costa, Mohsin, Fitzgerald, Gison, McCarthy and Aboagye-Sarfo (2018) point out that dependability is concerned about the replicability of the study in the same or similar context with the use of the same or similar participants. Per Maher *et al.* (2018) dependability seeks to establish whether the study findings can be repeated if the study was undertaken with the same participants and within the same setting. Gill and Gill (2020) indicate that though participants' experiences or perspectives do not remain stagnant but changes all the time, establishing dependability requires that the researcher provides a detailed exposition of the decision trail and the research context. This is to enable another researcher to ascertain the replicability of the study.

In this regard, the researcher ensured dependability by requesting a postgraduate candidate attached to the MDev programme at the University of Limpopo to critique and validate the identified themes and descriptors. The purpose of this process was to enable the researcher and candidate consulted reach consensus on the relevance of the themes against the transcribed material. Moreover, the researcher kept records of the decisions made with regard to the research process. This is crucial to foster transparency (Aquinis & Solarino, 2018) and to enable another researcher understand the purposes and decisions for which certain methods were preferred and used in comparison to others.

3.10.3 Confirmability

Smith and McGannon (2018) indicate that confirmability is concerned about the plausibility of the study findings especially the extent to which the findings are actual representation of the participants views. Morse (2015) points out that confirmability is achieved when the findings are as objective as possible. Objectivity, in this regard, implies that the findings should not be premised upon the researcher's biasness, prejudice, motives, perspectives or even distortions (Thomas, 2017).

In this study, confirmability was achieved in the following ways: The researcher was engaged in continuous self-introspect and reflected on his subjective viewpoints (self-awareness) to ensure that they do not creep into the data. Complete reduction from the research process was not possible given the researcher being the central research instrument (Aquinis & Solarino, 2019). However, Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Pollki, Utriainen and Kyngas (2014) suggest that the researcher should continuously engage peers in meaningful discussions of the study findings to permit for assessment of possible biasness. On this note, the researcher immersed himself with the data obtained thorough iterative analysis to further gain an in-depth understanding of the contextual meanings entailed in the data. Also, the research process was thoroughly explained to detail how the study findings were obtained and conclusions drawn.

3.10.4 Transferability

Frauenberger *et al.* (2015) states that a determination of the degree to which the study findings are applicable or can be transferred to a different setting is at the core of transferability. In other words, the researcher should ascertain the extent to which the obtained findings can be generalised either to other context or groups possessing similar characteristics as the participants studied (Forero *et al.*, 2018). In order to enable a determination of transferability, Noble and Smith (2015) propose that thick and detailed descriptions of the study context be provided including the sampling techniques and criteria utilised to select the participants.

In this study, transferability was enhanced by use of a purposive sample to recruit participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon being investigated. The use of the snowball sample was crucial

also to recruit additional participants to offer information that may increase the scope and enhance the relevance of the collected data (Cypress, 2017). Thus, pertinent participants were continuously recruited and data collected to an extent that the data gathered become saturated, complete and replicate. Further, the audio-taped interviews were accurately transcribed for future examination.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter proffered the rationale and choice of the qualitative research approach and the exploratory, descriptive, and contextual research designs used by the researcher. It discussed the characteristics of these selected research approaches and designs, rationale for their selection and relevance of their applicability in the study. The chapter also provided discussions on constructionism, interpretivism, and hermeneutics as paradigmatic perspectives that outlined the researcher's worldview in relation to the phenomenon under study, and the description and explanation of their suitability in this study. Ethical considerations which were pertinent to safeguarding and protecting the interests and welfare of the participants forming part of this study were explicated. Included in this chapter was also a delineation of the strategies the researcher applied to establish the trustworthiness of the research process and subsequent findings accrued from this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the rationale and justification for the research design and methodology utilised in this study. In this chapter, the researcher presents an analysis and interpretation of the qualitative primary data collected from the participants by use of the semi-structured interview guide and open-ended qualitative questionnaires. More precisely, the research data was obtained from a purposive and snowball sample of ten ward committee members and eight municipal officials who met the inclusion criteria and informatively consented to participate in this study.

Table 4.1 Summary of the data analysis and presentation

Summary of the data analysis and presentation process	
Features	Description
Participants	8 Municipal Officials <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 3 participants from the Public Participation Unit➤ 2 participants from the Municipal Manager's Office (IDP)➤ 3 participants from the LEDT Department 10 Ward Committee Members
Data collection instruments	Face-to-face semi-structured interviews Open-ended qualitative questionnaire
Type of data collected	Primary data (First-hand textual data)
Data presentation format	Narrative and discussion format

The response rate pertaining to the completed and returned open-ended qualitative questionnaires was 90% with only one distributed qualitative questionnaire not returned. The open-ended questions comprised in the qualitative questionnaire delved into participants' understanding of participatory governance and its significance, purposes of budgetary monitoring and evaluation and perspectives regarding its implementation in the local municipality. Of the eight semi-structured interviews conducted with the municipal officials in their offices and lasted between 25 and 30 minutes, only four consented to be audio-taped which were subsequently transcribed by the researcher. Thus, the researcher resorted to note-taking during the other four interviews.

Owing to the qualitative nature of the data gathered, it was analysed using the Tesch's eight-step descriptive analysis technique and it is presented in this chapter in a narrative form. The focus of the research data obtained was premised on the objectives of this study. The study had three objectives: First, to assess municipal officials and ward committee members' understanding of participatory governance and its relevance in the context of municipal governance. Second, to examine the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as applicable in the local municipality, and third, to develop an in-depth understanding of the benefits and barriers associated with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation; the effectiveness of information dissemination and accessibility in relation to the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation; and the level of ICT use to improve the timely dissemination and accessibility of information.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY RESULTS

The presentation of the study results is based on the analysis of the two sets of research data obtained from ward committee members through the use of open-ended qualitative questionnaires and from municipal officials through the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews. In presenting the study results, the term "participant" was used throughout to refer to both the ward committee members who completed the open-ended qualitative questionnaires and the municipal officials interviewed. The use of the concept of participant(s) in this study is relevant given Hackett's (2016) claim that the concept represents individuals who have informatively consented to participate in a research study and with whom the researcher has established trust in order to provide answers to the research questions explored.

4.2.1 DATA RECEIVED FROM THE WARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS

This section presents the analysed and interpreted data derived from the ward committee members. The primary analysed and interpreted data presented in this section were obtained from the participants through the use of open-ended qualitative questionnaires.

4.2.1.1 RESULTS FROM THE OPEN-ENDED QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRES

A total of eleven open-ended qualitative questionnaires were distributed for the participants to complete at their own convenient time and in the absence of the researcher. However, only ten of the eleven administered qualitative questionnaires were completed and returned thereby resulting in a response rate of 90%. The constructions of the questions contained in the open-ended qualitative questionnaires were written with no use of professional and technical jargons for ease of comprehension by the participants. Further, the open-ended qualitative questionnaires were subjected to pilot testing (feasibility study) in order to determine the appropriateness of the questions contained therein and changes pertaining to the few double-barrel questions were effected prior to the actual empirical study. The results accrued from

an analysis of the participants responses delineated in the open-ended qualitative questionnaires are explicated below in accordance with the themes and sub-themes that emerged.

Table 4.2 Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Understanding of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active residents engagement ▪ Reciprocal consultation ▪ Cooperative partnership ▪ Co-governance
2. The significance of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empowers residents towards active citizenship ▪ Promotes responsiveness and transparency ▪ Strengthens answerability from officials ▪ Prevents self-aggrandisement over public good ▪ Enhances oversight on executive decisions
3. Sources of knowledge regarding participatory governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political engagements ▪ In-service trainings ▪ Continuous professional development ▪ Professional training
4. Scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the local municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informs decisions on expenditure ▪ Discourages wastage and misappropriation of funds ▪ Enables tracking of performance against set targets ▪ Strengthens consequence management
5. Perspectives on implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inadequately capacitated personnel ▪ Dearth of appropriate practice guidelines ▪ Delayed willingness ▪ Culture of unaccountability ▪ Inactive citizenry

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paucity of uniform understanding of participatory governance among officials ▪ Selective openness (transparency)
6. Efficacy of information disseminated for access by the residents on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited accessibility of the information ▪ Language the information is presented ▪ Relevance of the information

Theme 1: Participants understanding of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance

The researcher explored the participants' understanding of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance. Analysis of the participants' responses revealed a wealth of conceptualisations and meanings associated with the concept of participatory governance. The researcher discovered that participants viewed participatory governance as synonymous with active resident engagement, mutual consultation, collaborative partnership and co-governance. This diversity of understanding of what participatory governance is and means was to be expected. This is because the available evidence in the literature suggests that a plethora of interpretations are often given when questions arise about what participatory governance entails (Gustafson & Hertting, 2016). Although there was no consensus on the participants' responses as to what participatory governance actually is, a considerable understanding of what it entails in municipal governance was evident among the participants.

Participants pointed out that the municipality should not treat residents as their clients, as they serve residents in their primary function. This means that the residents are to be regarded as co-owners of the municipal institution. According to these participants, it is of central importance for the municipality to ensure that residents are actively involved in its affairs. Similarly, among the ways that the municipality should take to ensure participatory governance, as participants alluded, are improving mutual relationships and continuous consultations with residents. The reasons given by the participants are that residents yearn for opportunities and spaces to share their voice, especially when decisions on municipal governance issues are being discussed and decided. This effort, expected of the local municipality, is important to deepen participatory governance, particularly when addressing issues related to municipal governance. Given the participants' responses, it is clear that they are aware of the key tenets of participatory governance even though they have not been able to articulate and agree on what participatory governance actually is. In particular, they demonstrated an understanding of what participatory governance entails in practice, particularly in the context of municipal governance.

In this context, participants expressed their understanding of participatory governance as follows:

“The primary role of municipalities is to serve their residents...to succeed in this endeavour, they should not treat residents as their clients but should regard them as co-owners of the institutions...and the residents must become actively engaged in its [municipalities] affairs.” [PA]

“There should be reciprocal relationship and consultations between the municipality and its residents...particularly when it comes to issues of governance...so participatory governance to me equate to a process of reciprocal consultation between [municipal] officials and the residents.” [PC]

“In my opinion, there is no difference between participatory governance and co-governance...I mean, at the centre of each of them is the need for residents to be involved in the control of the municipality.” [PF]

“The communities being serviced by the municipality should have a voice in how they are being lead...I guess this is like a requirement to make sure that people are given a share voice in the matters of municipal governance.” [PJ]

Theme 2: The significance of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance

The researcher inquired about the perspectives of the participants on the importance of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance. Based on the participants' responses on their understanding of the importance of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance, several dominant sub-themes emerged. Participants credited the importance of participatory governance in empowering residents for active citizenship; promote responsiveness and transparency; strengthening the accountability of municipal officials; preventing self-aggrandisement over the common good and improving control over executive decision-making.

