



**Perceptions of management and local labour forum on employee performance and
service delivery at Zululand District Municipality**

by

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School of Management, IT and Governance

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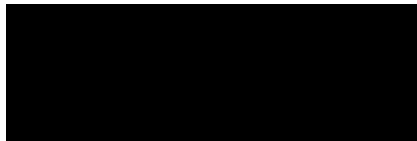
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August 2023

DECLARATION

I, **Gugulethu Nonkululeko Zamazikode MAPHISA**, declare that

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- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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04 August 2023

.....

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

The whole project is dedicated to my Mother, COVID-19 abruptly claimed the life of my mother on the 27th of December 2021. She was a major reason for me taking up this qualification and motivated me never to give up till her dying day. I wish to dedicate this achievement to her, Mama lapho ukhona ngiyabonga ngakho konke. I have made it Momma, I've done it, and this one is for you; I miss you always.

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To God almighty be the glory for all the good he has done in my life. This all would not have been possible if not for his Grace and Mercy upon me that has kept me going even at my lowest.

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ABSTRACT

South African public sector organisations have been criticised for poor employee performance in the last few years, especially post-1994. Given this concern, it is worth investigating the current state of employee performance in the local government. Therefore, the primary aim of study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of local labour forum and management on the impact of employee performance on service delivery at local government in the Zululand District Municipality. A qualitative approach was utilised to offer an adequate explanation and description of the chosen phenomenon. Besides, an exploratory study was conducted to provide an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the research phenomenon and develop research questions for an extensive investigation. To achieve the aim of the study, Zululand District Municipality was used as the case study organisation. The target population of the study was 1,120, which comprised of permanent employees and contractual employees in the Zululand District Municipality. The purposive sampling techniques was used to select 14 participants. However, only 8 participants were interviewed. The data was analysed using the NVivo software (version 13). The thematic analysis was used to identify, classify and present themes (patterns) that relate to the dataset. The findings revealed various criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality, including work quality, employee output, creativity and innovation, cost reduction, quarterly report, teamwork and problem-solving. In addition, the main findings showed a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery. Furthermore, the overall findings suggested that service delivery could be improved through performance activities such as setting performance targets, providing performance feedback to employees, setting performance management objectives and monitoring. The perceived impact was that underperformance in the Zululand District Municipality affected service delivery, leading to service delivery protests. The study is essential because it expands existing knowledge on employee performance, performance management and service delivery. This study will be a viable tool for the government, municipalities and employees to improve performance and service delivery. The study recommended that employee performance could be improved through training and development, a conducive working environment, employee involvement and participation and job autonomy. The study recommends that the municipality take necessary measures to ensure that the employees work in a satisfactory and healthy work environment to enable them meet the performance targets.

Keywords: Employee, municipality, performance, performance management, service delivery, service delivery protest.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFO	Chief Executive Officer
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
GDS	Growth and Development Strategy
IDP	Development Planning
KPAs	Key Performance Areas
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
SASA	South African Social Attitudes Survey

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The challenges of service delivery by local government in South Africa to their constituents is well documented. In the last decades, there have been ongoing community protests in South Africa in connection with basic service delivery such as water, electricity, roads, schools, sanitation and housing (Beyers, 2015). The numerous protests suggest that service delivery is a pressing issue facing communities in South Africa. The local government is part of the South African public sector organisations is the closest to the community and is therefore indispensable in its role of providing essential services as well as developing local communities. Given the numerous service delivery protests in South Africa, it appears that the local government has failed the very people that they are expected to serve. In this vein, Enaifoghe (2022) states that most South African municipalities struggled with service delivery for decades, leading to service delivery protests in most parts of the country. The service delivery in South African municipalities can be attributed to several factors, including lack of capacity, limited funding, corruption and maladministration, historical legacies of apartheid, urban-rural divides, accountability and socio-economic inequalities, to mention a few (Mamokhere, 2022; Selepe, 2023).

This study is motivated by the need to investigate the perceptions and experiences of the local labour forum and management on the impact of employee performance on service delivery at the Zululand District Municipality. The chapter, among others, addresses the background of the study and continues with the description of the problem statement. It further outlines the research aims, objectives and questions. The rationale and contribution of the study are part of this chapter. The chapter also provides a description of the research methodology which will aid the investigation. Moreover, it includes the structure of the thesis as well as the limitations of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Globally, basic services such as electricity and energy, water and sanitation, roads and bridges, and hospitals and schools are critical services required to improve people's lives. According to Lodoros, Kostopoulos and Kaminakis (2015), providing high-quality services remains a key priority for service providers that intend to create and offer value for customers. It is believed that providing high-quality services leads to improved customer satisfaction, loyalty and long-term profitability (Arslan, 2020). The above assertion is consistent with a study by Ramdhani,

Mnyamana and Karodia (2017), who expressed that in recent times, businesses and organisations have realised that providing an acceptable level of customer service delivery leads to long-term survival.

To this end, the South African government is committed to ensuring an uninterrupted supply of these essential services to the vast majority of the citizenry, especially the poor people. The provision of these basic services is a constitutional right in South Africa. For instance, sections 26, 27, and 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 guarantees everyone living in the country the following rights in terms of basic services, namely: the right to have access to adequate housing, right to health care services; right to food security; right to social security; right to basic education and right to further education (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The Constitution places responsibility on the South African government to ensure that such basic services are expanded progressively to all within the limits of available resources. Apart from the Constitution, the government has introduced several legal frameworks such as Universal Access and Government Policy, White Paper on Local Government, Energy and Electrification Policy, National Water Act 36 of 1998, National Policy for Provision of Basic Refuse Removal Services to Indigent Households, National Environmental Management: Waste Act 58 of 2008 and National Energy Act 34 of 2008 to ensure that all citizens, especially the poor and other vulnerable groups have equal access to basic services. However, the reality of providing basic services in South Africa is far from over as the country continues to experience service delivery protests, particularly in the rural communities (Mokoele, et al., 2018). South African municipalities have been plagued by poor service delivery, with several communities witnessing limited access to basic services: clean water, sanitation, electricity, and waste removal (Mamokhere, 2022).

Within the framework of local government, service delivery is defined as the provision of municipal goods, benefits, activities, and satisfactions that are deemed public to improve the quality of life in local jurisdictions (Ndudula, 2013). Within this framework, particular reference is made to discharging of municipal services, which can be either tangible or intangible. The former involves providing services that are construed as being visible to local communities, including state housing, roads, water and sanitation systems, and public transport. The latter refers to services that are considered being essential but not necessarily visible, including “public drainage and sewage systems and public-safety standards” (Ndudula, 2013, p.10). In South Africa, municipalities are the custodian of taxpayers' money, and as such, they have the legal mandate to

utilise the resources at their disposal to address the basic needs of local communities (Reddy & Naidu, 2012). However, an aspect of the 2008 local government budget and expenditure review, which, as presented to parliament, suggests that the considerable investment by local government has not “yielded the expected returns from the national economy” (Govender & Reddy, 2012, p.71). Moreover, the local government budget and review report suggest that poor governance, lack of spatial planning, insufficient social infrastructure, and massive service backlogs served as constraints to eradicating poverty and economic growth (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Masibigiri, 2022).

Mangai (2016; 2017) points out that service delivery challenge is a common challenge facing several developing nations. In their study, Alexander, Runciman, Ngwane, Moloto, Mokgele and van Staden (2018) and Morudu (2017) concur that in most of these countries poor service delivery has resulted in public protests. Mamokhere, Netshidzvihani and Musith (2021) believed that service delivery protest is a global phenomenon because of service delivery backlogs. Mamokhere et al. (2021) argued that the service delivery protests could be attributed to various factors such as the slow pace of service delivery, high unemployment, unethical conduct by public officials and politicians, unfulfilled promises, limited public engagement and poor access to information.

In South Africa, service delivery protests originated from the apartheid period as they were employed as strategies by the black Africans to voice out their dissatisfaction with the lack of adequate services and target ethnically based structures (Reddy, 2016). During the apartheid era, service delivery was based on skin colour, leading to several protests, especially in the form of violence against the government (Mamokhere et al., 2021). The purpose of service delivery protests during the apartheid regime aimed to develop community-based structures and social movements to oppose the apartheid system (Ngcamu, 2019). Brown (2017) also made a similar statement that service delivery protests in South Africa are not a new phenomenon. According to Brown (2017), during the apartheid regime, service delivery protests commonly used weapons to disrupt the apartheid-created structures of local government.

On the contrary, it has been argued that service delivery protests post 1994 local government dispensation indicate the expression of needs and grassroots protests against the poor quality of service delivery and related issues (Alexander, 2010; Beyers, 2015). Likewise, Mamokhere (2019, believes that service delivery challenge in South Africa remains critical issue even after the demise of the apartheid rules. It can be argued that service delivery protest is occasioned by inadequate

local services or tardy service delivery, the responsibility which lies with the local government and municipalities. Service delivery protests in South Africa have taken different forms, namely: police confrontations, municipal functionaries forced to resign, "toyi-toying", mass meetings, submission of memoranda, and petitions, processions, stay-away, chasing unpopular residents out of townships, election boycotts, road blockades, construction of barriers and burning of tires, and the destruction of property and looting (Booyesen, 2012; Tshishonga, 2015). A study by Mamokhere (2021) argues that the numerous service delivery protests in South Africa had impacted the socioeconomic development of the country negatively.

Owing to the numerous service delivery protests in the country, many experts (i.e., political analysts, governance practitioners), analysts and social commentators point out that service delivery boycotts are mainly a rebellion by the poor against neo-liberal policies (Alexander, 2010). According to Alexander (2010), service delivery protests appear to originate in the poorer neighbourhoods such as townships and informal settlements rather than the suburbs. Powell (2012), while reflecting on recent trends and developments, argues that the systems in place for local government funding seem to be inadequate, and the functions delegated to this sphere are quite onerous. Nevertheless, the view expressed by Powell (2012) might not necessarily be the reality since the local sphere has different avenues of funding that can be tapped. In a different opinion, Reddy (2015) points out that the politicisation of the local government has created a challenge for the local government to deliver on its mandate due to the lack of necessary skills. Other challenges have been identified that have impacted service delivery post-1994, namely: unfunded mandates, where municipalities are not funded or receive very little funding for services; financial viability; corruption; poor financial management; non-compliance; non-alignment between fiscal discipline and political leadership; guiding local economic development to address unemployment and poverty alleviation and investment-friendly environment (Reddy & Wallis, 2015; Zybrands, 2012). In their study, Nama, Daweti, Lourens and Chikukwa (2022) postulate that there is a growing concern that most public officials lack the required skills to deliver essential services to under-resourced local communities.

In addressing the service delivery challenges in South Africa, several researchers (Beyers, 2015; Ndevu & Muller, 2018) have offered divergent views and approaches, including but not limited to improved performance, good governance, leadership and legal compliance by local government. Mamokhere (2021) proposes that given the escalating rate of service delivery protests,

minimalities should respond timely to communities' demands to help reduce the service delivery protests that harm socio-economic development. Mkhathshwa-Ngwenya and Khumalo (2020) recommend that skills development programmes be implemented to focus on the needs of the local government outputs.

However, the focus of this study is to examine the perceptions of management and labour forum on employee performance and service delivery at the local government, using Zululand District Municipality as the case study organisation. For the purpose of this study, labour forum has been defined under Chapter 5 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, as a committee of employees elected by employees in a workplace. A local sphere of government is an independent institution responsible for “rebuilding local communities and environments as a basis for a democratic, integrated, prosperous and truly non-racial society” (South African Local Government Association, 2015, p.11).

Employee performance has become a critical issue for many organisations as it translates into the organization's overall performance. From the perspective of an employment contract, performance is considered to be the accomplishment of a commitment in such a manner that releases the employee from all liabilities laid down under the contract. Employee performance can be defined as the process of achieving a specified task measured against predetermined or identified standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed (Sultana, Irum, Ahmed & Mehmood, 2012). In a similar view, Nassazi (2013) sees performance as the outcome of employees in terms of process, results, importance and success. These days, many organisations target high-performing employees to maintain them because of the benefits they bring and the positive image they create for the organisation (Vosloban, 2012). It appears that there is scarce research on the extent to which employee performance influences basic service delivery in the Zululand District Municipality. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the perceptions and experiences of local labour forum and management on the impact of employee performance on service delivery at a local government.

1.3 Problem Statement

Efficiency and effectiveness are considered vital ingredients of employee performance. Therefore, Dladla (2018) concluded that the ineffectiveness of service delivery at grass-roots level has led to the introduction and application of performance management systems in South African municipalities. Most municipalities are using management systems and the balanced scorecard to

improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery (Dladla, 2018). Generally, employee performance is determined against the performance standards established by the organisation. An efficient and effective performance implies how well employees performed on the assigned tasks. Given this, it can be argued that high performers perform up to the set standards and meet the organization's expectations. Given the importance of performance, the South African government has adopted a Public Service Wide Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy in 2007, which is followed by the establishment of a national Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in 2009 to monitor performance within the public sector in order to improve service delivery (Govender & Reddy, 2014). In addition, the White Paper on Local Government (1998) proposes the establishment of performance management systems that should serve as a tool for the development of local government.

The White Paper states that integrated development planning (IDP), budgeting and performance management should be seen as tools to assist municipalities in developing an integrated perspective on development in their area. Moreover, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 proposes that every municipality conform to the IDP framework and develop a performance management system with specific and realistic measures. The Municipal Systems Act suggests that by introducing systems and policies, municipalities will improve their efficiency and effectiveness of public services and promote greater economy and resource containment (Van der Waldt, 2006). The Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998 also requires councillors to establish methods for delivering services and developing criteria for evaluating performance in service delivery (Mathibane, 2010). Although numerous legal and performance frameworks were introduced to improve performance within the South African public sector, the situation is far from reality. The 2012-2015 auditor general reports painted a gloomy picture of the performance of local government in some provinces (Mello, 2018). Many municipalities over the years have failed to meet the performance targets required and expected by law for several reasons, which include but are not limited to a high level of employee absenteeism, diversity issues, poor leadership, corruption, employee job dissatisfaction, and lack of transformation (Mamokhere, 2020; Mc Lean, 2013; Ndasana & Umejesi, 2022).

Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2021) acknowledge that recent studies have established that the poor performance of municipal officials contributes to poor municipal service delivery. Oupa (2023) also observes that most municipalities in South Africa have experienced protests due to underperformance. Oupa (2023) argues that the underperformance of South African municipalities

can be attributed to unethical behaviour and mismanagement of public funds. Moreover, it has been found that Zululand District Municipality has recently come under the spotlight for poor performance and the awarding of work to potentially unsuitable service providers (Zululand District Municipality Integrated Development Plan, 2020/21).

According to Mathibane (2010), despite the Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998 requires councilors to establish methods for delivering services and developing criteria for evaluating performance in service delivery, however, this raises a big question concerning the critical role played by employees towards service excellence. Although many studies (Ndevu & Muller, 2018) have been conducted globally on employee performance and service delivery, there is a dearth of empirical evidence on how employee performance impacts service delivery within the South Africa context. Although Smit and Govender (2016), in their study, found that there was a direct relationship between employee performance and municipal service delivery, it is not clear how employee performance influences municipal service delivery. Morudu (2017) also opines that service delivery protests are still prevalent in South African municipalities despite several interventions. This study aimed to address the gaps in existing research by conducting an in-depth investigation into the perceptions and experiences of local labour forums and management on how employee performance influences service delivery at Zululand District Municipality.

1.4 Research Aims

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions and experiences of local labour forums and management on the impact of employee performance on service delivery at Zululand District Municipality. Moreover, the study aimed to address underperformance and service delivery challenges in Zululand District Municipality.

1.5 Research Objectives

To achieve the broad aim of the study, the following specific objectives will be investigated.

- To explore the determinants of employee performance within selected Zululand District Municipalities;
- To elicit the manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the viewpoint of local labour forum and management within the selected Zululand District Municipalities ;

- To establish whether there exists a link between employee performance and service delivery in selected Zululand District Municipalities;
- To examine how service delivery can be affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum in selected Zululand District Municipalities; and
- To analyse the perceptions of the local labour forum and management on what could be the improvement of employee performance in selected Zululand District Municipalities

1.6 Research Questions

To achieve the broad aim of the study, the following research questions will be answered.

- How is employee performance being measured within selected Zululand District Municipalities?
- What is the manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the view point of local labour forum and management in selected Zululand District Municipalities?
- What type of relationship exists between employee performance and service delivery in selected Zululand District Municipalities?
- How is service delivery affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum the Zululand District Municipality? and
- What are the perceptions of the local labour forum and management on what could be the improvement of employee performance in selected Zululand District Municipalities

1.7 Rationale and Motivation for the Study

Poor service delivery remains a critical challenge facing South Africa, which is a cause for concern (Smit & Govender, 2015). This phenomenon has resulted in many violent service delivery protests in municipal areas (Mathibane, 2010). Post-1994, there has been an increase in community-level protests against municipalities due to the non-delivering of essential services, corruption, and violation of the spirit of the Constitution of South Africa, by victimizing those too poor to pay for municipal services. These protest actions indicate that services offered by municipalities are to meet the community's expectations. Although some municipalities have managed very well and service delivery is excellent, the overall local government service delivery in South Africa is precariously classified by increasing debtors, poor systems, poor performance, poor long-term planning, huge service delivery backlogs and queries, increasing salary bills, unfunded mandates, government debt, concerns about sustainability, and greater demands and expectations by all stakeholders (Chiwara, 2022; Mamokhere, 2022). Failure to conduct this study will result in

deteriorating service delivery, leading to an increase in service delivery protests in the Zululand District Municipality. Also, failure to conduct this study will result in customer dissatisfaction, ultimately resulting in revenue loss in the Zululand District Municipality. Therefore, this study is necessitated by the need to address the state of poor service delivery in the local government through improved employee performance.

1.8 Contribution of the Study

There are several contributions that this study will offer to public sector organisations and scholarly researchers. Theoretically, the study adds to existing knowledge on employee performance and service delivery, as it investigates the perceptions of local labour forums and management on how employee performance influences service delivery at Zululand District Municipality. The findings from the study will extend the frontier of knowledge on employee performance and service delivery in the field of Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management. This will serve as a reference point of material for HR practitioners, academics, researchers, and students. In addition, the study will contribute to minimising service delivery protests in South Africa, particularly in local communities through employee performance. The study, when completed, will serve as a guide to local government on how to improve service delivery to their constituents. This will serve as a panacea to the service delivery protest in the country. Furthermore, the research findings will help South African municipalities and policy-makers when developing policies on employee performance and service delivery. Besides, the study South African municipalities to develop strategies to improve employees performance.

1.9 Brief Description of Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted the interpretivist paradigm that will help to understand the viewpoint of the subject being observed rather than the observer's viewpoint. An exploratory study was carried out to help provide more insights into and an understanding of the research problem. Qualitative research method was employed to offer an adequate explanation and description of the chosen phenomenon. An inductive approach was used to construct a theory based on the research participants' views. The study was carried out in the Zululand District Municipality. The target population of the study was approximately 1,120, comprising of permanent employees, contractual employees and those on Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

Given the nature and method of investigation, non-probability sampling strategy was used to select the participants. This sampling strategy has various techniques such as purposive, snowball, and

convenience sampling. However, purposive sampling technique was used to select subjects (participants) based on their prior knowledge and experience about the chosen phenomenon or subject matter under investigation. Although the total population of the study was 1,120, the sample size of 14 was selected. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) recommend that the appropriate sample size for qualitative research ranges from 7-30. Therefore, based on the above recommendation, the study assumes that the sample size of 14 was sufficient for the research.

There are different data collection instruments, including interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, survey research, and experimental research. However, the most suitable data collection instrument in this study was interviews. There are different methods of collecting data through interviews, including personal interviews and telephonic interviews. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Zoom and Skype interviews were conducted. The interviews were audio taped with the consent of the participants. The data quality control was determined by employing trustworthiness criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Different software are available for analysing qualitative data, namely: ATLAS-ti7, NVivo, and MA Xqda11. However, in this study, the data was analysed using the NVivo software (version 13). NVivo helps to organise, index, code, and query the journals for specific topics (Robins & Eisen, 2017). There are two ways of analysing qualitative data, such as content and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted, which involves classifying and presenting themes (patterns) that relate to the dataset.

1.10 Organisation of the Study

The thesis comprises of six (6) chapters as follows:

- **Chapter One-Introduction**

This chapter provides a detail overview of the study. The chapter addresses the background of the study, problem statement, aims of the study, research objectives, research questions, motivation and rationale for the study, contribution of the study, brief description of the research methodology, and structure of the study.

- **Chapter Two-Literature Review**

Chapter review both empirical and theoretical literature that relate to employee performance and service delivery. The review includes definitions of employee performance and service delivery, factors affecting employee performance, legal frameworks that regulator employee performance, performance indicators in South African public sector, current state of employee performance in

South African local government, current state of service delivery and protest action in South African public sector, criteria for measuring service delivery in South African local government, and relationship between employee performance and service delivery.

- **Chapter Three-Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter explains the research methods that will be adopted to investigate the research phenomenon empirically. The chapter will address the research paradigm, research design, research approach, population of the study, sampling strategy and procedures, data collection instrument, pre-testing, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

- **Chapter Four- Data Presentation and Analysis**

This chapter will deal with the data presentation and analysis. The data will be transcribed and analysed using NVivo software, version 13.0. Thematic analysis will be adopted to help in identifying, analysing, and reporting the findings.

- **Chapter Five-Discussion of the Results**

This chapter discusses the findings obtained from the research. The discussion of the results will be done per the research objectives.

- **Chapter Six- Conclusion and Recommendations**

Chapter six presents the study's concluding remarks by supporting the findings with literature review. It further provides the conclusion of the entire research and highlights the scholarly contribution to the field of study. The chapter concludes with recommendations and directions for further research.

1.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a broad overview of the study in terms of employee performance and service delivery. It discussed the background of the study. The description of the problem statement also formed part of the chapter. The research aims, objectives, and questions were highlighted in the chapter. The chapter further highlighted the significance of the study. The motivation for the study was clearly stated in the chapter. It additionally provided a summary of the research design and methodology to be employed. The chapter concluded with the organisation of the study. The following chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Efficient and reliable service is one of the challenges facing many countries worldwide. For example, Mangai (2016, 2017) argues that several countries, especially developing ones, including Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa, to mention a few, face service delivery challenges. Also, Gafar (2017) suggests that post-independence, African countries have faced different challenges, particularly service delivery-related issues. Research on poor service delivery by the South African local government to their constituents is well documented (Ngcamu, 2019; Vyas-Doorgapersad & Masibigiri, 2022). In the last decades, there have been ongoing community protests in South Africa in connection with basic service delivery such as water, electricity, roads, schools, sanitation and housing (Beyers, 2015). According to Shongwe and Meyer (2023), South African municipalities continuously experience challenges in providing quality basic services to their communities. Most communities that experience poor service delivery often engage in violent and disruptive service delivery protests. The numerous protests suggest that service delivery is a pressing issue facing communities, predominantly rural areas in South Africa. Therefore, this chapter reviews literature on employee performance and service delivery. The chapter includes the definition of the key constructs, followed by the discussion on employee performance and service delivery in line with the stated research objectives that guide the study. The chapter is organised in two phases, with the review of literature on employee performance first and followed by service delivery. This section of the chapter reviews definitions of employee performance and service delivery.

The variables investigated in this study include employee performance and service delivery. The principal aim of organisations is to achieve high work productivity through optimal employee performance (Rachmaliya & Efendy, 2017). However, there is no universal definition for the concept of employee performance. Thus, there is no consensus among scholars (See: Pradhan & Jena 2017; Tuffaha, 2020) regarding the conceptualisation of employee performance. According to Sultana, Morrison and Rosengarten (2012), performance is considered as the achievement of specified task measured against predetermined or identified standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. Combs, Liu, Hall and Ketchen (2006) point out that for an organisation to be effective for its goals, it is imperative to regularly monitor or measure its employee performance.

For Kazan and Gumus (2013), performance is a degree of achievability to predetermined business objectives.

Chen, Dean, Frant and Kumar (2018) believe that service delivery is a common phrase used to describe the distribution of essential resources such as water, electricity, sanitation, infrastructure, land and housing to citizens. Within the framework of local government, service delivery is defined as the provision of municipal goods, benefits, activities and satisfactions that are deemed public to improve the quality of life in local jurisdictions (Ndudula, 2013). Within this framework, particular reference is made to discharging of municipal services, which can be either tangible or intangible. The former involves providing services that are construed as being visible to local communities, including state housing, roads, water and sanitation systems, and public transport. The latter refers to services that are considered being essential but not necessarily visible, including “public drainage and sewage systems and public safety standards” (Ndudula, 2013, p.10). Shongwe and Meyer (2023) also consider service delivery to be providing basic quality services and goods classified as tangible public goods and intangible services.

Regrettably, governments' service delivery and upkeep of these resources are unreliable - greatly inconveniencing or endangering several communities (Chen et al., 2018). For instance, in a survey conducted by the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), more than 25% of the respondents expressed the view that poor service delivery was a major challenge facing their communities (Chen et al., 2018). A further survey released by the Department: Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2009) shows that 46% (5.7 million) of households in South Africa have no universal access to basic services such as water, sanitation, refuse removal, and electricity.