Sub-Theme 1: Empowers residents for active citizenship

Participants identified the need to deepen participatory governance in municipal governance as crucial to ensure residents are empowered for active citizenship. According to the participants, empowerment is inextricably linked to participatory governance. As few participants noted, there is no participatory governance unless it is undertaken with the aim of empowering residents. In this sense, it was common in the participants' responses that the responsibility for participatory governance being embedded in the local municipality is given to the municipality itself. In other words, participants credited themselves with only a minor role in ensuring that the municipality takes significant steps to ensure residents are engaged in its governance affairs. This finding is corroborated by participants' assertions that the prospects of influencing the governance of the municipality will not be realised unless residents are provided with adequate information to understand the inner workings of the institution.

While it is undisputed that the municipality has a legal obligation within the meaning of Section 195(1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 not only to respond to the needs of the residents but also to promote their involvement in municipality affairs, residents need to take responsibility for their own empowerment. This means that they should not wait for the municipality to offer them the information they need in their own time, but rather take the lead in claiming the information they need as critical to their own empowerment (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014).

These efforts, if implemented by residents, will give effect to the provisions of the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2002. More specifically, the law gives residents the constitutional right to access any information held by the municipality or state, if necessary for the exercise of their rights. Some participants remarked:

“Unless our people are equipped with the know-how’s of municipal governance, their attempts to sway decisions in their best interests will be in vain.” [PB]

“In as much as they (municipality) must explore pathways to empower people, the ball is in their hands to demand information that is relevant to ensuring their participation in the municipal governance.” [PG]

Sub-Theme 2: Promotes responsiveness and transparency

The veil of secrecy in decision-making was lamented by the majority of participants. According to the participants, municipal officials tend to perceive decision-making as their sole prerogative. In this situation, residents are considered to have a minimal role to play. Although participants acknowledged that the exclusion of residents should be challenged in decision-making, they were unable to identify the pathways used to change the status quo. In terms of participant accounts, such exclusion is more common when making decisions about how and where municipal funds should be used. Therefore, the majority of participants agreed that transparency would be achieved if residents were allowed to participate and be involved in decisions, particularly in deciding which service projects to implement and finance. Of concern, however, are participants assertions that their calls for residents inclusion are often met with mixed reactions. That is, when attempts are made to find answers as to how and where funds have been used, concrete and satisfactory answers are not provided. As indicated by several participants, they are often referred to the annual reports of the municipality, which some participants criticised for being incomprehensible. This implies, as the participants suggested, that the ideal is to be able to contact them personally and not be directed to read the annual reports, which some residents cannot understand due to their illiteracy.

In this vein, the usefulness of participatory governance, as indicated, lies in its ability to improve responsiveness and transparency on the part of the municipality. However, if left to chance or not implemented to residents' expectations and satisfaction, trust between them and the municipality will decrease. These results are consistent with the arguments of Mbithi, Ndambuki, and Juma (2019) that failure by municipalities to find ideal solutions to engage with residents and engage them in critical governance matters can undermine trust. The consequences of this, these researchers suggest, include reduced confidence in officials' decisions and lead to conflict. This situation leads to protests and in most cases to violence and destruction of municipality property. The reason suggested by participants is that the municipality and its officials are failing in their obligation to serve openly and recognise that residents need to be heard and contribute to the proper functioning of the municipality. In examining the patterns and practices of transparency in municipalities, Kraha and Mertens (2020) also found that public distrust and secrecy in governance increases the likelihood of disagreements and conflicts.

More specifically, several participants noted:

"In most times, they [municipal officials] forget that their duty is to serve...become comfortable in their positions when people need and deserve to be heard and communicated with..." [PE]

"Should there have been no tendencies of veils of secrecy in how certain decisions are being taken within the municipal governance structures...our people would have no need to rise up to protest." [PI]

Sub-Theme 3: Strengthens answerability from the officials

In their responses, participants seemed at a loss as to who the municipality is accountable to. However, participants noted that the municipality is accountable to those served and funding the operations of the municipality through taxes and levies. In this regard, the common dissatisfaction expressed by participants is the limited answerability of the municipality for residents' demands. Bemoaning and characterising their dissatisfaction with the municipality being unanswerable to them, participants identified the prevailing perception of being the law unto themselves as troubling. The lack of answerability in questions and answers, participants said, suggests that municipal officials are only interested in serving their own interests and not the public.

These perspectives, as put forward by the participants, were coupled with lamented dearth of accountability. The arguments have led participants to suggest that encouraging resident participation in decision-making as a central element of participatory governance remains the best antidote to stemming the growing culture of un-answerability. As Pretorius (2017) argues, accountability and how it should ideally be exercised and implemented is contextual. This means that not all individuals have a similar

view of how accountability should be demonstrated. The arguments of Pretorius (2017) find support in this study because although participants yearn for accountability, they could not say exactly how they expect it to be exercised and how they will rate their satisfaction with implementation.

However, dissatisfaction with the level of accountability exercised in the municipality was expressed as follows:

“...across the many municipalities, officials are increasingly attempting to become a law unto themselves...they often do as they wish, disregarding their obligations to be answerable to the residents who placed them into office.” [PG]

“If the residents knew that the officials they trusted are acting willy-nilly with the responsibilities given to them...surely answers would have to be sought.” [PB]

Sub-Theme 4: Prevents self-aggrandisement over public good

Self-aggrandisement seemed to be a recurring expression of dissatisfaction among participants. In its original form, participants associated self-aggrandisement with self-serving behaviours that undermine the public good when personal interests prevail. In this sense, active citizenship and participation in decision-making processes within the municipality are seen as essential deterrents. As participants alluded to, the ineffective implementation of participatory governance, particularly in the context of municipal governance, can be a precursor to laxity among officials. It is argued that this situation, if left unattended by residents, can lead to the emergence of self-serving tendencies among officials and significantly undermine the priority that should be given to the interests of the public.

The researcher found that the perceived subversion of public interests, particularly in proffering information about decisions on the use of municipality's funds, stems from the many widely reported instances of unlawful misappropriation of municipality's funds. In other words, in cases where financial misappropriation is reported in the municipality and is not followed by widely demonstrated corrective action consistent with the rule of law, residents' perceptions of self-aggrandisement by officials' remains widespread and unchanged. This means that where misconduct is reported, investigated and proven, consequence management must be applied. In return, trust in the decision-making processes of the municipality can be strengthened. These circumstances demonstrated, as indicated by the participants, their belief in the link between participatory governance and the prevention of self-serving practices that run counter to the ideals of safeguarding the public interests in all decisions within municipal governance structures.

In this case, the participant expressed these views by stating:

“Residents should be eager to follow up...must yearn to know what is being done by those tasked to put their [people’s] interests first before theirs...these can deter wrong-doings.” [PD]

“...left to govern on their own [municipal officials], they may be more than likely to subvert the interests of the residents...an undesirable situation which should be prevented through the residents becoming watchdogs.” [PA]

Sub-Theme 5: Enhances oversight on executive decisions

The importance of participatory governance when properly implemented in the context of municipal governance has been attributed to improving control over executive decisions. Few participants identified absolute and uncontrolled power as corrupting. The implication for these arguments is that executive decisions, particularly in the context of municipal governance, must be constantly monitored. Failure to exercise adequate oversight, participants said, can provide undoubted latitude for officials to make decisions and respond to decisions that, by their nature, do little to improve the lot and common good of residents' well-being. Therefore, the main way to prevent municipal officials from perceiving themselves as having absolute power in the decision-making process, which participants felt to be somewhat detrimental, is to ensure that local residents are meaningfully engaged when decisions are being made. In other words, as suggested by other participants, local residents involved in the decision-making processes become watchdogs exercising external controls and checks.

However, the participants themselves acknowledged that it was not feasible to involve all residents in decision-making processes. Reasons given in this regard include the issues of seeking a collectively approved decision, which is time-consuming and detrimental to speeding up decision-making. In this regard, participants acknowledged that as members of the ward committees, they play an important role in promoting the interests of residents in their interactions with the municipality. However, several participants indicated that the effectiveness of their role in this regard is hampered by the same vested interests they seek to curb from officials. One participant remarked:

“The challenge we face is that we are conflicted ourselves...how do you challenge decisions that counter the interest of the residents when you are been given ‘something’ to sway the decision? [PJ]

The participants' arguments in this regard are that while participatory governance should encompass the involvement of all residents, it is simply impossible to ensure their full involvement in decision-making processes. However, those tasked with representing their interests, in this case the members of the ward

committees; appear to be performing their duties inadequately. That is, they are more likely, as admitted by participants, to undermine the interests of the very same people they have been elected to represent. This is evident when they are influenced and, as one participant indicated, have worked to influence decisions away from promoting the common good towards promoting specific personal interests.

Therefore, improved oversight of executive decisions can be realised if due priority can be given to participatory governance in municipal governance, as indicated by one participant:

“The more the residents are aware of the power they possess to undo the wrongs done by some officials the less likely they [officials] will continue to act on the contrary.” [PF]

According to participants' responses, the importance of participatory governance is to ensure that proper oversight is exercised over the decisions made or made by executive officials that are central to governance matters. This view is further corroborated by participants who cited participatory governance as a key mechanism to achieve compliance and ensure external controls in the form of knowledgeable residents able to monitor the behaviours and conduct of officials without exception. These findings are supported by the arguments put forward by Moyo (2016) that weaknesses in exercising adequate oversight over the conduct of municipal officials in decision-making processes can undermine transparency and accountability and give rise to self-serving tendencies. The ideal alternative, as Gumede (2020) suggests, is for residents to actively participate in decision-making processes to hold municipal officials accountable for their actions.

Theme 3: Participants sources of knowledge towards participatory governance

After the participants' understanding of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance was probed, their sources of knowledge on this topic were queried. What mattered was how they began to be acquainted with participatory governance as a practice in municipal governance. This is due to the expectation that the participants in this context, the members of the ward committees, must have appropriate sufficient competence to carry out the tasks assigned to them (Mbhele, 2017). When asked about the source of their knowledge on participatory governance, the participants had to make their choice from the options offered by the researcher.

Table 4.3 Participants source of knowledge towards participatory governance

Source of knowledge	Number (N=10)
Educated guess	0
Continuous professional development (CPD)	2

In-service training	3
Supervision	0
Professional/academic training	1
Political engagements	4
Total	10

The results from the participants' responses regarding the source of their knowledge on participatory governance showed that the majority of the participants (N=4) acquired their knowledge through political engagement. Another significant number of participants (N=3) indicated that they acquired their knowledge of the essence of participatory governance through engagements in in-service training. Only three participants acquired their knowledge of the nature and utility of participatory governance in relation to municipal governance both through technical/academic training and through continuous professional development. None of the participants relied on educated guesswork as a source for their acquired knowledge of participatory governance and its relevance to municipal governance.

Knowledge that provides participants with an understanding of participatory governance and its integral practices must be based on, or acquired through, credible sources of knowledge. This is particularly important given the dearth of adequate understanding and paucity of universal definitions and meanings associated with the practice of participatory governance. This explains Naidoo and Ramphal's (2018) arguments that stakeholders and officials involved in municipal governance must have adequate knowledge and skills to perform their duties with merit. However, the nature of their knowledge must be based on reliable sources of knowledge that do not include political engagement. Therefore, it can be argued that participants' knowledge of the nature of participatory governance must be based on authoritative sources of knowledge such as policy frameworks and other relevant official documents designed to offer relevant, accurate and reliable information (Dikotla, 2019). The unavailability of opportunities such as accredited training for participants in this regard was identified as a key challenge to their obtaining relevant and up-to-date information on how participatory governance is understood and needs to be carried out in the context of municipal governance.

Theme 4: Scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the local municipality

Budgetary monitoring and evaluation is essential in determining the effectiveness and efficiency with which funds allocated within local municipalities are used. The use of allocated funds should be within the law and informed by decisions about the service delivery needs of the residents being served. More

specifically, fiscal allocations to municipalities must not serve any purpose other than to improve the well-being of residents by funding planned service delivery projects. In doing so, the researcher explored participants' understanding of the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the local municipality. Exploring participants' perspectives was crucial given that participatory governance, which requires residents to be meaningfully engaged in municipality affairs, is implemented in the context of budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

The data analysed showed that participants perceived budgetary monitoring and evaluation as purportedly multi-purpose. These purposes include making informed spending decisions; prevention of waste and misappropriation of funds; enable performance tracking against set goals and strengthen consequence management. However, there seems to be mixed reactions on the extent to which budgetary monitoring and evaluation is being implemented effectively in the local municipality.

Sub-Theme 1: Informs decisions on expenditure

The realisation that municipal spending decisions must be influenced by the outcomes of budgetary monitoring and evaluation was cited by almost all participants. There was widespread awareness among participants that the municipality receives its fair (equitable) share from national government, including other forms of grants and transfers, on an annual and ad hoc basis. The fiscal allocations, as pointed out by the participants, are intended to be used and spent on the core business of the municipality, which is the delivery and improvement of service delivery. The understanding that participants have in this context, as ward committee members, of knowing the essence of budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes and their outcome influencing spending decisions is critical for several reasons. Such understanding was cited as especially important if residents are to challenge decisions about what informs the municipality to invest or forgo in certain projects versus others. It is precisely the members of the ward committees as the liaisons between the municipality and residents that can play a key role in informing residents of the decisions that result from the budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes.

In this context, providing residents with accurate and credible information can mitigate the perception of municipal officials, as likely to make decisions for themselves about which projects to fund or not, willy-nilly. Appropriately captured by one of the participants who noted:

“Budgetary monitoring and evaluation serves no any other purpose than to inform decisions on the local municipality’s expenditure...that is where to spend their budgets and not...” [PE]

Sub-Theme 2: Discourages wastage and misappropriation of funds

The inseparable link between waste and misappropriation of municipal funds was cited by participants as the main reason for the importance of budgetary monitoring and the evaluation process. Participants stressed that when budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes are properly implemented, instances of waste and misappropriation of funds can be identified in a timely manner and remedial action can be taken. For example, one participant remarked:

“Budgetary monitoring and evaluation is a helpful process for determining whether the funds given to the municipality did what they were planned and allocated for...which is important to tell if the funds have been wasted or misappropriate.” [PF]

In their own accounts, participants characterised waste in this context as the unsanctioned use of funds for unintended or unplanned purposes. On the other hand, they pointed out that misappropriation of funds constitutes an unlawful and unauthorised use of funds. Although participants recognised that identifying and dealing with these wrongful acts related to the use of public funds remains a challenge for residents, the municipality needs to be transparent and allow access to budgetary monitoring and evaluation outcomes, as requested by residents. Nonetheless, participants noted that access to such information remains a challenge as municipal officials are not always willing to make the information easily accessible. As one participant said:

“...the more there is wrong doing; the less likely access to the information will be made easily accessible...would anyone want their unlawful shenanigans to be uncovered?” [PA]

In this vein, the participant inadvertently acknowledges that while budgetary monitoring and evaluation is crucial to prevent misuse of funds, the effectiveness of the process depends on those tasked with ensuring its effective implementation. Properly stated, insofar as the perceived and actual benefits of the process and its outcomes are acknowledged, the effectiveness of its implementation depends on the competency and willingness of the municipal officials. However, participants also argued that while competence is not always the area of concern, the lack of willingness to complete the budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes, including the implementation of their outcomes, leaves much to be desired. As another participant said:

“...the presence of and realisation of the benefits these processes can offer does not always translate into their successful implementation...they just bend them to suit their need as and when they want...” [PE]

Sub-Theme 3: Enables tracking of performance against set targets

According to several participants deviations from implementation of set targets without provision of accurate and sensible reasons is troubling. The participants bemoaned in this regard the effectiveness with which budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes are being conducted. The dearth of appropriate mechanism for ensuring its efficacious implementation is cited as thwarting the actualisation of its intent. For instance, one participant recorder that:

“Without relevant mechanisms and processes of budgetary monitoring and evaluation being permitted to be undertaken...all of us [the residents] will not know how to benchmark and let alone to judge their performance in relation to their targets.” [PG]

The argument is that in the absence of an adequate mechanism to facilitate the implementation of budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes with merit, no performance tracking against set targets can be achieved. The participants' claims in this regard that not only is the identification and implementation of mechanisms ideal, but the issues of benchmarking must also be considered. This is because benchmarking is crucial to determine how other local municipal agencies implement budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes and what practices are good fits for improving its effectiveness. This explains the participants' arguments that, to their knowledge, such benchmarking has not been a widely reported phenomenon in the local municipality. Another participant concurred by stating that:

“...the processes [of budgetary monitoring and evaluation] are in themselves desirable and relevant for the benefit of the municipality and residents...but remember it is these officials who often frustrate this process and distort its outcomes too.” [PJ]

According to these participants, the process and outcomes of budgetary monitoring and evaluation are critical to measuring the municipality's performance against the set goals. However, the ways in which the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process is conducted and managed by municipal officials, can either enhance or hinder its effectiveness and impact. That is, the effectiveness of budgetary monitoring and evaluation process is determined by the extent to which information about the outcomes is available to residents. On that note, Nxumalo (2016) proposes that the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process should serve as a feedback loop to inform residents and build trust in the legitimacy of the process and its subsequent decisions by engaging the voices of local residents.

Sub-Theme 4: Strengthens consequence management

Participants expressed a desire for municipal officials to do what the residents they serve expect of them. In their own accounts, participants indicated that when officials perform their assigned duties with merit and in accordance with the law governing their conduct, the trust deficit that exists between them and

residents is mitigated. However, the researcher found that the majority of participants expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of action to hold officials accountable for breaching mandates. According to the participants, the outcomes of budgetary monitoring and evaluation are rarely implemented, especially when it comes to an unlawful omission or commission. This situation, some participants noted, further exacerbates feelings of disrespect and disregard for the accountability demanded by residents. One participant stated that:

“Expecting that they (municipal officials) will act on the outcomes of the process especially if they are not placing them or their work in a good light is like waiting for something that will never happen...” [PI]

The problem is the view taken by the participants that not much is being done within the municipality to engage in the process of using the outcomes of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. This is because the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process must help identify problem areas in budget use and take timely remedial action. Of major concern, as expressed by participants, is the municipal council's failure to proactively demonstrate a desire for instituting remedial actions against officials contravening and subverting the efficacious implementation of budgetary monitoring and evaluation outcomes. Failure or disguised reluctance to evaluate positively or negatively the outcomes of the process and to take remedial action undermines the purpose that budgetary monitoring and evaluation is intended to serve in promoting good municipal governance. The participants' accounts were recorded in this regard as follows:

“They [municipal officials] should constantly inform the residents on how and why they decide(d) to spend money on certain projects and not others...so that there could be consequences for failure to be accountable and responsible when dealing with the monies that do not belong to them.” [PB]

“Residents always demand answers in black and white, but they are not always forthcoming...if budgetary monitoring and evaluation was undertaken effectively and its outcomes shared widely across the community structures, any deviations by the officials will ensure that consequence management is put in place to undo the wrongs.” [PD]

Theme 5: Perspectives on implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality

Participants' perspectives on the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality were solicited by the researcher. A plethora of responses were provided, showing mixed reactions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the degree and effectiveness of its implementation. In particular, the general attitude expressed by the majority of

participants indicated a lower level of satisfaction with how participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation is implemented in the local municipality. Against this background, the participants gave several reasons to explain their dissatisfaction. The reasons proffered were categorised as associated with inadequately capacitated personnel, dearth of appropriate practice guidelines, delayed willingness, culture of unaccountability, inactive citizenry, paucity of uniform understanding of participatory governance among officials and selective openness (transparency).