2.2 Factor Affecting Service Delivery in Sub-Sharan Africa

According to Odaro (2012), service delivery remains a crucial issue in Sub-Sharan Africa. The author observes that Sub-Sharan African countries lag behind other countries in the developing world in terms of service delivery due to funding shortfall and lack of accountability. In Nigeria, it has been found that most public service enterprises have been unsuccessful in providing reliable water supply and sanitation services (Odaro, 2012). The author argued that government monopoly in service provision has resulted in lack of accountability and community ownership in the

planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, poor management and sustainability, low quality and limited options.

Also, Matallah (2020) finds that high inequality and failure to scale up public service delivery worsen living conditions and serve as repellent factors in North African countries. According to Matalla (2020), poor-quality public services and glaring inequality were the main catalysts for the Arab Spring. Opoku and Barfi (2022) discovered that while human resource management and organisational factors have a significant positive correlation with the service delivery quality of staff, organisational factors had a greater effect than human resource management factors.

2.3 Factors Affecting Municipal Service Delivery in South Africa

The review of previous empirical research suggests that quality service delivery in South African municipalities is affected by several factors. For example, Mpehle (2012) investigated service delivery protests in South African municipalities. Mpehle (2012) points out that despite the progress post-1994, the government's failure to adequately meet communities' needs has led to numerous recent service delivery protests. The study concluded that the service delivery protests result from the deployment of unskilled, unqualified and inexperienced cadres to municipal management positions, corruption, lack of revenue due to centralisation of funding and the absence of proper systems of collecting revenue by municipalities.

Ibok (2014) analysed the impact of governance on service delivery in Nigeria. The historical and descriptive approaches were adopted to collect data on the effect of governance on service delivery. The findings indicated that elected leaders at the local level were unresponsive to the basic needs of the people due to bad leadership, lack of accountability and transparency. In addition, the findings demonstrated that lack of funds occasioned by low budgetary allocation, restricted revenue sources available to local government and inability to utilise its internal sources of revenue generation effectively had impacted service delivery in Nigeria. Koma and Tshiyoyo (2015) analysed how service delivery could be improved in South Africa and found that institutional blockages hindered effective public service delivery.

Mathebula, Nkuna and Sebola (2016) argued that service delivery remains the pressing challenge facing many developing countries in the 21st century. For this reason, Integrated Development Plan (IDP) has been adopted to improve service delivery in South African municipalities. A mixed-method approach was adopted using structured questionnaires and supplementary unstructured interviews, documentary analysis and observations to collect data. The results revealed the

challenge of engaging in management planning processes regarding formulating and implementing the IDPs.

Shai (2017) analysed the factors of poor service delivery and found that a lack of knowledge, skills and poor governance (lack of accountability, transparency and community participation) contributed to poor service delivery. Masegare and Ngoepe (2018) developed a framework for incorporating implementation indicators of corporate governance for municipalities in South Africa. The findings indicated that municipalities still struggle to provide services to the citizens because of the poor implementation of the corporate governance framework.

Kalonda and Govender (2021) examined the factors that affect municipal service delivery in Katima Mulilo Town Council, Namibia. The study adopted the mixed method approach to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative information about the factors affecting municipal service delivery. The study involved 130 participants, which comprised 30 town council employees and 100 community members. The sample size was collected using purposive and stratified sampling techniques. The quantitative data was analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 16, whereas the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that most participants were dissatisfied with service delivery by the Katima Mulilo Town Council for several reasons, including poor solid waste management, lack of road infrastructure, poor governance and leadership, inadequate water supply, and inadequate town planning and housing. Moreover, the participants attributed poor service delivery to factors such as lack of community participation, poor leadership, lack of skills, lack of funding, corruption and ineffective strategic management.

Ngobeni (2018) analysed the factors influencing service delivery in the Tshwane Municipality, South Africa. The primary aim of the study was to identify factors that affect service delivery within the City of Tshwane Municipality. The study involved 60 respondents who completed the questionnaire in the various departments within the City of Tshwane Municipality. The results suggested that the major factors contributing to poor service delivery within the City of Tshwane Municipality were a lack of stakeholder involvement and communication.

Masiya, Davids and Mangai (2021) explored the factors affecting the performance of South African municipalities. A qualitative research approach was adopted to identify the factors contributing to poor performance among municipal officials. Interviews were conducted among municipal officials to elicit information about the causes of poor performance. The findings

indicated that the factors responsible for poor performance in South African municipalities include an unsupportive institutional environment, power struggles, political interference, bureaucratic environment, lack of coherent management systems, lack of a culture of excellence, skills shortage, poor collaboration skills and lack of trust between councillors and political parties.

Van Antwerpen and Ferreira (2016) investigated contributing factors to poor service delivery in the Gauteng public service in South Africa. The study was conducted among non-managerial administrative workers in the public service located in the Gauteng province. The study was triggered by poor service delivery in South Africa. It focused on the opinions of administrative employees because they interact with the public daily. The findings revealed that although the employees were satisfied with the work environment and other job factors, they lacked the competency, typing and keyboard skills. If these challenges are not addressed, poor service delivery will likely continue, leading to high costs, frustration among community members, and decreased foreign investment.

Masiya, Davids and Mangai (2019) also assessed public perceptions of municipal service delivery in South Africa. The study was intended to analyse citizen satisfaction with basic municipal service delivery and their perceptions of the South African Social Attitude Survey. A quantitative research approach was adopted to determine citizen satisfaction with basic service delivery. The findings showed that citizen dissatisfaction with service delivery could be attributed to perceptions of relative deprivation and inequality, unfulfilled political promises, inadequate access to services, provision of poor quality service and high poverty rate.

Furthermore, Worku (2021) investigated the factors moderating service excellence in the City of Tshwane. The study assessed the perceptions of people who live and work in the city. The data was collected from 402 people using 57 indicators of satisfaction with municipal services' quality, affordability and efficiency. Contrary to other studies, this study found that approximately 76% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of services provided to the municipality. The study identified three factors that influenced service excellence in the City of Tshwane: promptly resolving customers' queries on municipal accounts, effectively using the Help Desk to assist customers who require help, and effectively collecting municipal bills from customers.

Moloto, Mkhomazi and Worku (2020) evaluated the factors contributing to poor service delivery in rural South African communities. Moloto et al. (2020) point out that service delivery in rural communities is less efficient than in urban areas. The study concluded that poor service delivery

in rural communities could be attributed to infrastructure challenges. Emily and Muyengwa (2021) assessed the impact of the maintenance of municipality infrastructure on service delivery in Limpopo Province. The study adopted the mixed-methods approach to analyse impact of the maintenance of municipality infrastructure on service delivery. Survey questionnaire and structured interviews were used to collect the data from communities and employees in the Limpopo municipality. The findings indicated that residents faced water challenges due to a lack of maintenance and absence of water supply.

Pekeur (2018) investigated the perception issues and challenges of service delivery in UMzimkhulu Municipality, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. In addition, the study focused on identifying the factors affecting service delivery in the municipality. Also, the study aimed to make recommendations for improving service delivery at uMzimkhulu. The findings suggested that although there are challenges facing the municipality, there was a strong perception among respondents that the management at uMzimkhulu municipality exercised tight control of resources, leading to an efficient allocation of scarce resources to priority service delivery projects. The study found poverty, unemployment and the growing population as the significant challenges affecting the municipality.

Also, Mamokhere (2020) also explored the reasons behind service delivery protests in the Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality. Mamokhere (2020) points out that in the last decades, South Africa has experienced several protests against poor and insufficient service delivery in different municipalities. Against this backdrop, the study intended to ascertain whether the protests were due to poor service delivery. A desktop research approach was adopted to validate the argument and uncover the underlying factors of service delivery protests in the Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality. Mamokhere (2020) claims that service delivery protests are attributed to poverty, political instability, corruption, nepotism, and lack of public participation.

Masuku and Jili (2019) researched public service delivery in South Africa. The study aimed to assess whether poor service delivery at the local government level is attributed to the politicisation of administrative components in municipalities. The findings confirmed that the political interface in local municipalities greatly impacted effective and efficient administration and growth opportunities. The study concluded that political favours and interferences are dominant in South African municipalities and hinder the process of providing services equally.

Besides, Tsako (2020) assessed the influence of the political environment on service delivery. A qualitative study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal district municipalities to determine whether political instability and patronage affect service delivery. The findings showed that political instability had a negative impact on service delivery. The study by Zerihun and Mashigo (2022) focused on the quest for service delivery in Mpumalanga province. The study aimed to assess the extent of service delivery and determine how to improve it. The primary data was collected from 120 respondents. A descriptive research approach was adopted to describe service delivery in the province. A quantitative research method using a questionnaire was adopted to collect data from the respondents. The findings revealed that the study area residents were dissatisfied with service delivery because the municipality failed to generate enough funds due to non-payment for the services rendered.

In their study, Masuku, Mlambo and Ndlovu (2022) examined how households in South Africa are satisfied with service delivery by the South African government. The study relied on a secondary research approach that analysed data published by Statistics South Africa. The study adopted the new public service approach as the theoretical lens to explain the governance conditions in South Africa and assess how and what needs to be done to achieve effective governance. The results showed that while efforts to enhance service delivery have been initiated and supported by policies, they have not changed the citizens' perceptions of the state because of mistrust in state institutions. The findings indicated that inequitable development and poverty hinder efficient public service delivery in South Africa.

2.4 Factors Influencing Employee Performance in South African Local Government

There is a myriad of factors that influence employee performance worldwide. According to Arta, Rijal, Samsudin and Sutaguna (2023), all over the world, local government performance is reflected by the performance of its workforce. These indicators of employee performance may vary from organisation to organisation, study to study, or country to country. Some of the factors influencing employee performance in the South African local government and other jurisdictions are discussed below.

2.4.1 Self-efficacy

Research (Bandura, 1977; Pajares, 1997) suggests that self-efficacy represents one of the significant predictors of employee performance. The concept of self-efficacy was introduced by Bandura (1977). According to Bandura and Wood (1989), personal efficacy (skills and abilities) is the key to success in several areas that keep inevitable focus on productivity and a constant effort

to achieve goals. From the perspectives of social cognitive theory and an agentive theory, Bandura (1977) identifies four sources of self-efficacy, including mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal or social persuasion and, physiological arousal or emotional state. Several studies (Pajares & Miller, 1994; Yeo & Neal, 2006; Zhu, Chen, Chen & Chern, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000) have acknowledged the mediating role of self-efficacy in linking various determinants to performance. A more recent study conducted by Tiwari, Srivastava and Pathak (2017) also confirm that enhanced self-efficacy provides solution as it helps to build trust in one's capabilities and skills in times. Tannady, Ismuhadjar and Zami (2017), in their study, confirm that self-efficacy positively impacts employee performance. Mojavezi and Tamiz (2012) also made a similar conclusion that a significant positive relationship exists between self-efficacy and performance.

Srivastava and Pathak (2019) postulate that self-confidence and self-motivation work better when accompanied with job involvement, thereby improving employee performance. Similarly, Song, Chai, Kim and Bae (2018) found a positive relationship between employee self-efficacy and performance. These above findings are consistent with a study conducted by Clercq, Inam Ul Haq and Azeem (2018), which states that self-efficacy enhances job performance.

2.4.2 Job involvement

Job involvement represents workers' commitment to their work. Thus, job involvement refers to workers' dedication and concern for their work. This feeling will psychologically get the workers to perform the task and total confidence in getting the job done (Thevanes & Dirojan, 2018). For Rivai and Mulyadi (2012), job involvement represents an individual's level of psychologically liking his/her job and attaching importance to the performance for self-esteem. Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2016) believe that job involvement denotes the level of identification of a person in the work he/she does. It has been argued that a person with high job involvement values his/her job as important to his life. Doing an excellent job at work will contribute to their self esteem.

It has been found that work involvement plays a vital role in determining employees' work performance. Rachmawati and Mauludin (2018), in their study, discovered a significant influence of job involvement on job performance in State Civil Apparatus, Pasuruan, Mgedezi, Toga and Mjoli (2014) also claim many researchers have acknowledged that job involvement is a tool for aiding productivity and creating work situations in which individual and organisational goals are integrated. Thus, job involvement leads to enhanced satisfaction and increased employee

performance. Given these findings, it can be argued that job involvement has been a top organisational priority as fostering employee involvement can enhance organisational effectiveness. By contrast, Prasetyo, Kusmaningtyas and Nugroho (2021) found that job involvement has no significant influence on employee performance.

2.4.3 Job autonomy

Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2006, p.162) describe job autonomy as the degree to which “the job allows the worker decide on how to perform his/her work. The authors further add that job autonomy is positively associated with employee performance. Thus, employees with increased job autonomy have more flexibility in their work because they choose how to execute their jobs more efficiently, and therefore, their performance is improved (Morgenson, Delaney-Klinger & Hemingway, 2005). In a similar study, Parker, Williams and Turner (2006) expressed that job autonomy is positively related to commitment and proactivity. Additionally, Dysvik and Kuvaas (2011) report a relationship between job autonomy and employee performance, which is moderated by intrinsic motivation.

Saragih (2011) argues that a significant positive exists between job autonomy and employee performance due to increasing satisfaction, self-efficacy, and mitigating job stress. Khoshnaw and Alavi (2020) also confirm that among other, job autonomy is one of the predictors of employee performance. In a similar study, Muecke and Iseke (2019) found that job autonomy leads to better job performance.

2.4.4 Organisational culture

Organisational culture is one of the predictors of employee performance. Desson and Clouthier (2010) observe that organisational culture and its dimensions are important issues that attract the interest of scholarly researchers. The origin of organisational culture can be traced to anthropology (Tharp, 2009). Extant literature suggests no single exhaustive definition of the term organisational culture universally acceptable by scholars in different disciplines. In a general term, organisational culture has been perceived as a social process. Thus, organisational culture represents a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Tharp, 2009). According to Desson and Clouthier (2010), organisational culture is the personality of an organisation; capable of guiding the thoughts and actions of employees, and central to the values, beliefs, attitudes and interpersonal behaviour of all stakeholders, which defines the way an

organisation functions. For Schein (1990), organisational culture represents the norms, communication, behaviour, beliefs and values that provides guidance to people.

Wambugu (2014) examined the effects of organisational culture on employee performance and found that organisational values has a more significant effect to employee's job performance than the organisational climate. Moreover, Martinez, Beaulieu, Gibbons, Pronovost and Wang (2015), in their study, established a strong link between organisational culture and employee performance. Martinez et al. (2015) explained that aspects of organisational culture, whether broad and large, or slow and gradual, exert influence on large and small scale organisational economic activities, including performance. Furthermore, the authors found that the four dimensions of organisational culture (adaptability, mission, consistency, and inclusiveness) exhibit a strong influence on employee performance. Shahzad, Luqman, Khan and Shabbir (2012) share a similar view that if employees share values and respond to shared norms within the organization, they will maximize their work efforts, resulting in improved organisational performance. Nikpour (2017) also observes that organisational culture enhances employee and organizational performance, increases employee satisfaction and problem-solving capacity. Bonstra (2013) also agrees with other scholars that organisational performance is significantly impacted by a strong culture.

2.4.5 Employee training and development

Yasmin Musmuliana (2012) believes that training is a set of planned activities to enhance knowledge and skills or modify members' attitudes and behaviour in ways that are consistent with the organizational goals and job requirements. The author defines training and development as the process where trainees acquire or absorb skills and knowledge that enhance their effectiveness. From the perspective of human capital theory, training and development are the major contributors to developing a society's human capital. Managing public organizations requires a certain amount of skills and professionalism for attaining effective and efficient results (Yasmin Musmuliana, 2012). This assertion underscores training and development, especially in public sector organizations. Shadare (2010) points out that one of the strongest arguments favouring employee training and development is that it helps develop the proper and effective human capital required to achieve organisational goals.

Moreover, in their study, Kum, Cowden and Karodia (2014) confirm that training and development lead to better employee performance. Therefore, it is recommended that organisations invest in employee training and development for sustainable competitive advantage. Ampomah (2016) also concurs that training and development are key determinants for improving employee performance

in most organisations. The study further found most employees are motivated by training and development, leading to higher performance. Similarly, Asfaw, Argaw and Bayissa (2015) found that training and development positively correlated with employee performance and effectiveness. Darshani (2018) also observes a significant impact of training and development on employee job performance.

2.4.6 Working environment

The work environment is also a multidimensional construct in terms of how it has been dealt with in the literature. Work environment constitutes the physical dimension of the organisation in which staff perform their functions (Foldspang, Mark, Hjorth, Langholz-Carstensen, Poulsen, Johansson & Rants, 2014; Jain & Kaur, 2014). On the other hand, it is a non-physical context and social dynamics in which individuals interact and exercise their core functions. Better still, work environment has been described as the work environment as the organisational dimension that encompasses all aspects affecting employees' minds and bodies (Jain & Kaur, 2014). Moreover, there are other defining elements of what constitutes the work environment of an organization, including patterns of delegation of competencies, authority, roles and control (Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012). Other determining factors in the work environment are coordinating interactions between all stakeholders in the organisational context (Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012), communication channels, and dissemination of guidance between employees and their managers (Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012; Robbins, DeCenzo, & Coulter, 2008).

It has been argued that employees work individually but at the same time, they interact with others in the shared work environment, which requires different workplace solutions (Chandrasekar, 2011; Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012). Thus, the work environment is inevitably linked to employees and the dynamics of relationships created in the shared work environment in which people shape professional and personal interconnections (Chandrasekar, 2011; Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012). Robbins et al. (2008) in their study of the psychological and psychosocial effects of the work environment on employee well-being and productivity. The findings revealed that the work environment, through the so-called "psychological contract", turns out to be determinant of emotional reactions at work, thus becoming responsible for both positive and negative impacts on the employees' professional and psycho-emotional well-being.

The effect of organizational structure and its environment on the behaviour of the organisational members has been an important topic of discussion and analysis in the literature since time immemorial (Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012). Within the context of the industry, the problem of

increasing production and transforming the work environment into a more pleasant one has been approached through the introduction of a work environment that favours and supports long-term and sustainable change (Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012). During the first decades of research and development in the field of industrial psychology, the physical dimension of the environment and the workplace has been given greater prominence and considered to be dominant in employee performance. Notwithstanding, the working environment in organizations has grown significantly since then (Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012). The term workplace performance implies a workspace whose fundamental objective is to clearly support work performance and transform it into an environment that optimizes employee productivity levels (Musmuliana & Mustaffa, 2012). In their study, Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) point out that convenient and ergonomic office design encouraged the employees and increased their performance significantly.

In their study, Hafeez, Yingjun, Hafeez, Mansoor and Rehman (2019) established that working environment and employee performance are positively correlated. Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019) analysed the factors affecting employee performance and found that job environment and management support have direct influence on job performance.

According to Zhenjing, Chupradit, Ku, Nassani and Haffar (2022), a positive work environment improves employee performance. Zhenjing et al. (2022) argued that employees' motivation to work hard, their efficiency and performance are shaped by the influence of the quality of the workplace. The authors conclude that once employees get a favourable working environment, they become more dedicated to their assigned tasks, ultimately improving their performance (Zhenjing et al., 2022). In a survey by Alemu (2022), the findings on modeling the employees' performance against the workplace environment factors showed a 5% significant level, and the multiple linear regression model was statistically significant (p-value 0.001).

2.4.7 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents individuals' opinions and perceptions concerning how well their expectations at work correspond to outcomes (Salminen, 2012). Employee job satisfaction can be affected by many factors, including working conditions, pay and benefits, the employee's attitudes towards the organisation and supervision, towards the work itself, and the employee's health and age. Job satisfaction is a general attitude that results from specific attitudes and factors (Rue & Byars, 2010). Job satisfaction is imperative for both employers and employees in an organisation since it is likely to influence the performance of the employees and organisation. Employees have to be happy at work as they spend most of their day in their work environment (Appel, 2006). It is

generally believed that satisfied employees tend to be more productive than dissatisfied employees. However, research has begun to support this theory in recent times after decades of questions about the satisfaction-performance relationship. It has been found that an employee with a high level of job satisfaction invariably has positive attitudes towards his or her job, while a dissatisfied person has negative attitudes about his or her job (Lotich 2014; Rue & Byars 2010; Spagnoli, Caetano & Santos, 2012).

Helmi and Abunar (2021) point out that job satisfaction and performance are important aspects for many firms and employees. In their study, Helmi and Abunar (2021) argued that employees from both public and private sectors are satisfied with their job. The overall findings confirmed that job satisfaction positively impacted employee job satisfaction in public and private institutions. Riyanto, Endri and Herlisha (2021) argued that effect of mediation through motivation and job satisfaction can have a significant effect on employee performance. These findings are consistent with Fadlallah (2015), who found a positive and statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction factors and employee performance.

2.4.8 Management support and commitment

Organizational commitment is considered a measure of employees' willingness to remain working in company in the future. According to Baihaqi (2014), organisational commitment is necessary indicator of employee performance. Putri, Sjabadhyni and Mustika (2018) argued that a strong commitment encourages managers to strive to achieve organisational goals and improve performance. Nurmala (2019) confirms that employee performance impacted by influenced by several factors, including organisational commitment.

Khalid (2020) assessed the influence of managerial support on the relationship between pay satisfaction, continuance and affective commitment and employee work performance. The data was collected from 610 faculty members in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study adopted descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation analysis, and Preacher and Hayes's PROCESS macro to make sense of the data. The findings suggested that commitment positively mediates the relationship between pay satisfaction and manager work performance. Simanjuntak, Amini and Prasetya (2022) also established that management commitment positively impacted employee performance in the Gowa Regency Regional Government.

Chen, Hao, Ding, Feng, Li and Liang (2020) examined the impact of organisational support on employee performance. About 180 participants were selected from 36 work teams 7 large

automotive manufacturing enterprises in China. The findings showed that reinforcing organisational support positively impacted new performance of frontline workers.

2.4.9 Performance management system

According to Armstrong (2015), performance management system is the measure of alignment between employee performance and organisational objectives. It has been argued that performance management system assists firms in managing their strategy. Sarwar and Awan (2013, p.84) claims that “performance management bridges the gap between organisational strategy and individual contributions and ensures that the efforts of employees are harnessed to achieve the organisational objectives.”

Simanjuntak, Amini and Prasetya (2022) established that management commitment positively impacted employee performance in the Gowa Regency Regional Government. Awan, Habib, Shoaib Akhtar and Naveed (2020) assessed the effectiveness of a performance management system for employee performance through employee engagement. A structured questionnaire was used, which was validated through confirmatory factor analysis. The findings showed a significant impact of performance management system effectiveness and work engagement on task and employee performance.

Santi and Rahim (2021) examined the influence of the performance management system on employee performance in Consumer Food Products Ltd. A simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data from 61 respondents. Descriptive Statistics (mean, Standard deviation, Standard error mean), inferential statistics (reliability test,) and structural Model (t-value, p-value, Coefficient value) were used to interpret the findings. The results showed that the performance management system significantly influenced employee performance in Consumer Food Products Ltd. Ravi Chandra and Saraswathi (2018) determined the impact of performance management system on employee performance and concluded that a significant positive relationship existed between performance management system and employee performance.

2.5 Relationship Employee Performance and Service Delivery

Previous studies such as Bettencourt and Brown (1997) and Galbraith (1973) have also confirmed that employee's role performance had a significant impact on quality service delivery. Another set of researchers (Bowen & Jones, 1986; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Ahearne, 1998) in their studies agreed that there is strong relationship between employees' role

performance and increased service quality. A study conducted by Lodorfos, Kostopoulos and Kaminakis (2015) on the impact of service delivery system effectiveness on service quality reveals that employee's role performance, effectiveness of coordination and effectiveness of process' control had positive influence on service quality in the organisation. Winfred (2013) concurs that factors such as remuneration, clear job descriptions and increased employee performance contribute to reducing conflicts and, in the process, motivates employees to work hard in ensuring the delivery of high-quality service. Mose (2016) also notes that there is a significant relationship between employee performance and service delivery.

Koma (2010) notes that individual capacity, which refers to competency and potential that exist in a person, will contribute to his/her performance, resulting in the improvement of service delivery in the organisation. Lovelock (1985) argues that service employees are an inseparable part of the service and their performance is crucial for service delivery success. It is suggested that for an employee to perform well, they must enact their role in the service delivery both efficiently and effectively (Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert & Zeithaml, 1997). A study suggests that if employees effectively performed their predefined role, they could contribute to achieving the company's quality standards and bridge the gap between service delivery and customer expectations (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1988).

Chebat and Kollias (2000) found that the ability of employees to adapt to individual customers' behaviour will result in improvement of service delivery. Singh (2000) concurs that more adaptable employees, especially if they are empowered, will be better positioned to offer attention to customers and satisfy their individual needs. On the contrary, it is argued that employees who do not have the necessary ability or willingness to adapt their behaviour to the circumstances and follow their supervisors' instructions cannot deliver high quality of service (Sony & Mekoth, 2012). In a related study, it was found that employee coordination, which refers to the degree to which employees work successfully together to achieve mutually agreed goals, will have a significant impact on their performance, thereby improving service delivery within the organisation (Ellinger, Baş, Ellinger, Wang & Bachrach, 2011). According to Demirbag, Sahadev, Kaynak and Akgul (2012), coordination enables organisations to generate value for their customers. Lings and Brooks (1998) noted that a service organization avoids double efforts, bottlenecks, and miscommunication during the service delivery through successful coordination of activities.