Sub-Theme 1: Inadequately capacitated personnel

According to participants, residents have a broad assumption that municipal officials have appropriate skill and experience in their various responsibilities. Despite not having substantial evidence to back up their claims about the municipality's lower levels of skilled staff, the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the officials' competence levels. The inability of municipal officials responsible for ensuring effective implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, according to the participants, is the biggest impediment. In this regard, these personnel's incapacity to carry out their obligations meticulously stems from a lack of required skills and competence. The majority of participants agreed that no reasonable and sufficient progress will be made unless there are coordinated efforts and initiatives to retrain officials. The purpose for the trainings, as participants indicated, must be to provide the officials with current and up-to-date information on how participatory governance should be fostered in the context of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. These participants aptly expressed themselves as follows:

“...unless they [municipal officials] engage in the processes of re-skilling on these matters to correctly understanding what needs to be done and which is the best way to do so...then we must just forget about expecting them to do a good job.” [PA]

“Some of them have been there [with the local municipality] for many years...they are just using their experience, and this is very dangerous because the tools [ways of doing things] they used and succeeded ten years ago may not be relevant for today's situation.” [PG]

Participants emphasise the importance of reskilling municipal officials in order for them to be inventive in carrying out their duties, particularly in ensuring that participatory governance is properly implemented in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. They did, however, raise the issue of a lack of necessary funds and the cost of recruiting officials with appropriate competence to assist the local municipality as another impediment. These participants mentioned the following:

“In as much as it is necessary for the municipality to reskill its officials...it is also costly given the financial situation the municipality is in now...I mean we [ward committee members] know that they are in a huge debt.” [PD]

“The municipality has been relying on consultants to train them [municipal officials] on many occasions but the results ‘dololo’ (translated: the outcomes for the trainings are not been seen).” [PF]

The importance of reskilling or retraining municipal officials is recognised and emphasised based on the responses provided by these participants. The rationale, in particular, is to make participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation more effective. However, given the fiscal condition in which the local municipality finds itself, it appears that the costs of retraining the officials are not the only issue. The participants are concerned about the municipal official's failure to put the lessons learned into effect. Nevertheless, Zandamela and Mphahlele (2021) argue that municipalities have received large sums of public money dedicated to improving skills in municipal administration. However, it is of great concern that limited positive outcomes have not been achieved given the financial investments made for capacity building of municipal official competency levels (Khambule & Mtapuri, 2018; Kamara, Leonard & Haines, 2017).

Sub-Theme 2: Dearth of appropriate practice guidelines

Participants indicated that the efficiency with which municipal officials are able to improve the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation depends on the availability of appropriate tools. While the concept ‘tools’ was considered broad, they highlighted guidelines on how officials are expected to carry out their obligations in this regard are needed. For participants, the lack of best practice guidance can hamper efforts to ensure that participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation is implemented effectively. More precisely, the participants believe that guidelines can assist officials in incorporating the expected recommendations into their activities. However, some of the participants stated that simply having practice guidelines available may not translate into actual use. A situation that could sabotage efforts to enhance meaningful resident engagement in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes.

Therefore, the lack of practice guidelines obstructs the effective implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality. The participants’ argument is that this represents a sad scenario in which municipal officials are expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities while being denied access to practice guidelines that would help them plan and implement their mandates. As a result, the participants emphasised this point by saying:

“...not much can be done by these officials [municipal] because they do not have relevant guidelines to guide them on this matter [implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation] ...can you really build a house without a plan...” [PC]

“Similar to many government institutions, municipalities have so many good planning documents, but they still fail to put them into practice...imagine when no planning documents on ensuring effective residents engagement are not available...what would you expect?” [PJ]

Sub-Theme 3: Delayed willingness

Deriving from the participants' previous arguments, the effective implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation depends on the competence and willingness of officials. However, as indicated by the participants, the lack of innovativeness and initiative on the part of municipal officials contributes to the delayed willingness to integrate participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. According to these participants, municipal officials need to constantly respond proactively and not reactively to the demands of local communities and their residents. This means they must be constantly in touch with residents' needs and find the best strategies to meet the needs expressed. This is particularly important in the context of ensuring meaningful engagement of residents in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes and determining the outcomes of such processes and the resulting impacts. With this in mind, these participants reported the following:

“...they are always reactive to situations. They [municipal officials] should be willing to be innovative because if they aren't then how could they best ensure that participatory governance is given appropriate effect?” [PB]

“In engaging residents in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, they are purely reluctant because they do not know how accurately to do it and they are afraid of failure...” [PI]

Sub-Theme 4: Culture of unaccountability

Insufficient accountability, or lack of accountability, was reported by participants as hampering efforts to involve residents in budget monitoring and evaluation processes. Participants blamed the lack of responsiveness and failure to implement participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation on a culture of unaccountability. According to these participants, there should be a broad recognition in all municipal governance structures that the reason for their existence is to serve and respond to the needs and demands of local residents. Thus, these participants noted the following:

“They [municipal officials] are obliged to involve the residents in all significant matters because they are there to serve the public...they should give residents explanations for their actions which affect their [residents] wellbeing.” [PA]

“...they tend to consider our people as passive as compared to their political masters...I mean, they should regard the residents as important because they are holding these positions on behalf of them [residents] and not themselves.” [PJ]

Sub-Theme 5: Inactive citizenry

The recognition that residents do not need to wait for the municipalities to invite them to get involved in their affairs but should demand opportunities and spaces for engagement was a dominant expression among participants. This endeavour, as indicated by the majority of participants, is an essential part of active citizenship. Therefore, inactive citizenship was cited by participants as a negative impact on the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality. According to participants, residents' lowered awareness of the need to be actively involved in the affairs of the local municipality remains a major factor preventing meaningful engagement from being realised. In this regard, few participants indicated that the implementation of participatory governance, particularly in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, will not be realised without the willingness of residents to engage with the municipality, whether invited or not. Hence, they aptly mentioned that:

“...they [residents] should exhibit the necessary interests in what needs to be done and what the municipality is doing...who has to monitor them if not the local residents?” [PC]

“It is both [the residents and municipality] their responsibility to find appropriate ways to engage with each other in matters involving the outcomes of budgetary monitoring and evaluation...” [PE]

“It cannot be disputed that Fetakgomo [municipality] has the obligation as an institution meant to serve the residents to act and judge themselves...but they [residents] too should yearn to know and be involved in these processes.” [PH]

Sub-Theme 6: Paucity of uniform understanding of participatory governance among officials

Participants had different levels of education or literacy skills. Furthermore, it could have been expected that their understanding of participatory governance could evoke different meanings. Likewise, their active engagement with the municipality in their role as ward committee members may not have led to the same understanding of the phenomenon under study. Against this background, the lack of common

understanding among municipal officials about what participatory governance entails has been cited as a need for attention. In this case, participants claimed that in the absence of a common understanding, municipal officials may not know how it should ideally be carried out and what best practice mechanisms should be put in place to assess levels of satisfaction with its implementation, particularly in determination of the results and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Participants suggest that the adequacy of implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation should be based on a shared understanding of its nature and benefits. With that in mind, these participants responded by saying:

“Different views should be welcomed but not so different that they [municipal officials] end up not knowing what should be done and how...” [PB]

“...are there clear mechanisms on how residents should be involved in this process? They need to have them or otherwise it will be more than difficult to determine any successes or failure and to rectify the situation when the need arise.” [PF]

A shared understanding of what needs to be done to integrate resident engagement into budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes is critical and required. While different views on how to carry out these activities effectively should be welcomed, a common understanding is essential to focus their efforts to achieve the pre-established and agreed goals and vision in this regard. It can thus be concluded from the participants' assertion that some form of guidance is needed. In the absence of guidelines as standards to determine the adequacy of their implementation efforts, there will either be no or limited positive results in improving resident engagement in the processes.

Sub-Theme 7: Selective openness (transparency)

According to participants, selective openness (transparency) thwarts the effective implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Selective openness is characterised by participants as a situation in which officials decide, on their own terms, which information is published and made available, and which is withheld and likely hidden from access. The participants claim that the efforts to implement participatory governance are being thwarted to undermine the realisation of its benefits. The perceived benefits lie in the active engagement of residents in decision-making processes to ensure transparency. For the participants, the intentional efforts to undermine those efforts are malicious in nature. As the participants alluded to, they are intended to serve certain interests by paralysing the effectiveness of the systems and their processes. To counteract this existing situation and counteract the malicious intentions, the participants indicated the following:

“...there should not be inconsistencies in the regularity of the residents engagements...it appears that in matters that are considered potentially threatening to the status quo, the residents voices are neither given a chance to be heard nor solicited.” [PG]

“They are not always willing to put forward the information on the public eye for scrutiny...then, how should we know about what is being done?” [PI]

Consistent with participants' preferences, the municipality must endeavour to involve residents in all important matters related to determining the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. That means they should refrain from being selective about what residents can and cannot know. This is especially true because selective openness does little to allay residents' fears that officials are acting in their own interests rather than the best interests of the community. This implies that where transparency can be established as a whole, the already existing lack of trust between residents and the municipality could be reduced enormously.

Theme 6: Efficacy of information dissemination and accessibility on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

Access to information about the outcomes and impact of the budgetary monitoring and evaluation, as required, needs to be honoured by the municipality as participants stressed. The questioning of the researcher about their perspectives with regard to the effectiveness of the dissemination and accessibility revealed varying levels of satisfaction among the participants. Among the responses offered by the participants, the effectiveness of accessing and disseminating the required information seems to be negatively affected by the language in which the information is presented and the timeliness of the information dissemination. These findings are further contextualised below.

Sub-Theme 1: Limited accessibility of the information

Participants mentioned that information about the results and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation does not reach the vast majority of local residents. According to the participants, the people who can access the information are those who have a vested material interest in the procurement processes within the municipality and live in its close proximity. In this regard, one participant mentioned the following:

“...not all of our people are able to lay their hands on this information. It is hard for them because if they are not given the information, they are also send from pillar to post when they visit the municipality seeking answers but the people involved in procurement processes have this information, why?” [PI]

Given the response of participants, access to information about the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is not a privilege intended for only a select few with material interests in local municipality affairs (Sutcliffe & Bannister, 2020). It remains a legally protected right, the protection and upkeep of which places responsibility on municipal officials to put in place appropriate mechanisms for its proper dissemination to the residents they serve (Moyo, 2016). A local municipality's failure to develop an appropriate information strategy, which is critical to facilitating appropriate information delivery to the broader community, constitutes a violation of the law that should be promptly remedied (Moloto, Mkhomazi & Worku, 2020).

Sub-Theme 2: Language the information is presented

The main challenge identified by participants was the English language, which is used to present information intended for local residents, the majority of whom are said to be unable to read and write that language. One participant stated that:

“Most of these people [residents] cannot read and write English...why is it that the information is not given in their language?”

Under section 11(3) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, a municipality has the legislative power to develop and enact language policies appropriate for communication with and dissemination of information to residents. Considering the multilingual communities within Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality, the option of hiring multilingual liaison interpreters may prove useful to ensure functional multilingualism in providing information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. However, as participants have mentioned, this can pose challenges given the financial constraints the local municipality is in. Be that as it may, it can be crucial for the municipality to consider viable options to ensure that the information provided and requested by residents on the results and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is understandable and usable. This is important given the literacy level of the majority of residents served by the local municipality.

Sub-Theme 3: Timeliness of the information

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the timeliness of information on the results and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as provided by the local municipality. The timeliness reported by participants is related to whether the information is provided at the right time when it is requested to ensure its usability. In this regard, participants complained about the timeliness by which information is provided by the local municipality. In their responses, participants claimed that the information intended for residents to access is seldom provided in the timely manner expected. They noted that the delays in

providing the information appeared to be aimed at thwarting any possible response from local residents. This was cited by participants as commonly observed in cases where malevolence is likely to be spotted and discovered by residents. To justify their answers, these participants indicated that:

“They [municipal officials] simply delay the provision of the information intentionally...they give it when we have forgotten and moved on with other pressing and essential matters.” [PD]

“The reason the information is not forthcoming at the time we need it is because they know that information is power...if residents can have access to it and find that distortions and fraud is prevalent they will definitely require answers and the situation may turn badly as we have seen in the past years with protest.” [PG]

4.2.2 DATA RECEIVED FROM THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

The researcher conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews with eight municipal officials from the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality (FTLM). The data presented in this section delve into the participants' responses to the semi-structured interview questions asked regarding the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality. Because the research data collected was qualitative in nature, the participants' responses are presented in the form of a narrative and discussion.

4.2.2.1 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

The researcher was able, through the process of data analysis, to identify the themes that emerged from the responses given by the municipal officials interviewed. In this sense, a total of seven themes emerged from the analysed data, which are described below. Furthermore, the emerged themes are based on the three-fold objectives that this study sought to achieve, as described previously.

Theme 1: Participants understanding of participatory governance both as a concept and practice

The researcher needed to know how participants understood participatory governance as both a concept and practice. This endeavour was necessary in order to gain insight into their overall perceptions (ideas) and knowledge (awareness) of participatory governance. The findings revealed that the participants had different ideas about what participatory governance entails. These various perspectives on participatory governance revealed that it is frequently linked to a variety of other concepts. These concepts include consultation, empowerment and collective participation of interested people in municipal affairs. In particular, the participants proved unable to articulate succinctly the meaning they ascribe to participatory governance when compared to relating it to what the researcher views to be the important components

of participatory governance. These components include the empowerment and collective participation of individuals in municipal governance issues. Some participants stated in this context that:

“Participatory governance is inextricably linked to empowerment of the local masses to be able to participate in matters relating to how individuals within governance structures conduct themselves. Though I am not certain what it actually means literally, I guess it is no different to peoples’ empowerment.” [PD2]

“There are many ways through which to call participatory governance but for me it is the same as consultation because at its core is the intent to involve the people in decisions being made by authorities.” [PD6]

Despite the different perceptions (ideas) that participants had regarding participatory governance, there seemed to be minimal consensus on how participatory governance should be carried out in practice. According to the participants, the practice of participatory governance ensures that people with significant interests and competence in governance issues are invited to participate if and when their participation makes the process more fruitful. In this respect, the prerequisite for exercising participatory governance should only be people who have the necessary expertise and a substantive interest in governance matters. In addition, their participation should be subject to the approval of an authority, depending on the extent to which their invited participation is deemed valuable. The participants stated that:

“In as much as I consider it best to involve everyone in decision making as part of instituting participatory governance, how would you go about doing it? I mean you cannot involve all individuals because some do not have what it takes to either benefit from the process or add any significant values.” [PD1]

“[...] participation in governance issues is no small feat. I mean not only should the person participating have some level of skill but should understand how the process works. If they have neither of these competences, then their involvement would be meaningless. So, it is better for someone to decide who participate and who do not.” [PD7]

The perspectives expressed by the participants in this regard are inherently problematic. The arguments that engagement in municipal governance matters should be limited to a segment of residents with the requisite skills are futile. Similarly, the suggestion that engagement should be allowed for those more likely to add value to budgetary monitoring and evaluation process is also worrying. This is because Section 195(1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 does not contain a provision to exempt certain individuals from participation in the affairs of the municipality. Participation in municipality’s governance affairs is not a privilege that officials can arbitrarily extend to residents. It is a legally protected right that the municipality has an obligation to respect. The arguments put forward for

selective inclusion and participation of residents in municipal governance matters therefore violate the law. In addition, they reflect a dereliction of duty on the part of municipal officials in carrying out their duties. After probing into the participants' understanding of participatory governance as both a concept and practice, the researcher discovered that they learned through experience, expert consultation, and independent learning. As a result, the participants' responses were as follows:

“New developments are emerging in our practice...so we always have to familiarise ourselves with these developments or we will perish or be left behind the times in executing our assigned responsibilities.”

[PD3]

“...the mandate that has been bestowed upon us as the servants of the people in this local municipality is to learn, adapt and improve in how we do our work.” **[PD4]**

“Experience is not enough to be relied upon solely...it needs to be complimented with recent knowledge because changes in how we govern our people is the primary challenge we face constantly.” **[PD8]**

It is important to recognise that there is no single reliable or authoritative source of information. Any relevant knowledge on participatory governance, on the other hand, must be based on reliable information sources. The essence of the researcher's argument appears to be recognised by the participants in a comparable way. For example, by recognising that they cannot rely solely on experience to understand what and how participatory governance needs to be implemented, they acknowledged the essence of continuous learning. More specifically, they are aware of the need to keep abreast of new developments in their area of expertise and practice in order to learn how best to carry out their assigned responsibilities. These responsibilities include ensuring that participatory governance is fully integrated into their local municipality's affairs.

Theme 2: Participants accounts on the scope of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality (FTLM)

The researcher elicited responses from participants on the extent of budgetary monitoring and evaluation implemented in the local municipality. The results showed that the implementation of budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the municipality aims to promote transparency and accountability in the use of public funds entrusted to the municipality. As highlighted by participants, the implementation of budgetary monitoring and evaluation serves as an oversight exercise. Its rationale is to enforce compliance with efficient, effective and economical use of public funds. Hence, it also serves to promote

compliance with sanctioned public fund use legislations and procedures. To which the participants replied:

“Within this municipality, budgetary monitoring and evaluation is undertaken to monitor and assess our [municipal officials] progress in terms of how efficient and economical we are able to use the funds given to us by the Treasury annually.” [PD3]

“Budgetary monitoring and evaluation initiatives in the municipality are informed by the many statutes that regulate public finance usage such as the PMFA, MFMA and Treasury regulations. For instance, the municipality is warranted to make certain that not only are allocated finances used effectively, efficiently and economically but also that there is openness and accountability in their use...so, that is precisely how we are able through budgetary monitoring and evaluation to gauge progress and direct funds to the core business of the municipality.” [PD4]

“The mandate bestowed upon us as municipal officials is to use public funds to deliver to the local residents the much-needed services for them to attain better lives and improved socio-economic living...by embarking on budgetary monitoring and evaluation, we are then able to determine the efficacy with which we use public money...particularly for the purposes it is intended for and not to aggrandise our own interests.” [PD9]

According to the responses of the participants, the importance and perceived benefits of budgetary monitoring and evaluation are widely acknowledged. Importantly, none of the participants are opposed to the processes' primary role in promoting transparency and accountability. Participants, on the other hand, appeared hesitant to explain how their understanding of the process benefits has resulted in a reduction in widely known financial mismanagement in the local municipality. However, the culture of unaccountability and selective openness may possibly be preventing the actual realisation of the benefits of budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes, based on the data gathered from the initial data set of participants.

Theme 3: Participants experiences towards implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality

It was critical for the researcher to determine participants' practice experiences in order to gain insights into how they perceive the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. In this vein, the responses of the participants yielded four outcomes: Firstly, the participants agreed that implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation is fraught with

difficulties due to a lack of guidance on how to implement it effectively. For instance, one participant stated:

“There should be guidelines enacted at the strategic management echelons of the municipality to aid in the appropriate implementation of participatory governance...without them [the guidelines] it is difficult to assess how good we are doing in this regard.” [PD1]

In this regard, the relevance of practice guidelines, as previously noted by ward committee members, is also being mentioned. Similarly, it is widely acknowledged that practice guidelines are essential for guiding efforts aimed at ensuring that participatory governance is embedded in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, their importance is linked to officials' ability to measure their success and identify their failings in order to make proactive changes when necessary. The claims of the participants that strategic management staff should take the lead in this regard suggest that such guidelines do not exist in the local municipality. As a result of the lack of these critical practice guidelines, participants have been hesitant to embrace participatory governance and its incorporation into budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Working without guidelines that act as blueprints or signposts for how to go about integrating participatory governance can be both a detrimental endeavour and one that invites serious ramifications.

Secondly, the participants identified a significant hindrance to adequate implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation as a limitation on human capacity within the local municipality. In this context, participant 5 said succinctly that:

“We [public participation officials] are understaffed but endeavour to do our utmost best with the little human resource capacity we have. Though we are often limited in the scope of what we are able to do, we do not always succeed but significant strides are being made.” [PD5]

The lack of human capacity mentioned in this context was described in three ways by participants: They first linked it to a lack of resources and an inability to devote enough time to properly facilitate the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Second, the participants reported that some officials are unaware of their own level of competency in terms of participatory governance and best practice strategies. They also noted officials' unwillingness to seek extra training and their lack of admission that they lack adequate understanding. As a result, when taken as a whole, the municipal officials are admitting that they are unable to easily integrate participatory governance into budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes.

Thirdly, as the participants pointed out, apathy among local residents' stifles efforts to effectively implement participatory government in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Participants agreed that proper implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation should be considered a two-way process. That is, local residents should show a united front in support of municipal officials' efforts to encourage active participation and provide chances for meaningful interaction. To put it another way, these participants stated:

"There should be recognition among the local community members about the essence of getting involved with the affairs of the municipality. Unfortunately, most of them [local residents] appear disinterested regardless of our good efforts and intentions to promote and encourage their engagement." [PD3]

"In as much as it is our [municipal officials] responsibility to put in place measures to ensure proper implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, the communities we are mandated to serve should always come on board when invited to do so...otherwise, our efforts will be in vain." [PD7]

Fourthly, the importance of integrating participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation should be recognised and appreciated across the broader municipal governance structures, according to the participants. The lack of recognition of the importance of deploying best practice strategies within the broader municipal governance structures, according to the participants, has a negative impact on the appropriate implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. As a result, one participant stated:

"For the effective deployment of participatory governance in co-joint determination of the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation, all of us [municipal officials] in our distinct echelons must be acquainted with the utility and perhaps its [participatory governance] benefits...so that we may synergise our activities towards its implementation in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. If this is not done, we would have well grafted documents on participatory governance which may possibly not see the light of the day." [PD10]

Theme 4: Participants awareness of the benefits of implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation

The participants understanding of the benefits of integrating participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation was elicited by the researcher. The researcher's assumption was that failure to recognise and appreciate the benefits in this area would either result in haphazard implementation or

downright rejection. The researcher did recognise, however, that acknowledgment of the benefits of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation does not always transfer into implementation. Nevertheless, the advantages of integrating participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, according to the participants, are threefold:

First, the participants noted that implementing participatory governance is critical for exercising oversight over the use of funds granted to the local municipality for service delivery and the execution of its constitutionally mandated purpose. Second, the main benefits that can be accrued through the effective implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation were cited by the participants as the legislative requirements to promote transparency in how fiscal decisions are made. Cited by the participants also was the need to be accountable to local communities. As a result, participants 6 and 9 made the following remarks:

“All of us as municipal officials we are acutely aware that by law we are expected to make sure that our people know how, where and what we do with their money...they expect to see tangible results and their impact thereof and that explains why we always seek to engage them in all relevant decisions we make.”