Lages, Piercy, Malhotra and Simões (2020) observed that service firms strive to encourage their employees to develop attitudes that support service delivery. Lages et al. (2020) found a direct relationship between shared values and emotional exhaustion and an indirect relationship between emotional exhaustion and service delivery performance via affective organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Moreover, Lages et al. (2020) argued that customer service quality in organisations is often affected by poor employee performance. This implies that there is a direct relationship between employee service delivery and employee performance. Ng'aru and Wafula (2015) claimed that quality of service delivery could be achieved in the public sector through public policy reforms that emphasise the need to enhance the quality of services provided to the public.

Despite literature reveals that there is a relationship between employee performance and service delivery, there is lack of research within the South African context which to determine the relationship between employee performance and service delivery. This study will therefore establish the type of relationship that exists between employee performance and service delivery in the local government.

2.6 Legal Frameworks that Regulate Performance in South African Local Government

Employee performance is a complex approach that requires serious attention. Within the South African local government context, several legislative frameworks exist in managing employee performance. These legal frameworks include the Constitution Act 108 of 1996, Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, White Paper on Local Government, Local Government, Municipal Systems Amendment Act 32 of 2000, and Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003.

2.6.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provided the basis for a plethora of statutes dealing with performance management in local government. According to Davids (2011), Chapter 7 of the Constitution provides the legislative foundation for local government. Moreover, section 152(1) outlines the objectives of the Constitution. Broumels (2014) points out that the objectives include: to provide an elected inclusive, representative and answerable administration to ordinary citizens; to provide public services equitably to all citizens without prejudice; to advance civic and economic growth; to develop secure and flourishing living habitats; to promote public participation in matters of local governance.

Section 195 sets out the requirements for the public service, which provides that is that good human resource management and career development practices must be cultivated to maximise human potential. Section 195(1) acts as a reference point guiding the conduct of public officials, including performance in all spheres of government. The section highlights the principle of good human resource management and career development practices to cultivate and maximise human potential. Accountability which is also paramount in the management of performance has been stipulated as one of the principles of public administration by section 195(1)(f) (Mokoele, Masenya & Makalela, 2018).

Although these objectives play a unique role in guiding local municipalities' development agenda, they need intergovernmental interaction and cooperation. For this reason, Reddy (2001) proposes that a culture of cooperation based on mutual respect and trust and adequate capacity development concerning financial, technological and human resources must be established to realise these objectives.

2.6.2 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 is also an important piece of the legal framework that regulates performance management in the South African local government. The Act requires that municipalities execute their responsibilities in the most proficient manner possible. It stipulates that municipalities must establish performance management systems to fulfill their constitutional mandate and guide them in designing developmental interventions responsive to citizens' needs. According to Ndlela (2008), the Act provides an operational framework for local government and sets out the systems that enable it to improve citizens' socio-economic status by ensuring that they can access essential basic services at an affordable price. Moreover, the Act requires municipalities to develop a performance management system to set targets and monitor and review performance based on indicators linked to their IDP.

2.6.3 Municipal Financial Management Act 56 of 2003

The Municipal Financial Management Act 56 of 2003 was introduced to promote effective processes to manage all municipal financial affairs, including those of related institutions in the local government sphere (Kariuki, 2017). Section 38(1)(b) of the Act, 1999 requires the accounting officer to be responsible for the effective, efficient and economic use of public resources (Mokoele et al, 2018). The Act strives to inculcate treasury standards for all financial and related matters at the local government level. The purpose of the Act is five-fold (Van der Waldt, 2014), including: to control municipal fiscal administration to establish prerequisites for

resourceful management of the income and expenditure of municipalities and their agencies; to determine responsibilities regarding municipal fiscal administration; to establish a fiscal administration governance structure for municipal entities; to set a frame of reference for municipal financing. From the performance management standpoint, the Act sets the broad framework for financial management at local government level. It also caps expenditure, especially in relation to items not provided for in the annual budget to ensure that local municipalities operate within the prescribed limits. Moreover, it sets parameters to address financial mismanagement within local government and stipulates the consequences for municipal officials who violate any clauses or fail to comply with any of its sections and procedures.

2.6.4 White Paper on Local Government of 1998

The White Paper on Local Government of 1998 provides a framework for performance management to guide municipalities in integrated development and citizen-oriented planning with clear objectives that can be tracked and evaluated over time. It also provides a platform for active public participation to ensure that municipalities are achieving their targets as per the performance indicators and, if this is not the case, hold them accountable.

Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System is another important regulatory framework that guides performance in South Africa. In 2004, the Cabinet initiated plans to develop a policy on monitoring and evaluation system for the government. This plan was subsequently developed and adopted by the government. Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System aims to improve performance management, especially within the public sector (National Treasury-South Africa, 2007).

The White Paper on Human Resource Management was also introduced to manage employee performance. The White Paper on Human Resource Management is based on the premise that the success of the public service in delivering its goals depends primarily on the efficiency and effectiveness of employees in performing their duties (Mokoele, Masenya & Makalela, 2018). Against this background, the White Paper on Human Resource Management considers performance management integral to an effective human resource management and development strategy. It considers performance management a vital process where subordinates and supervisors strive to improve an organisation's wider objectives.

2.7 Measuring Employee Performance in South African Local Government

There are different models and approaches for assessing employee performance. Adelle and Boris (2014) argued that the different models and approaches for measuring employee performance have led to the empirical vague of employee performance. Griffin, Neal and Parker (2007) pointed out that currently, there exists no unique or universally accepted theoretical framework for differentiating and integrating the various constructs that describe individual performance. Chirasha, Chipunza and Dzimbiri (2018) advocated that organisations need to have key performance indicators and performance standards set to evaluate their employees' performance effectively. Chirasha et al. (2018) have identified eight (8) criteria used to measure employees performance at Gweru and Kwekwe City Councils in Zimbabwe, namely: quality work, employee output, communication and dependability, controlling of costs, planning, team working, problem-solving and technical understanding and leadership management. A study carried out by Dhammika (2013) reveals that the performance of employees in Sri Lankan within the public sector is assessed based on behavioural factors such as the task/job, career, team, innovation, and organisation. Conversely, Synovia and Burchel (2017) argue that most organisations consider problem-solving as a determinant of employee performance.

It has been argued that only output, the easiest way to measure constitutions, is one of the important criteria for evaluating employee performance (Mbore & Cheruiyot, 2017). There are different ways to measure this employee performance metric, including the number of sales, units produced, and product defects or errors. However, the authors suggest that when sales are complex, the number of sales becomes less reliable because lower frequency and randomness/luck will play a significant role in the successful outcome of the sale.

Besides, Synovia and Burchel (2017) postulate that most organisations consider problem-solving as a determinant of employee performance. In performance management, employers' value good problem-solving skills because it helps to determine employee competencies such as logic, creativity, resilience, imagination, lateral thinking and determination. It has been argued that problem solving skills help people cope with various challenges and demands in their lives and take responsibility of their actions (Matemba, Awinja & Otieno, 2014). According to Jyung, Lee, Park, Cho and Choi (2020) jobs that require problem-solving skills for abstract tasks are expected to increase because problem-solving skills is considered an important criterion for determining employee competency and performance in most firms. Jyung et al. (2020) define problem-solving

as the abilities to solve problems for personal, work, and civic purposes by setting up appropriate goals and plans

From the perspective of the New Public Management (NPM), different criteria were introduced in business firms to measure performance, including output per hour/shift quality of work, behaviour, discipline and level of commitment (Schermerhom, Hunt & Osborn, 1985). This performance management approach helps determine the poor and good performers out of the lot based on performance measurement so that further remedial action can be taken. Several firms have been scrapping the traditional performance appraisal policy favouring new performance measurements (Day, 2007). According to Wade and Recardo (2001), a new approach focuses on coaching and feedback to produce a better outcome of employee performance. Different input forms are used in the African public sector to take feedback from various sources like the supervisor, peers, and the employee (Wade & Recardo, 2001). Aguinis, Joo and Gottfredson (2011) postulate that measuring the performance of the employees based only on one of the same factors can provide inaccurate results and leave a bad impression on the employees and the organization. For instance, by measuring only the activities in employee performance, an organisation might rate most of its employees as outstanding, even when the organization might have failed to meet the goals and objectives. Hence, a balanced set of measures should be used to measure the employees' performance (Kuvaas, 2006). Kuvaas (2006) proposes that measuring employee performance also encompasses the quality of the accomplishments, compliance with the desired standards, costs involved and the time spent in achieving the stated goals.

In their study, Mbore and Cheruiyot (2017) argued that performance management include indicators such as monitoring, providing timely feedback and reviews of the employees for their work and performance based on the predetermined goals and solving the problems that emerged. Given the findings, it has been proposed that timely recognition of the accomplishment motivates and helps to increase employee performance (Rudman, 2002). According to Bataineh (2017), employee performance is the combination of efficiency and effectiveness of the employee's daily tasks to meet the stakeholders' expectations. In a similar study, Zakaria, Aziz, Selamat and Omar (2020) identified six components of measuring of employee performance, including tasks, contextual, adaptive, productive behaviour, service quality and organisational strategic objectives. Twaissi and Aldehayyat (2021) expressed a similar opinion that the measurement of employee performance should consider the overall operation of the business and organisational strategies and goals.

By contrast, Tuffaha (2020) points out that a consensus prevails among scholars that are important in daily tasks and assignment. Khalili (2018) points out that creativity is a fundamental step in innovation, which influences employee performance. Creativity involves developing new and useful solutions for an organisation's challenges, whereas innovation involves implementing or applying new and valuable thoughts in the workplace (Khalili, 2018). In their study, Nguyen and Le (2019), argue that fostering innovation and creativity in the organisation has several advantages and positive consequences on employee's psychology, behaviour and performance. Alzghoul, Elrehail, Emeagwali and AlShboul (2018) share a similar opinion that a workplace climate that encourages creativity and innovation has a positive impact on employee's job satisfaction, job commitment and job performance. In their study, Ismail, Iqbal and Nasr (2019) conclude that most organisations rely on employees' creativity and innovation to determine the extent of their performance.

In South Africa, the 'Excellence Model' is the standard framework for measuring performance within the public and private sectors (Van Der Walt, 2004). The 1997 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) set out citizen-centred principles to ensure that the government provides relevant services that meet the public's expectations (Department of Public Service and Administration, DPSA, 2014). The South African Excellence Model is a generic plan which strives towards service excellence. This model predicts the cause and effect relationship between organisational condition and resulting performance. This model is an internationally recognised criterion for performance excellence and has been adopted and implemented by many organisational in improving performance. It contains different criteria for assessing performance, including leadership, policy and strategy, customer focus, people and management, processes, impact on society, customer satisfaction, people satisfaction, supplier and partnership performance and results. The performance dimensions are classified into three broad areas: enablers, organisational results, and performance results.

However, it appears that South African Excellence Model tends to focus on measuring the performance of municipalities as compared to employee performance. Moreover, extant literature shows that a relatively little attention has been paid by researchers for the identification of an appropriate model of performance for employees South African public sector. Against this backdrop, this study will determine the best approach or model of measuring employee performance in the local government.

2.8 Current State of Employee Performance in South African Local Government

Globally, employee performance in the public sector has attracted a lot of debate in recent times. The performance of the public sector organisation is perceived in terms of its capacity for effective and efficient public service delivery to enable a wide range of actors in society to deliver the development goals and objectives of a country (Issa, 2010). According to Naser; Abolhassan and Mohammad (2013), it is difficult to measure performance in public service because the outputs are also intangible. South African public sector organisations have criticised poor performance in the last few years. In view of this concern, it is worth investigating the current state of employee performance in the local government. Van Dijk and Reyneke (2015) believed that the negative employee perceptions of performance management are pervasive throughout the public sector in many countries.

Zakaria, Aziz, Selamat and Omar (2020), in their study, have identified a problem with regard to management aspects in terms of effective communication, lack of resources, implementation of and performance appraisal system. These problems negatively affected employee's morale that adversely affected the overall performance. Zakaria et al. (2020) further argued that the cause of poor work performance in the South African public sector was because the policy was incorrectly implemented. Since 1967, output per worker per unit of capital in South Africa has declined from R7,297 to R4,924 a year – a decline of 32.5 per cent (Sharp, 2012). Based on the fall in output per worker, Mazibuko (2012, 2016) argues that South Africa is less efficient than many of its emerging market competitors because the labour force is uncompetitive. Findings suggest that there are myriad of factors that contribute to poor performance within the South African local government, including organisational culture, a mismatch of officials and posts, a general lack of skills, and shortcomings inherent in the performance management system itself. Furthermore, the research revealed a lack of manager will and conviction to manage poor performance – despite their ability to articulate the rationale for managing poor performance (Hamilton & Streets, 2007).

Kanyane (2014) discovers that poor service delivery in local government results from the manifestation of municipal capacity constraints, financial viability problems, service delivery protests, convoluted political process, corruption and poor planning, and monitoring and evaluation challenges. Van Antwerpen and Ferreira (2016) opine that if the problems such as employee dissatisfaction with the job environment and lack of practical skills are not resolved, poor service delivery will probably continue, resulting in cost increases, higher frustration levels of the community, and a decrease in foreign investment. Similar, Kalonda and Govender (2021),

in their study, found that most respondents were dissatisfied with services rendered by Katima Mulilo Town Council. The authors add that some factors which contributed to poor service delivery were lack of community participation, lack of leadership, inadequate service delivery skills, financial difficulties, corruption and ineffective strategic management. For these reasons, the study proposed that management pays attention to developing council leadership, training of employees and strengthening revenue collection policies (Kalonda & Govender, 2021).

2.9 Current State of Service Delivery and Protest Action in South African Public Sector

Service delivery is critical for the functionality of a modern community or family life. Against this background, Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Publishing (2010) reports that governments worldwide are making stronger commitments towards the provision of public services as part of their policy initiatives to improve social cohesion and citizens' quality of life. Ndevu and Muller (2018) explain that in South Africa, the local government forms part of the public sector, which is close to the citizens and mandated to provide basic services and develop the local communities. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 requires the government to pass a Bill of Rights, inter alia, to promote and protect human dignity, the achievement of equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. The Constitution confirms that everyone has the right to have access to sufficient water and an environment devoid of harm to human health or wellbeing (Reddy, 2016). Moreover, the White Paper on Local Government (1998) states that municipalities should conform to certain basic principles regarding the services they deliver.

However, it has been argued that several years after the transition, several countries, including South Africa is still faced with myriad challenges, including poor service delivery. According to Matallah and Benlahcene (2021), inefficient public service delivery is a common issue across the globe, especially in developing countries. In Africa, Mbandlwa (2023) argues that service delivery has been hijacked by politicians who want to advance their political interests and deploy people, not based on how they can contribute to public service delivery. For example, in Nigeria, Egugbo (2020) observes that one of the challenges facing Nigerians is poor service delivery. Therefore, it can be argued that service delivery remains a pressing issue throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

In South Africa, Reddy (2016) points out that basic services have often proved unreliable, greatly inconveniencing and endangering local communities. The slow pace and poor service delivery have resulted in service delivery protests all over the country and have brought local government

under the spotlight. Most of these protests were characterised by violence, xenophobic attacks, looting, and police brutality (Akinboade, Mokwena & Kinck, 2014; Kanyane, 2014; Nkomo, 2017; Peyper, 2016). According to Kanyane (2010), the first 100 days of President Jacob Zuma's administration was characterised by protests and strikes. President Zuma's first term of office, which was expected to end in 2014, leaves many communities disgruntled about service delivery. Reddy (2016) observes that the recurring protests against poor service delivery in all the provinces cause serious concern. As a result of the historical past, the local government has been challenged to deliver quality services on several occasions. Reddy (2010) alleges that since 1998, the local government has no or limited capacity to provide quality basic service.

Sibanda (2012) points out that due to the dysfunction and difficulties faced by municipalities in South Africa towards quality service delivery, there was a reduction in the number of municipalities from 843 to 284 municipalities in 2000. The total number of municipalities was further reduced to 283 in 2006, following the demarcation process per Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998 as well as constitutes 6 metropolitan municipalities, 231 local municipalities and 46 district municipalities (Reddy, 2010). Municipalities were further reduced to 278 post-2011 local government elections (Sibanda, 2012). The 278 municipalities were expected to provide effective, efficient and reliable services. However, due to party political laxities, the ward councillors and municipal councils failed to meet this obligation. According to Sibanda (2012), it appears that the local government is a dumping place for people with no talent who missed more gravy-lined political posts elsewhere. The lack of technical skills and talent in most municipalities is a recipe for disaster, which affects basic service delivery.

Government Budgets and Expenditure Review (2011) reveals a huge gap between municipal expenditure and service delivery outcomes as a result of inefficiencies in the machinery of government and municipalities, which resulted in service delivery challenges over the years. Government Budgets and Expenditure Review (2011) indicates that the rising expenditure is incommensurate with policy outputs and this political and economic problem is a cause for concern. For instance, a report suggests that there has been persistent growth in capital expenditure relating to water and sanitation, however, there are a large number of smaller municipalities that have inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure (Government Budgets and Expenditure Review 2011). In a different opinion, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2009) points out that poor service delivery is a result of arrogance and insensitivity of most councillors to the community's needs. It has further been identified that effective conflict management and the

absence of coherent systems to measure service delivery are common factors for poor service delivery in South Africa.

Thusi and Selepe (2023) also argued that South African local government has witnessed several service delivery protests stemming from community dissatisfaction. According to Thusi and Selepe (2023, p. 688), “lack of accountability and consequence management has had a negative impact on good governance in the local government sphere, putting the provision of basic services at risk”. Shongwe and Meyer (2023) agreed with other researchers that South African municipalities continuously experience challenges in providing quality basic services to their communities, leading to violent and disruptive service delivery protests. Shongwe and Meyer (2023) noted that these service delivery protests are typically triggered by the failure of municipalities to provide communities with basic quality services such as electricity, water, tarred roads, sanitation and waste removal. They discovered that service delivery protests are often attributed to corruption, financial mismanagement and unproductive operations.

Service delivery protest has its origin in the apartheid regime as it is used as a weapon for citizens to express their dissatisfaction with the lack or poor services and target ethnically based structures. Govender and Reddy (2012) argue that service delivery protests in post-apartheid South Africa can be viewed as the expression of needs and grassroots protests against the poor quality of service delivery and related issues. Alexander (2010) concurs by admitting that service delivery protests appear to be originating and taking place in the poorer neighbourhoods such as townships and informal settlements as compared to suburbs. According to South African Social Attitudes Survey (2015), satisfaction with water and sanitation has received fairly consistent ratings between 2003 and 2015, ranging from 57-62% with a 58% national average from 2003 to 2015. However, when it comes to the racial assessment, the report revealed that access to water and sanitation among black African adults recorded significant satisfaction levels (52%) compared to the other racial groups (SASAS, 2015). The survey suggests that rural dwellers were the least satisfied (30%), followed by informal settlements (45%). For access to electricity, 66% were satisfied at the national level between 2003 and 2015. However, the results suggest that Black African adults were the least satisfied (63%) with the provision of electricity, compared to coloured (75%), Indian (76%) and white adults (75%). The survey further showed that informal settlement dwellers were the least satisfied (45%) with the provision and access to electricity (SASAS, 2015). When it comes to the satisfaction with refuse removal, the report indicates that the black Africans were the least satisfied (average of 44%), compared to Indian (81%), white (78%) and coloured adults

(75%). In terms of access to low-cost housing, black Africans were generally the least satisfied (30%), compared to coloured (40%) Indian (43%) and white (39%). The levels of satisfaction by geographic type indicate that people living in informal settlements have been the least satisfied (18%) (Bohler-Muller, Davids, Roberts, Kanyane, Struwig, Masiya & Nomdo, 2016).

2.10 Strategies to Improve Service Delivery in South African Municipalities

The review of empirical research showed that service delivery in South African municipalities could be improved by adopting different strategies. For instance, Shai (2017) recommends that service delivery in Greater Tubatse Municipality could be improved through effective leadership and good governance. According to Shai (2017), effective leadership will help steer the municipality in the right direction, whereas good governance will help improve democratic dispensation. Mkhathshwa-Ngwenya and Khumalo (2020) investigated how service delivery could be improved in local government and suggested that Skills development programmes interventions be designed to focus on the needs of the local government outputs. In a study by Schoeman and Chakwizira (2023), it was recommended that to overcome the shortcomings of service delivery, a simplified performance management be designed and adopted. Schoeman and Chakwizira's (2023) findings are consistent with a study by Armstrong and Taylor (2020), who suggest that performance management is a dynamic process for improving performance and getting better results through understanding and managing employee performance.

Ndevu and Muller (2018), in their study, developed a value-based integrated performance framework and measurement instrument for improving service delivery based on normative values such as openness, transparency, consistency, administrative fairness, service standards and value for money. Ndevu and Muller (2018) challenged municipalities to adopt performance measurement instruments to improve service delivery. By contrast, Biljohn (2017) proposes social innovation as a tenable alternative to improving service delivery in South Africa. According to Blijohn (2017), social innovation could be adopted to increase citizen participation for improved service delivery in local government.

Tauté (2020) assessed how collaborative partnerships could improve service delivery. The study adopted the desktop approach, which focused on reviewing literature related to service delivery and collaborative partnerships. The study argues that collaboration improves demands within the public sector. The findings revealed that a collaborative partnership could place the government in a position to deliver services strategically by leveraging the stakeholder's core competencies and resources to address the government's failure and optimise social value creation.

Shava and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2022) evaluated how digital innovations could help accelerate service delivery in South African local government. The study adopted the explorative qualitative case study design based on an extensive literature and document review analysis to examine the barriers facing the City of Tshwane from adopting digital innovations in the fourth industrial revolution. The findings showed that adopting digital innovations could help accelerate urban service delivery in the City of Tshwane. The study recommended that institutional readiness and increased revenue streams, such as a stable regulatory and policy environment, are imperatives to improving digitalised local government in the fourth industrial revolution.

Lebodi (2021) investigated the role of community participation in enhancing service delivery in Madibeng Local Municipality, North West Province, South Africa. The study explored how effective and efficient community participation strategies could improve local democracy and quality service delivery in the municipality. The study employed the quantitative research method to collect data from 200 community members and qualitative data from 12 municipal officials. The study recommended a holistic restructuring of the municipality to enhance active collaborations between the municipality and municipal stakeholders. In addition, the study recommended the adoption of innovative technologies in the municipality to improve service delivery. Masuku et al. (2022) recommended a holistic and IDP that will guarantee inclusive public service delivery to all people.

Ntoyanto-Tyatyantsi (2018) examined how intrapreneurship practices could help improve service delivery in the OR Tambo District Municipality. A qualitative approach was adopted to collect data from 11 participants through semi-structured interviews. Intrapreneurship was established as a positive culture that municipalities could adopt to foster innovation and enable efficient and effective service delivery. The results demonstrated that while there is a general appreciation for intrapreneurship, several factors affect the success of intrapreneurship in the municipality. Therefore, the study recommended addressing these factors to help foster innovation and intrapreneurial culture in municipalities.

2.11 Criteria for Measuring Service Delivery in South African Local Government

According to Grönroos and Ravald (2011), delivering high-quality services is an important pursuit for service providers who intend to create and provide value to their customers. High quality service delivery increases customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby increasing the firm's long-term profitability. The ability of a firm to measure all dimensions of service delivery remains a

critical issue. There is no specific model for measuring service delivery in South Africa local government. However, the White Paper contains principles that should guide municipalities and councilors in selecting the best service delivery options for their local communities, including the accessibility of services, affordability of services, quality of services, accountability for services, integrated development and services, sustainability of services, value for money, the competitiveness of local commerce and industry and promotion local democracy (Gwane, 2011; Kakumba & Fourie, 2007; Maimela, 2009; Malefane & Mashakoe, 2008; Zondi, Nzimakwe & Mbili, 2017). According to Bahreini, SeyedAliAkbar, Azad and Izadi (2013), although there are no universal criteria for measuring service delivery quality, the weighted Servperf scale has explained perceived service quality more than the weighted Servqual scale did.

Apart from these principles, the local government has adopted a model called ‘local government efficiency measurement’ to determine the efficiency of service delivery. The economic efficiency model has five dimensions: allocative efficiency, productive efficiency, dynamic efficiency, scale efficiency, and scope efficiency (Zondi et al., 2017). Nevertheless, this study will adopt principles outlined in the White Paper to measure quality service delivery in the local government because service delivery goes beyond just ensuring efficiency. In their study, Ajayi and De Vries (2022) point out that service quality is based on effectiveness, project, and technical criteria.

2.12 The Theoretical Framework that Underpins the Study

A study of this nature requires a theoretical framework to support the presupposition underlining citizen satisfaction and the actual service delivered by the municipalities in South Africa. This study is underpinned by the “performance management delivery systems (PMDS)”. The PMDS model was initially theorised by Robert Anthony in 1965. The model focuses on management control systems by dividing the tasks and deliverables between strategic planning, management control and operational control. This model has been applied in research on employee performance and customer satisfaction in developed and developing countries like South Africa. Mangai (2017) argues that the essence of the PMDS model is to determine the satisfaction derived by citizens by comparing the actual quality of service delivery and how they think the government is performing in delivering services. The citizens' judgment or perception is used as feedback to improve and prioritise service delivery (Mangai, 2016). The PMDS model is based on the premise that quality and sufficiency of municipal service delivery is based on expectations and are also strengthened by experience individuals face in receiving public services, including management (Elliot, 2007). The validation of the citizens satisfaction, which is the fundamental assumption of the performance model, is therefore indicative of improving service delivery in South Africa’s local government.