[PD6]

“Our people remain the most vital check and balances...we engage them in most budgetary monitoring and evaluation decisions and resultant processes because there should be some considerable level of trust between us and them...that is good to establishing and achieving legitimacy for our decision...I mean we govern not for ourselves but for them.” **[PD9]**

Theme 5: Dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impacts of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

Given the utility of information in fostering transparency and accountability, the researcher wanted to see how effective information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is communicated and accessed by local residents. In this vein, the participants were asked to respond to questions about how local municipal officials disseminate information about the outcomes and impacts of budgetary monitoring and evaluation, as well as how local residents obtain the information. Included was the determination of participants' level of satisfaction with the manner in which information is disseminated and the extent to which the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) are being used for timely and ease of information dissemination.

The findings revealed that print and electronic copies are still the most common modes of information dissemination. According to the participants, information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is printed and distributed through booklets and summarised leaflets. These information materials are made available at municipal offices and other government institutions within the municipality. Additionally, the information is made available on the municipal website (portal) for local residents' convenience. For instance, the participants mentioned that:

“The municipality covers a wide geographically dispersed area and though it is important to ensure that the results of our budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes are made known to the local residents, we cannot be able to provide each resident who is able to read and write with a printed copy.” [PD9]

“Not all of the interested residents can have access to print copies of the budgetary monitoring and evaluation outcomes and impacts but they can still access it through the website [www.ftlm.gov.za] under the heading ‘documents’...though there are limitations linked to the fact that the majority of the residents are not adequately literate to comprehend the documents on their own, we try to provide print summaries.” [PD14]

Theme 6: Participants levels of satisfaction with the modes of information dissemination and access by the local residents

The participants were asked to rate their degree of satisfaction with the modes by which information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is shared and accessed by local residents, as well as to justify their comments. Table 4.10 shows the results derived from the responses of the participants.

Table 4.4 Participants level of satisfaction with the modes of information dissemination and access

Levels of satisfaction	Total (N=8)
Extremely satisfied	0
Satisfied	4
Neutral	1
Unsatisfied	3
Extremely unsatisfied	0
Total	8

As demonstrated in table 4.10, there were differing opinions about how satisfied the participants were with the local municipality's information dissemination methods. That is, how information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is made available to local residents. The majority of the participants (N=4) were pleased with the methods employed to communicate information intended for local residents. Only one participant, on the other hand, was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the appropriateness of the information dissemination methods used. Three of the participants indicated their unhappiness. As a result, none of the participants expressed extreme satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Participants who expressed discontent with the adequacy of the modes of information dissemination used by the local municipality to provide information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation cited three reasons for their unhappiness. The lack of attention for the functional literacy levels of the intended audiences (local residents) remains a major hurdle to ensuring that they are able to understand the information provided, according to the participants. Second, placing print copies in certain locations ignores the geographic dispersion of the areas served by the local municipality, limiting access to the information. Third, the information's numerical (statistical) descriptive nature makes it difficult for nonprofessional residents to understand. As a result, the participants stated that:

“There should be significant improvements in how the information is given...even though we are able to place print copies at important nodal points within the proximity of the local residents including clinics and other state buildings, few of the residents are able to recognise them [information booklets].” [PD1]

“The use of the English language is at times an impediment because almost 82.2% of our people speak Sepedi and of these people only 24.3% has matric and almost 16.0% have no formal schooling...so they are less likely to understand the information contained in the leaflets and booklets being distributed for their attention.” [PD3]

“By virtue of the information being statistically descriptive in nature, it renders itself more likely not to be understood by a less trained eye...I mean for persons with limited technical knowledge of basic accounting or statistics...the information may be less meaningful and unusable to know how the finances have been used and what impact they have had.” [PD6]

Theme 7: Perceptions towards ICT utilisation for ease of information dissemination and accessibility

The participants' views on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a method to promote timely dissemination and ease of access by local residents were established by the researcher.

The findings revealed varied perceptions to the adoption and use of information and communication technologies to disseminate information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation for local residents' convenience. To be more specific, the findings revealed a slowed receptivity to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by the local municipality. That is, despite the recognition and acknowledgement of the impetus that such use of ICTs can add to municipal officials' efforts to accelerate timely dissemination of the information in question for wide and easy access by local residents.

According to the participants, the prevailing digital divide in the local municipality poses challenges in utilising ICTs for information dissemination. The majority of residents do not have internet-connected gadgets via which information may be easily and rapidly accessed, according to the participants' understanding of the digital divide. Another challenge mentioned was the increased vulnerability of ICT use to hacking. This is because, as participants pointed out, relying on ICT has its own drawbacks, such as the rising number of cyber-attacks, which local municipalities with limited funds are unable to adequately address. Furthermore, participants cited the potential for information to be misused by people with harmful or ulterior purposes as a barrier to widespread transmission of the information. The legal implications of disseminating government information through online networks were once again cited as factors preventing the adoption and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to disseminate information on the results and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality to facilitate access. In this respect, the participants remarked by saying that:

“Having used ICTs myself, I am aware of the myriad of benefits that abound in using them especially in distributing information to many people in no time...but I am not really aware of how, for instance, the municipality can use ICTs at a larger scale to disseminate information on budgetary monitoring and evaluation outcomes because their usage also has serious limitations and are vulnerable to hacking.”

[PD4]

“The municipality has a Facebook page which is often used to disseminate some information...but not all information. There could be changes and improvements to include information on budgetary monitoring and evaluation outcomes and impact but there should be consideration of the possible legal ramifications...I mean...these communication channels can be abuse...” **[PD8]**

“The digital divide and the absence of reliable and affordable internet connections remain a major challenge which may be faced by both the municipality and local residents...because most of them [local

residents] are not adequately internet connected. Be that as it may, the usage of ICTs should be further explored as the need for their usage remains an inescapable future for this municipality.” [PD10]

Regardless of the barriers identified by participants as inhibiting the adoption and use of ICTs to promote timely dissemination and access to information, local municipalities cannot avoid the realities of the information age and the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). They will have to come up with new ways to accept and use ICTs in order to keep residents informed and communicate with them on a larger scale. Local municipalities that do not take aggressive steps in this respect risk being left behind in reaping the benefits of the information age and becoming outmoded in terms of effective functioning and relevance.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the study results. The results emanate from an in-depth analysis and interpretation of qualitative primary research data collected from two data sets, namely the ward committee members and municipal officials in Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality. Analysis of participants' responses on the subject of the study identified several themes, which were explained in detail and corroborated and contrasted with relevant literature. The analysed research data is presented in the form of a narrative and discussions. It provides accounts of participants' perspectives and experiences regarding the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age in the context of the Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality. Several conceptualisations of participatory governance as both a concept and practice have emerged. Likewise, participants expressed different perspectives regarding their understanding of participatory governance in the context of municipal governance. The divergent views also included the distinct meanings, purposes and benefits associated with budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the local municipality. The circumstances affecting the effective implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation as practiced in the local municipality were identified and explicated.

The factors that adversely affect its effective implementation were identified and justified by the participants. The lack of consensus among the participants on the effectiveness of the information dissemination methods used to disseminate information on the results and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation intended for access by the local residents was apparent. In addition, there were significant responses to levels of satisfaction with the type, amount and timeliness of information made available for residents to access, including the perceived benefits of the use of Information and

Communication Technologies (ICTs) to promote timeous information dissemination and access by local residents.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The foregoing chapter presented the study results. In this chapter, the researcher proffers the synthesised summary of key study results, conclusion and recommendations premised on the accrued findings pertaining to the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality. The limitations of this study and the suggestions for future research are also explicated.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This qualitative case study investigated the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age. The study focused on the local municipality of Fetakgomo-Tubatse. Three research objectives were formulated to guide this study. The first objective was to assess the participants understanding of participatory governance and its importance in the context of municipal governance. The second objective involved an examination of the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the local municipality. The third objective was to develop an in-depth understanding of the benefits and barriers related to the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, the effectiveness and use of ICTs to improve the timely dissemination and accessibility of information on outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. An interpretivist, hermeneutic approach integral to the adopted constructivist epistemological perspective was followed in this study. These paradigmatic

perspectives were useful for exploring the participants' experiences and meanings associated with their socially constructed multiple realities of the phenomenon being studied in their real-world settings. Hence, an exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design was used.

Non-probability sampling techniques (i.e., purposive and snowball sampling) were used to select a sample of ward committee members and municipal officials who met the inclusion criteria. Primary research data was gathered through the use of face-to-face semi-structure interviews and open-ended qualitative questionnaires. A research data management plan was developed and used to protect and prevent data loss and unauthorised access. Tesch's eight-step descriptive data analysis technique outlined by Creswell (2009) was used to analyse the textual data gathered. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis were interpreted and reported in a narrative and discussion format. Pseudonyms were used to de-identify and anonymise the actual identities of participants when citing verbatim.

Several ethical considerations were maintained throughout the empirical study. Active, informed and written consent was obtained and given from all participants. The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence (*primum non nocere* translated as "first do no harm") were observed. Risk adjustment protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19 were also followed. This included hand sanitising, wearing a face mask and maintaining social distancing during interviews. Guba and Lincoln (1985) strategies to ensure trustworthiness in both the findings and research process were followed. These include truth-value (credibility), consistency (reliability), applicability (portability), and neutrality (confirmability).

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE KEY STUDY RESULTS

This section presents a summary of the key study results. The results are based on the themes and sub-themes resulting from an in-depth analysis of the data collected. More specifically, the main results are presented in accordance with the research goals that this study aimed to achieve.

❖ Objective 1: Understanding of participatory governance and its significance in the context of municipal governance

Participants had limited knowledge of participatory governance as an integral concept of good governance. The concept of participatory governance has led to different conceptualisations without a common understanding among the participants of what it actually is. Its mention, reference and use were synonymous with active citizenship, consultation, partnership and co-governance. Therefore, participants seemed uncertain about the contextual meaning of participatory governance as a concept. In contrast, participants demonstrated a significant understanding of what participatory governance actually requires

when put into practice in the context of municipal governance. They were able to point out that at the heart of participatory governance is the need to provide meaningful opportunities and spaces for residents' engagement in matters of municipal governance. Nevertheless, the participants failed to understand that fostering residents' engagement does not denote mere consultation or participation but warrants a collaborative effort to entrench their active engagement in local municipality's affairs; to the extent that they themselves find their inclusion meaningful, purposeful and empowering.

In this regard, the researcher noted that, based on their understanding of how participatory governance should be put into practice, participants cited several of its significance in the context of municipal governance. They viewed participatory governance as crucial to fostering the empowerment of local residents to attain active citizenship. In addition, it is considered crucial to improve responsiveness and promote transparency; to prevent self-aggrandisement over the promotion of the common public good and to enable exercise of oversight on executives' decisions. In this vein, participants view the practice of participatory governance as an antidote to behaviours and conduct within municipal governance that not only violate good governance but undermine it. Participants' understanding and knowledge of participatory governance and its importance in municipal governance was largely acquired through political engagement, followed by in-service training, supervision, continuous professional development, and professional/academic training. The fact that participants rely heavily on political engagement as a source of knowledge is a consequence of the lack of context-specific practice guidelines that have not been developed within the local municipality to guide participants' understanding and knowledge of participatory governance and its importance for good municipal governance.

❖ Objective 2: Examine the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

The scope of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the municipality is limited to making informed decisions about spending and enabling performance tracking against set targets. Hence, budgetary monitoring and evaluation is seen by the participants as an exercise meant to demonstrate compliance with public finance legislation. However, it appears that little priority is given to the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process as a key feedback loop. That is, participants do not consider the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process as crucial to provide residents with accurate information about the results and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Nonetheless, participants recognise that failure to use the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process as a feedback loop is detrimental to residents' confidence (trust) in the legitimacy of the decisions that emerge and inform from the process. This recognition, as expressed by participants, contradicts their claims that budgetary monitoring and

evaluation processes, when conducted with meaningful residents' engagement, can prevent waste and misappropriation of funds, and promote transparency and accountability in the use of public funds entrusted to the municipality. The purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as a feedback loop for both the municipality and residents is severely undermined by the lack of human capacity. The dearth of human capacity, as defined by the participants, includes a lack of municipal staff with adequate knowledge of budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes and the best context-specific strategies to promote their effective implementation.

❖ Objective 3: Develop in-depth understanding of benefits and barriers linked with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation

Participants have a greater awareness of the perceived benefits of implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. These benefits, participants claim, include the need to oversee municipal officials' decisions; ensure effective execution of their assigned responsibilities related to the effective, efficient, and economical use of public finances and promote transparency (openness) and accountability. However, these benefits mentioned by the participants are not actually realised in the local municipality. These barriers associated with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluations are cited as impediments to realising its benefits. The barriers mentioned appear to be institutional in nature, meaning that they arise from the inadequacies within municipality's governance systems. They involve the lack of practice guidelines to guide and inform implementation efforts and decisions. This implies that the municipality does not have standard procedures and protocols in relation to the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes. Furthermore, the lack of appreciation of the nature and essence of participatory governance in municipal governance structures is another obstacle.

More precisely, the importance of embedding participatory governance into budgetary monitoring and evaluation is recognised, but this recognition has not translated into concrete implementation. Inextricably linked to the barriers cited is the delayed willingness to step up the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Delayed willingness, participants indicated, is due to municipal officials' lack of understanding and knowledge of what needs to be done, how effectively to do it, and why it should be done in the absence of best practice guidelines. Inactive citizenship and apathy among local residents are cited as the results of reduced interest in actively engaging in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes when called upon (invited) to do so. The apathy cited by participants

is fuelled by a lack of or selective transparency and a culture of unaccountability in which residents view their engagement as less meaningful, purposeless, and intended only to stamp decisions already made.

❖ **Objective 4: Develop insights into the efficacy of information dissemination and accessibility on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation**

The dissemination of information about the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the municipality is insufficient and increasing dissatisfying. The printed records (booklets and pamphlets) of summaries of information provided by the municipality and displayed in municipal premises limit the information's wider availability. The use of English in compiling the information and the descriptive statistical (numerical) nature of the information provided renders the information incomprehensible to local residents given their low functional literacy. The delays in responding in a timely manner to the provision of the information impact its relevance and usefulness to enable residents to engage in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes in an informative, targeted and meaningful manner and to pursue accountability on the part of municipal officials.

The use of ICTs in enhancing the ease of information dissemination and accessibility

There is a slow uptake and delayed receptivity to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to promote the timely dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality. Several factors were cited by the participants as being responsible for preventing the receptivity and use of ICTs to improve the dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. These factors include the increasing prevalence of the digital divide in the municipality; increased vulnerability of ICT use to hacking; propensity for abuse by individuals with malicious and ulterior motives and legal implications related to the use of ICTs in the dissemination of sensitive information related to the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Different conceptualisations and meanings assigned to participatory governance, both as a concept and as a practice, render ineffective its understanding, clarity of its contextual meaning and usefulness. The lack of context-specific practice guidelines, which are crucial to inform, guide and serve as a source of knowledge related to participatory governance, is detrimental to its effective implementation in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. The scope of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the municipality is limited because it does not serve as a feedback loop to meet residents' needs for timely and accurate information on its outcomes and impacts. Engaging residents in budgetary monitoring and

evaluation processes is ineffective and adversely affected because it only focuses on making decisions about spending and enabling performance tracking against set goals. The dearth of sufficiently competent human capacity with knowledge of participatory governance and its importance hinders its effective implementation in budgetary monitoring and evaluation. The perceived benefits related to the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation has not prompted the municipality to promote its effective implementation.

The ease of access, comprehensibility and usability of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation in terms of transparency and accountability is hampered by its descriptive statistical nature, the modes of dissemination used, and the language used in its compilation. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is not adequately explored and tapped-into to improve timely and effective access for residents to information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age is ineffective in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key results obtained from this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality:

The development of context-specific guidelines aimed at educating, informing and guiding municipal officials' understanding and knowledge of participatory governance by providing clarity on its contextual meaning, importance in the context of municipal governance and appropriate ways to enhance participatory governance implementation in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes and decisions.

Expanding the scope of budgetary monitoring and evaluation to facilitate and offer meaningful opportunities and spaces for inclusive and meaningful residents' engagement to build trust in the process and gain legitimacy for its subsequent decisions.

Re-assessment of the modes of information dissemination used and retraining staff involved in budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes to acquire requisite information and knowledge management competencies to enable prioritisation of, and use of the budgetary monitoring and evaluation process as a feedback loop critical to proffer residents' with accurate and easily understandable information about the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation.

Formulation of an information dissemination strategy based on exploring and exploiting the benefits of using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to improve timely responsiveness, easy access and usability of information on outcomes and impacts of budgetary monitoring and evaluation by residents to foster transparency and accountability in the use of public finances.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations and delimitations of a study are not synonymous and have distinct meanings. According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019) limitations of a study involve potential weaknesses associated with a study and which are out of the researcher's control. They encompass imposed restrictions that limit the extensity to which a study can go (Simon & Goes, 2013). In contrast, delimitations refer to matters and occurrences that arise in a study. However, delimitations of a study are intentionally set by a researcher because they are within a researcher's control. Thus, Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) indicate that delimitations represent the researcher's justification for selection and use of specific methods in the course of the study to the exclusion of others. On this note, it is expected when conducting research inquiries that researchers will anticipate, acknowledge and clearly state the limitations and delimitations of their studies. This is important for transparency as it inform study readers and reviewers about the pros and cons of decisions undertaken by the researcher/s.

This study focused on investigating the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the information age, with particular reference to the local municipality of Fetakgomo-Tubatse. The potential limitation of this study is that the lessons learned may not be transferrable to other municipalities without actually replicating the study to in their specific contexts. However, to mitigate this weakness, the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the study context to allow for future replicability in different setting(s). In addition, the study focused on budgetary monitoring and evaluation within the budget cycle. Therefore, the conclusions drawn are in no way related to events at other stages of the budget cycle, such as the formulation, approval and implementation of the budget. Time and financial (money) constraints made it impossible for the researcher to study all potential participants as with municipal officials and ward committee members. However, the use of non-probability sampling techniques (i.e., purposive and snowball sampling) meant the samples were sufficient to ensure that

detailed information was obtained. Therefore, the researcher specifically selected participants who possessed sufficient information and knowledge about the phenomenon studied.

5.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Considering the limitations of this study and the results obtained, the researcher proposes that another in-depth study in a metropolitan municipality (Category A) be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of participatory governance as implemented in their budgetary monitoring and evaluation processes. In addition, a quantitative survey using a probability sample of residents could improve understanding of their level of engagement in budgetary monitoring and evaluation, as well as their level of satisfaction with their engagement and the effectiveness of the mechanisms used to encourage their meaningful engagements in the process. A further qualitative investigation of the legal implications of using ICT in providing information on the outcomes and impacts of budgetary monitoring and evaluation could be helpful for municipal officials to prepare for, and skilfully address, the legal implications identified.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE/ APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 14 October 2021

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/255/2021: PG

PROJECT:

Title: The Effectiveness of Participatory Governance in Budgetary Monitoring and Evaluation in an Information Age: A Case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

Researcher: MN Mamabolo

Supervisor: Dr EN Zwane

Co-Supervisor/s: N/A

School: Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership

Degree: Master of Public Administration and Management

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

- Note:**
- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.**
 - ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.**
 - iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**

Finding solutions for Africa

ANNEXURE B: LETTER REQUESTING FOR CONSENT TO CONDUCT THE ACADEMIC STUDY IN THE FETAKGOMO-TUBATSE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY (FTLM)

Mr. Mamabolo MN
MPAM Candidate
TGSL-University of Limpopo
E-mail: Marumo.mamabolo@yahoo.com
Cell/No: +2776 7390 671

The Municipal Manager: Mr. Phala N.W (Walter)
Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality
P.O Box 206
1 Kastania Street Burgersfort 1150
Tel/No: +2713 231 1000
Fax/No: +2713 231 7467

STUDY TITLE: The effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age: A case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

I am Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo (Student Number: 200627426) a Master of Public Administration and Management candidate at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership in the University of Limpopo. I hereby request for permission to distribute semi-structured questionnaires for completion by the ward committee members and conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews with municipal officials involved with the following offices:

Corporate Services: Public Participation Unit

Municipal Manager's Office: IDP Unit

Local Economic Development and Transformation (LEDT) Department

The aim of the study is to examine the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality. To be more precise, the objectives of the study are as follows:

To assess municipal officials and ward committee members understanding of participatory governance and its significance in the context of municipal governance

To examine the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

To develop an in-depth understanding of the benefits and barriers linked with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

To develop insights into the

Efficacy of information dissemination and accessibility regarding the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

The degree of ICTs utilisation towards enhancing timeous dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

The semi-structured interview questionnaires will be furnished to the selected ward committee members for completion in the absence of the researcher and collected at a mutually agreed-upon time. In the same vein, the semi-structured interviews will be conducted at an agreed time and place with the selected municipal officials. Information sheets delineating the nature and scope of the study will also be provided to all the potential participants together with consent forms for completion and attestation by those who voluntarily consent to participate in the study. Please note that the raw data obtained from the participants regarding the subject of investigation will be kept securely by the researcher in accordance with the developed research data management plan. Further, the records containing the participants identifying details and raw data will not be shared with any individual or institution without a written approval from the participants. Only aggregated and de-identified data will be presented in the final research report. The original records containing the raw data will be discarded or destroyed appropriately post completion of this study.