This model suggests that understanding citizens' perceptions and experiences with municipal services will help provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the services received. The performance model may be relevant in the South African context as feedback of service delivery from citizens is paramount (Roch & Poister, 2006). Applying the PMDS model in this study will help provide a vital assessment mechanism to measure employee performance in municipalities. When applied by municipalities in South Africa, this theory will help increase employee performance, thereby improving basic service delivery.

2.13 Gap in Present Literature

Although the literature on employee performance and service delivery is comprehensive and exhaustive, a few gaps were noted that are worth investigating in future studies. The first observation is that most studies only focused on the causes and consequences of employee performance and poor service delivery without considering the frameworks for measuring employee performance. Thus, most empirical studies have not provided any meaningful measurement of employee performance. The second observation is that most researchers and studies focused largely on employee performance and service delivery in the public sector without any reference to the private sector. Therefore, examining employee performance and service delivery in private-sector organizations is important. The third observation is that there is a lack of comparative study in South Africa in terms of employee performance and service delivery. The review believes that a comparative study between South Africa and other countries will help better understand the subject matter in different contexts. This will help South African municipalities to learn different lessons.

2.14 Chapter Summary

The chapter review literature on employee performance and service delivery. Extant literature suggests that although the several interventions provided by the South African government, most municipalities over the years have failed to meet the performance targets required and expected by law for several. The reasons for the failure include but are not limited to the high level of employee absenteeism, diversity issues, poor leadership, corruption, employee job dissatisfaction and lack of transformation. The situation has resulted in poor service delivery, leading to several protest actions over the years. It has been found that suggests that the slow pace and poor service delivery have led to a series of service delivery protests in most parts of country and have brought local government under the spotlight. Evidence shows that some of the service delivery protests were characterised by violence, xenophobic attacks, and looting and police brutality. Besides, the review suggests that there exist no unique or universally accepted theoretical framework for

differentiating and integrating the various constructs that describe individual performance. Nevertheless, there is a common consensus among scholars that employee performance can be determined using criterion such as quality work, employee output, communication and dependability, controlling of costs, planning, team working, problem solving and technical understanding and leadership management. Moreover, studies have shown that employee's role had a significant impact on quality service deliver. It has been found that although literature reveals that there is a relationship between employee performance and service delivery, there is lack of research within the South African context. The following chapter describes the research design and methodology adopted.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter described the research design and methodology adopted to empirically investigate the perceptions and experiences of local labour forum and management on the impact of employee performance on service delivery at Zululand District Municipality. The justification and rationale are provided to support each approach or method adopted in the study. The chapter comprised the description of the research design, research approach, research method, study location, target population, sampling strategy and procedures, sample size, data collection instrument, data quality control, data analysis, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Rehman and Alharthi (2016) described research philosophy as the belief system and the framework with assumptions concerning ontology, epistemology, research methodology and methods. Research philosophy has further been defined as the system of beliefs and assumptions that concern knowledge development (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill & Wilson, 2009). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) postulate that an American philosopher, Thomas Kuhn, 1962, first used philosophy/paradigm, which means a way of thinking. Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, including those concerned with reality, knowledge and values of the world (Kenaphoom, 2021). The essence of philosophy is to find out philosophical answers to all questions through a critical and systematic approach and its reliance on rational argument. Thus, a research philosophy represents the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how an investigator views the world and how he/she interprets and acts within that world. Perera (2018) concurs that a research philosophy is a model representing the researcher's worldviews, mindsets, and ideologies.

Research stems from assumptions. This suggests that different researchers may have different beliefs and assumptions regarding the nature of truth and knowledge and its acquisition. In this study, the chosen research philosophy was to offer the researcher the opportunity to generate new ideas in the research knowledge. There are four major research philosophies: positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism, and realism (Kirongo & Odoyo, 2020). Having considered the strengths and weaknesses of each research philosophy, the study has adopted interpretivism.

According to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), interpretivism has its roots in the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology. The primary goal of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The interpretivist paradigm attempts to understand the viewpoint of the subject being observed rather than the observer's viewpoint (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). According to Chowdhury (2014), interpretivist paradigm is an approach that concerns with meaningful nature of people's character and participation in social and cultural life. Pervin and Mokhtar (2022) argued that interpretivism assumes that people's knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors. Kumar (2019) claims that interpretivism seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon from the individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals and the historical and cultural contexts that people inhabit. The theorists who ascribe to interpretivism believe that people make meaning of situations or events based on their experience, memories, and expectations (Kumar, 2019). Thus, interpretivism holds the view that meaning is constructed through experience obtained from different interpretations.

The interpretivist paradigm was chosen because it allows for meaning-orientated methodologies, including interviews and participant observations. Also, the interpretivist paradigm was adopted because it enables researcher to be part of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.3 Research Design

Maylor and Blackmon (2017) perceived research design as the blueprint in terms of how a study should be conducted systematically. It is argued that a good research design serves as a guide to the researcher in selecting the research methods, techniques, procedures, collection of data and analysis of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). There are different kinds of research design: explanatory research, exploratory research, descriptive research, action research, archival research, survey, experimental, case study, and longitudinal research. (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019).

Nevertheless, this study took the form of exploratory research. An exploratory research is mostly linked to qualitative, where the goal is to provide an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the research phenomenon and to help in developing research questions for an extensive investigation (Engel & Schutt, 2016; Marlow, 2005). Moreover, Kumar, Kumar, Palvia and Verma (2019) claim that an exploratory research aims to provide more insights into and an understanding of the research problem. Normally, an exploratory study is carried out when the investigator has little or no knowledge of the chosen phenomenon, as in the case of this study. Mbaka and Isiramen

(2021) shared a similar view that exploratory research is carried out when enough is unknown about a phenomenon and a problem that has not been clearly defined.

Swedberg (2020) also agrees that an exploratory study in social science attempts to discover something new and exciting by working with the research topic. According to Swedberg (2020), conducting an exploratory study is risky because it is impossible to know if something novel will emerge. An exploratory study was carried out, because when properly conducted will allow the researcher to obtain more knowledge about the subject matter being investigated. Additionally, an exploratory research design was chosen because of its flexibility and the ability to address complex research questions and issues. Besides, the exploratory study was carried out because the researcher has little knowledge of the subject matter. Also, the researcher chose the exploratory research design because it is often qualitative, as in the case of this study.

3.4 Research Approach

A research approach refers to the procedures employed to empirically explore a specific research phenomenon. Two approaches to research exist: deductive and inductive approaches. While the deductive approach is more associated with quantitative research, the inductive approach, on the other hand, is linked to qualitative research. These approaches can be combined in one study or used separately, depending on the nature of the study. Since this study employed the qualitative method, the inductive approach was the most suitable for the study.

The inductive approach is used when the researcher seeks to draw inferences from specific observable phenomena to general rules or expand knowledge (Worster, 2013). The inductive approach is rooted in the interpretivist philosophy of inquiry as an alternative to positivist assumptions in scientific research (Kelliher, 2011). The interpretivist paradigm appears to be popular in the field of social sciences around the 20th century. Zalaghi and Khazaei (2016) believe that the inductive approach begins with specific observations and the generalisation of the conclusions. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) advocate that inductivists work from the “bottom-up, by relying on the participants' opinions to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes. According to Thomas (2016), inductive research has the following purposes: condense raw textual data into a brief, provide a clear link between the evaluation and the summary findings derived from the raw data, and develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences that are evident in the raw data. The inductive approach was chosen because, when properly used will enable the researcher to construct a theory based on the research participants' views. Besides, the inductive approach was the most suitable for this study because it

requires no pre-fabricated. In addition, the researcher chose the inductive research approach because it advances knowledge and creates new theories. Furthermore, the researcher selected the inductive approach because it provides an easily used and systematic set of procedures for analysing qualitative data that produces reliable and valid results.

3.5 Research Method

There are three research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods. Creswell and Creswell (2017) pointed out that qualitative research is an unfolding model, which occurs in a natural setting that allows the researcher to collect detailed information due to his/her involvement in data collection. Qualitative research aims to offer an adequate explanation and description of the chosen phenomenon (De Vaus, 2013; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Quantitative research, on the other hand, is a “strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2012, p.35). This research method attempts to answer questions starting with ‘how many, ‘how much, and ‘to what extent (Rasinger, 2013). Mixed method research involves combining and integrating qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study (Molina-Azorin, 2018).

However, qualitative research method was employed because it builds on the premises of the inductive approach (Williams, 2021). A study by Flick (2014) suggests that qualitative research is based on subjective meaning, social issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardised data and analysing texts and images. From the above definition, it can be argued that qualitative research is associated with multiple methods involving an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter.

According to Rahman (2020), qualitative and quantitative studies are usually found to be used frequently in different disciplines of education such as sociology and psychology. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2013) acknowledge that qualitative research is a study that produces findings not based on statistical procedures. The qualitative research method was adopted because it explains phenomena relevant to social behaviours in new and emerging theories. Also, the researcher chose to conduct a qualitative study based on a person’s lives, experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings about a particular event. In addition, the study relied on a qualitative research approach because it is used to address research questions about experience, meaning and perspective from the standpoint of the participants.

However, Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey (2016) argued that most quantitative scholars critiqued that qualitative research is suspicious and considered lightweight since it involves small samples which are not representative of the target population. In addition, critiques assumed that qualitative research is subjective, and the findings are evaluated as biased by the researchers' own experiences or opinions.

3.6 The Research Location

The study was carried out in the Zululand District Municipality. Zululand is located at the north of the KwaZulu-Natal province. It is the second most populated District Municipality in the province and the second-largest in terms of its area. It is known as the Heart of the Zulu Kingdom is largely characterized by rural areas namely made up of five local municipalities Ulundi, Nongoma, Abaqulusi, eDumbe and Pongola.

3.7 Target Population

In research, it is essential to define the target population because it sets a clear direction for the scope and objective of the research and data types. According to Eldredge, Weagel and Kroth (2014), experimental, observational, and qualitative research designs involving human subjects must clearly define the target population to determine the eligibility of individuals for a study. Therefore, the defined target population becomes the basis for generalising the research findings to other relevant populations.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) defined population as a whole group of people, events, elements or things of interest that the researcher intends to draw inference from. Wilson (2014) states that target population represents a group of cases from which the researcher draws the sample. Casteel and Bridier (2021) argued that population comprised of the individuals, dyads, groups, organisations, or entities the researcher intends to understand and to whom the study results may be applied or transferred and is the principal group about which the research is concerned. Therefore, in this study, the target population is defined that the sum of employees working in the Zululand District Municipality. The target population of the study was 1,120, which comprised of permanent employees, contractual employees and EPWP. Table 3.1 shows detailed information about the population of the study.

Table 3.1: Distribution of the population

Distribution of Population	Nongoma Municipality	Abaqulusi Municipality
Permanent employees	418	294
Contractual employees	89	117
EPWP	120	82
Total (1120)	627	493

3.8 Sampling Strategy

Sampling is the process of choosing a representative subset of the population, known as sample (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). There are two basic types of sampling which probability and non-probability sampling. The former is a technique where each element in the universe or population has an even chance of being chosen as a subject or item of sample in a study, while the latter is a technique of selection where the individuals have no or less chance of inclusion in the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Given the nature and method of investigation, non-probability sampling strategy was used to select the participants.

The non-probability sampling strategy originates in the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research, which relies on subjective judgment. Thus, non-probability sampling is a method of choosing a representative sample from a population using a subjective method. According to Kohler (2019), non-probability sampling is the probabilities that cannot be estimated with a reasonable degree of precision. It is personal in that the probability of selecting population elements is unknown. The non-probability sampling is most suitable in this study because such a procedure satisfactorily meets the sampling objective. This sampling strategy has various techniques such as purposive, snowball, and convenience sampling. Given the nature of the investigation, the purposive sampling was used.

Purposive sampling is mostly used in the qualitative research to select subjects (participants) based on their prior knowledge and experience about a specific phenomenon being studied. It has been suggested that purposive sampling allows researchers to select the subjects by choice (Teddle & Yu, 2007). A purposive sampling used when the investigator desires to draw samples non-randomly based on his subjective judgment to find answers to the research questions and achieve the stated objectives (Smith, Colombi, & Wirthlin, 2013). Thus, purposive sampling helps to select individual participants based on a prior judgment about their relevance to the study.