I hope the information is orderly and useful in helping you grant me the permission to conduct the aforementioned academic research study. Should you require any additional information please feel free to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Mamabolo MN

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE C: APPROVAL FROM THE FETAKGOMO-TUBATSE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



FETAKGOMO TUBATSE
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

15 November 2021

Mr. MN Mamabolo
The Student of University of Limpopo
Student No. 200627426

E-mail: marumo.mamabolo@yahoo.com

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN FETAKGOMO TUBATSE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY CONCERNING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN BUDGETARY MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN AN INFORMATION AGE: A CASE OF FTLM

The letter serves as a confirmation that Mr. MN Mamabolo – student No. 200627426, a registered Master of Public Administration and Management Degree Student with Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership in the University of Limpopo has been granted permission by the Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality (FTLM), to conduct the research in the municipality. Please afford him the necessary support. And he will engage the following offices:

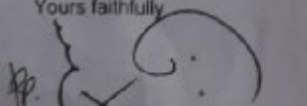
- 1) Corporate Services: Public Participation Unit
- 2) Municipal Manager's Office: IDP Unit
- 3) LEDT Department

The municipal contact person to assist is the Acting Director Corporate Services Mr. ON Mosoma and to be contacted on 079 438 8814.

It is further requested that the Municipality be provided with a copy of the study conducted for future reference purposes.

Hope to find the above in order.

Yours faithfully



N.W. Phala
Municipal Manager

HEAD OFFICE

Hamantla street | P.O. Box 296, Burgersford, 1120
Tel: +27 11 211 1000 | Fax: +27 11 211 7447

REGIONAL OFFICE

Stand No. 7, Maribong, Go-Nwena, P.O. Box 513, April 0739
Tel: +27 13 622 8000 | Fax: +27 13 622 8026

STUDY TITLE: The effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age: A case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

Dear Participants

You are cordially invited to participate in this research study undertaken by Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo as part of his Master of Public Administration and Management (MPAM) degree at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership of the University of Limpopo. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age in the case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality. The objectives of this study are:

To assess municipal officials and ward committee members understanding of participatory governance and its significance in the context of municipal governance

To examine the scope and purpose of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

To develop an in-depth understanding of the benefits and barriers linked with implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality

To develop insights into the

Efficacy of information dissemination and accessibility regarding the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

The degree of ICTs utilisation towards enhancing timeous dissemination and accessibility of information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation

Your participation in this study will involve completing a semi-structured questionnaire and answering questions through a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire can be completed at your best convenient time whereas the interviews will take about 25 to 30 minutes to complete.

Voluntary participation

Your involvement in this study is voluntary. You may elect to participate and withdraw your participation at any time. Hence, no penalty will be incurred by your decision to decline or withdraw your participation in this study.

Safeguarding of confidentiality

Your personal identification information will be kept confidential in terms of the Protection of Information (POPI) Act. The answers you will provide pertaining to the questions asked will be used for the purposes of this study only. Nowhere in the final research report will your identifying details be included or responses linked with the latter thereof. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the raw data which will be securely kept and destroyed once this study is completed.

Risks and discomforts

There are no known potential risks associated with this study. However, any perceived risks and potential discomforts will be communicated and addressed with you as they arise.

Potential benefits

This study seeks to utilise the insights revealed through your accounts shared with the researcher to proffer valuable information for use by the local municipality to enhance and strengthen the efficacy of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age.

Identifying Details of the Researcher	Identifying Details of the Supervisor
<p>Name: Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo</p> <p>Study level: Master’s degree</p> <p>Faculty: Management Sciences and Law</p> <p>Contact numbers: +2776 7390 671</p> <p>Email address: Marumo.mamabolo@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Name: Dr. E.N Zwane</p> <p>Qualifications: PhD</p> <p>Faculty: Management Science and Law</p> <p>Contact details: (Fax): 015 268 3774 (Tel): 015 268 3735/4190</p> <p>Email address:Engeline.zwane@ul.ac.za</p>

ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned, hereby confirm that (please tick with an **X** in the appropriate box)

1.	I have read and understood the information regarding this study as described in the information sheet and further explained by the researcher to me.	
2.	I have been offered the opportunity to ask questions about the study and my participation which have been responded to my satisfaction.	
3.	I agree to voluntarily participate in this study	
4.	I fully understand that I can withdraw my participation in the study at any time without providing reasons and that my withdrawal will not be questioned or incur any penalty.	
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been explained to my satisfaction.	
6.	The de-identification of the research data meant for publication, dissemination and archiving has been clearly explained to me.	
7.	I, along with the researcher, concur to attest (sign) and date this informed consent form.	

I have read this consent form and have been offered the opportunity to ask questions regarding the nature and scope of my involvement in this study. Therefore, I voluntarily consent to participate in this study being undertaken by Marumo Nyabane Mamabolo as part of his Master of Public Administration and Management degree in the University of Limpopo.

Participant Name

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

Researcher's Name

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

ANNEXURE F: OPEN-ENDED QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS

I Mr. MN Mamabolo am a Master of Public Administration and Management candidate at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership in the University of Limpopo. The title of my study is: The effectiveness

of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age: A case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

Purpose of the open-ended qualitative questionnaire

This open-ended qualitative questionnaire aims to elicit your responses regarding your knowledge towards participatory governance with reference to municipal governance; the circumstances that informs the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality and the efficacy with which information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is disseminated for access by local residents in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

Important for consideration

Please answer all the questions as honestly and as openly as possible. Note that there are no right and wrong answers. Do not write your name anywhere on the qualitative questionnaire. The responses you provide in answering the questions shall remain confidential.

1. Kindly describe your understanding towards participatory governance with reference to municipal governance.

2. In your opinion, what importance does participatory governance serve in the context of municipal governance?

3. Based on the options provided below, please indicate (with an **X**) your source of knowledge regarding participatory governance.

Educational guess	
Professional/Academic training	

In-service training	
Continuous professional development	
Political engagements	

4. According to you, what purpose does budgetary monitoring and evaluation serve in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality? Please explain your answer/s

5. What are your views regarding the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality? Kindly substantiate your answer

6. Kindly describe your perceptions towards the information disseminated for access by the local residents on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

*****Thank you for your participation*****

ANNEXURE G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS IN THE FETAKGOMO-TUBATSE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

I Mr. MN Mamabolo am a Master of Public Administration and Management candidate at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership in the University of Limpopo. The title of my study is: The effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age: A case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality.

Note to the participant/s

Your willingness to participate in this study and answer the questions asked is greatly appreciated. Please remember that your responses and/or answers given in this interview will remain confidential and will not be linked in any way to your personal identity. The information that you share in this interview will be used only for the purpose of this academic research study.

1. What is your role and assigned responsibilities in the local municipality?
2. Kindly describe your understanding towards participatory governance as both a concept and practice.
3. Based on your practise experience, how would you describe the scope of budgetary monitoring and evaluation as implemented in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality?
4. What is your experience/s towards implementing participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the local municipality?
5. What benefits would you attribute to the implementation of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality? (Please substantiate your answer)
6. How does information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation disseminated for access by the local residents in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality?
7. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the way/s through which information on the outcomes and impact of budgetary monitoring and evaluation is disseminated for access by the local residents on the nominal scale provided below.

Levels of satisfaction	Mark with an (X)
Extremely satisfied	
Satisfied	
Neutral	

Unsatisfied	
Extremely unsatisfied	

8. What do you consider to be an explanation for your level of satisfaction with the way/s through which the information is disseminated for access by the local residents in the local municipality?

9. What is your perception towards information and communication technologies (ICTs) utilisation for ease of information dissemination and access? (Please explain your answer/s)

ANNEXURE H: TURNITIN RESULTS

The effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age: a case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse local municipality

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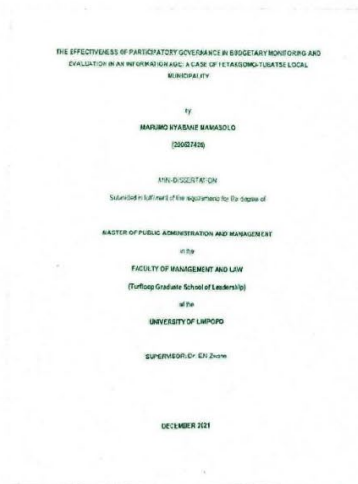


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ANNEXURE I: PROOF OF LANGUAGE AND TECHNICAL EDITING

Cell: 063 297 5082
Email: nkhubudzenimagwayi@gmail.com

Mr. ND Magwayi
2849 Villa Lantana Estates
161 Salie Street
Amandasig
Pretoria 0188

To whom it may concern

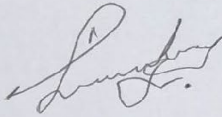
21 December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

SUBJECT: EDITING OF DISSERTATION

This serves to certify that the dissertation entitled 'The effectiveness of participatory governance in budgetary monitoring and evaluation in an information age: A case of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality' by Mamabolo Marumo Nyabane (200627426) has been copy-edited, and that unless further tampered with, I am content with the quality of the dissertation in terms of its adherence to editorial principles of consistency, cohesion, clarity of thought and precision.

Kind Regards



Mr. ND Magwayi
Freelance Editor & Proofreader
BAED (Univen) MA (English Literature) (Univen) Diploma in Higher Education (Rhodes) Cert. DTP (UFH)

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