Although purposive sampling has been widely criticised because of the likelihood of bias by the investigator's judgement, however, it is useful in tapping into the knowledge, feelings and experiences of the subjects in terms of a chosen phenomenon. The purposive sampling technique was used because it allowed the researcher to tap into the participants experience, knowledge and feelings about the subject matter. In addition, the purposive sampling technique was employed because the researcher was interested in selecting only a few cases or subjects to take part in the study.

3.9 Sample Size and Procedures

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) defined sample size as a subset or unit of the target population selected for inclusion in a study. Although the total population of the study was 1,120, the sample size chosen was only 14. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) recommend that the appropriate sample size for qualitative research ranges from 7-30. Therefore, based on the above recommendation, the study assumed that the sample size of 14 was sufficient for the research. However, the data were collected from only 8 participants. Table 3.2 below provides description of the sample size.

Table 3.2: Description of the sample size

Sample size distribution	Zululand District Municipality
CFO	1
Directors	4
LLF Members	8
Office of the MM	1
Total	14

Having obtained written permission from the participating organization, the following sample criteria were used. Firstly, the study involved only the participants who are employees in the organization. This implies that employees from other municipalities in the province are excluded from the study. Secondly, the study involved only the participants who have more than two years of work experience in the organisation. The researcher assumed that employees who had more than two years of work experience are capable of responding to the interview questions adequately. Thirdly, the study comprised only the participants who have adequate knowledge and experience of performance management and service delivery in the organisation.

3.10 Sources of Data Collection

There are two sources of data collection, including primary and secondary sources. The former is a type of data assembled first-hand by the researcher for ensuing analysis to find solutions to the problem, whereas the latter refers to readily available information (Sekaran & Bourgie, 2016). The study adopted two sources of data collection. A study suggests that the importance of analysing secondary data is to use theoretical knowledge and conceptual skills to utilise existing data to find answers to specific research (Johnston, 2014). The secondary sources of data used in this study included journal articles, books, government reports, achieve and theses. On the other hand, the primary data was collected from employees in the Zululand District Municipality.

3.11 Data Collection Method

There are different data collection instruments, including interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, survey research, and experimental research. However, interviews were the instrument of data collection. Interviews are defined as conversational encounters between the researcher and participants, where the researcher elicits valuable information from the participants about the subject matter (Kazmer & Xie, 2008). According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008), interviews are commonly used qualitative data collection instrument that explores the views, beliefs and experiences of research participants. Utibe (2020) argues that interviews are mainly used as data collection tools in social science research that facilitates direct explanation of human actions through an extensive speech interaction between the interviewer and research participants. Hamza (2014) claims that interviews, as a qualitative data collection tool, broaden the scope of understanding social phenomena. From the discussion, it can be argued that interviews facilitate interactions between the researcher and participants, where the researcher obtains information from the research participants.

There are different methods of collecting data through interviews, including personal interviews and telephonic interviews. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Zoom and Skype interviews were conducted. The interviews were audio taped with the consent of the participants. This method of data collection involves moderate costs and quick to conduct. It also has the advantage of wide geographic coverage without dramatic increase in costs. The interviews were structured into six sections as follows:

- ☐ Section A: How service delivery is measured in South African municipalities.
- ☐ Section B: How employee performance is determined within the South African municipalities.

- Section C: The manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the viewpoint of local labour forum and management.
- Section D: The type of link which exist between employee performance and service delivery in South Africa's municipalities.
- Section E: How service delivery can be affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum.
- Section F: Views of the local labour forum and management on how employee performance can be improved in the municipalities.

The interviews were conducted in both English and IsiZulu. The interviews were conducted because they ensure a high response rate. Moreover, they allowed a researcher to probe the subject on questions that were not answered satisfactorily. In addition, interviews were used because they are useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. Also, the researcher chose to conduct interviews because they are two-way methods that facilitate exchanging ideas and information between the interviewees and interviewer (Prabnat & Meenu, 2015).

3.12 Data Quality Control

Data quality control represents an essential aspect of research. There are various ways of measuring data quality in research. In quantitative research, data quality control is determined through reliability and validity, whereas in a qualitative study, data quality control is measured through trustworthiness. Since this study took the root of qualitative research, the data quality control was determined through trustworthiness. There are four criteria for measuring trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

- **Credibility:** The term credibility refers to the authenticity of the research findings (Saunders et al., 2009). The transcripts were verified with all the participants. In addition, credibility was achieved by making use of rich data and thick description of the data to convey the various findings of the study.
- **Transferability:** This refers to the extent to which qualitative results can be relocated to other contexts with other participants. It also refers to the degree to which the findings can be generalised (Saunders et al., 2009). Transferability in this study was achieved through thick description of information and using purposive/judgement sampling to select only the participants with sufficient knowledge on the topic under investigation.

- **Dependability:** Dependability refers to the consistency of the research findings over time (Saunders et al., 2009). Dependability as determined through the audit trail, stepwise replication and code-recode strategy.

3.13 Data Analysis

Different software are available for analysing qualitative data, namely: ATLAS-ti7, NVivo, and MA Xqda11. However, in this study, the data was analysed using the NVivo software (version 13). NVivo helps to organise, index, code, and query the journals for specific topics (Robins & Eisen, 2017). There are two ways of analysing qualitative data, such as content and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted, which involves classifying and presenting themes (patterns) that relate to the dataset. The thematic analysis involves the following step: identifying the main themes, assigning codes to the various themes, clarifying responses under the main themes, and integrating the themes and responses into the text of the final report (Cho, Lim, Lee, Varma, Lee & Choi, 2014). A rigorous thematic analysis was conducted, which helped to produce trustworthy and insightful findings.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

The ethical approval for the study was granted by UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Ethical considerations adhered to in this study were informed consent, privacy, anonymity and bias. Concerning the informed consent, written permission to conduct the study was obtained from participating organisation. Concerning privacy, a confidentiality clause was included in the informed consent form. The data collected from the participants were transcribed and stored on the researcher's computer for five years. In terms of anonymity, the participants' identities, such as names, were substituted with pseudonyms and limited in the final dissertation and future publications. Bias was eliminated by sending the transcripts to the participants for verification and confirmation. Concerning plagiarism, all sources cited in this study were properly acknowledge and referenced.

3.15 Limitations of the Study

A key limitation of this study was the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was undertaken as at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 had a profound impact on the data collection process. Nevertheless, this challenge was addressed by devoting more time and energy towards the data collection. Another limitation that affected the study was the ability to get the research participants to take part in the study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent nationwide

lockdown, it was difficult to get the participants for the study since most of them are working from home. However, arrangements were made with the respondents to ensure their participation in the study. They were reminded at regular interval about the need to participate in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with data presentation and analysis. Although 14 participants were selected for the study, only eight (8) were interviewed. The participants interviewed were CFO, Directors, LLF Members and Office of the MM. With the permission of the participants, the data was audio-taped. The data were then transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The data presentation and analysis were done per the research objective, including: to explore how employee performance is determined within the Zululand District Municipality; to elicit the manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the viewpoint of local labour forum and management; to establish whether there exist a link between employee performance and service delivery in the Zululand District Municipality; to examine how service delivery can be affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum in the Zululand District Municipality; and to elicit the views of the local labour forum and management on how employee performance can be improved in the Zululand District Municipality. The thematic analysis was used to identify, organise and report the main and sub-themes obtained from the dataset. The first part of the chapter describes the research participants, while the latter describes the findings based on the stated objectives.

4.2 Description of the Participants

Table 4.1 contains information regarding the participants demographics, including gender, age, race, level of education, tenure and position. The purpose of including the participants demographics in the study was to provide adequate information about the categories of the participants.

Table 4.1: Description of the participants

Dimensions	Participant	N	Mean
	Information		
Gender	Male	3	37.5
	Female	5	62.5
Age	31-35 years	1	12.5
	36-40 years	3	37.5
	41-45 years	2	25.0
	46-50 years	2	25.0
	51-60 years	1	12.5
Race	African	6	75.0
	Indian	2	25.0
Highest Qualification	Certificate	1	12.5
	Diploma	2	25.0
	Postgraduate	1	12.5
	Bachelor's Degree	2	25.0
	Honours/BTech	2	25.0
Tenure	2-5 years	2	25.0
	6-10 years	4	50.0
	11-15 years	2	25.0
Position	Employee	2	25.0
	Manager	2	25.0
	Director	1	12.5
	Chief Finance	1	12.5
	Other	2	25.0

As reflected in Table 4.1, females constituted 62.5% of the participant, representing the majority, whereas males accounted for 37.5% of the respondents. The findings implied that the organisation employees more female to work toward improving service delivery in the municipality. Regarding age, 37.5% of the participants were between the ages of 36-40 years, 25% were between 41-45 years and 46-50 years, respectively, while 12.5% were between the ages of 31-35 years and 51-60 years. It could be suggested that more employees between the ages of 36-40 were employed to help address service delivery challenges in the municipality. In terms of race, Africans were made up of 75% of the participants, while Indians constituted only 25%. Therefore, it could be argued that the municipality employed more African to work toward addressing service delivery.

Moreover, the findings indicated that 25% of the participants had Diploma, Bachelor's Degree and Honours/BTech, respectively, whereas 12.5% had Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma,

respectively. The findings suggested that the municipality employed more workers who had Diploma, Bachelor's Degree and Honours/BTech because they are perceived to be competent and skilful and capable of finding solutions to service delivery challenges. Furthermore, the findings revealed that 50% of the participants had worked between 6-10 years, while 25% had work between 2-5 years and 11-15 years, respectively. Finally, 25% of the participants were employees, managers and others, respectively, while 12.5% Directors and Chief Finance Officers, respectively. It can be argued that more employees and managers were employed by the municipality because they are capable of working hard in addressing service delivery challenges in the municipal areas.

4.3 Objective 1: Measuring Employee Performance

Objective 1 investigated the criteria for measuring employee performance in the municipality. The first part of the interview sought to determine whether the municipality assesses the employees' performance. The findings are presented below.

4.3.1 Objective 1(a): Whether the municipality measure employees' performance

As mentioned earlier, the first part of objective 1 sought to determine whether the municipality assesses the employees' performance. Based on the interviews, all the participants (N = 8) confirmed that the municipality periodically assesses their performance. The participants expressed performance measurement is one of the vital strategic objectives of the municipality that is used to make important decisions such as promotions, pay increases, bonuses and transfers. The findings are presented in Figure 4.1 below.

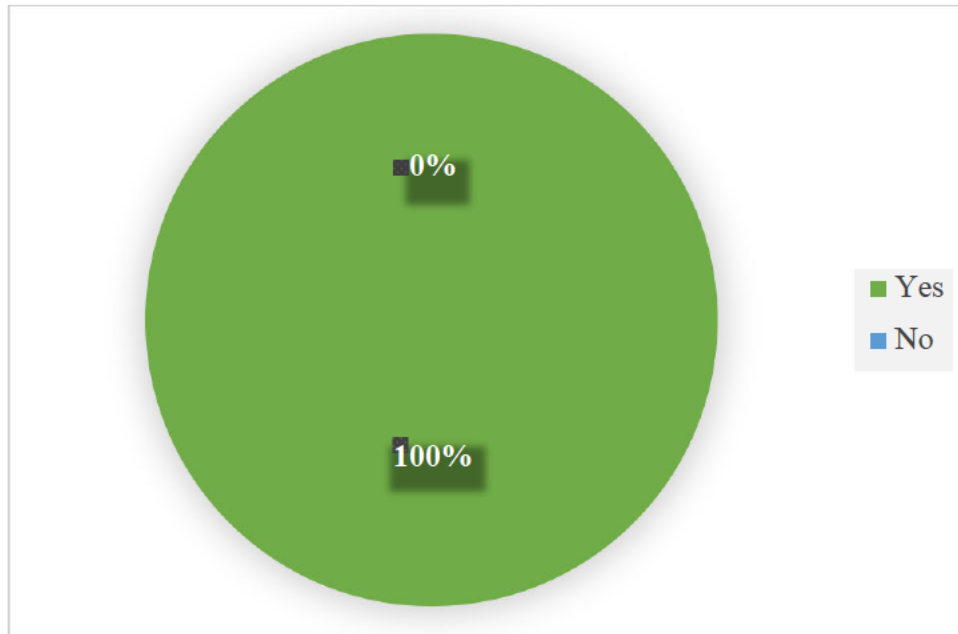


Figure 4.1: Whether the municipality measure employees' performance

From Figure 4.1, it can be observed that all the participants (N = 8) which represented 100% agreed that the municipality assessed their performance. Below are some of the iterative quotes from the interviews that give credence to the findings.

Participant 1 said:

“Yes, the municipality periodically assesses our performance to make important decisions such as promotions and pay increases. For example, if you want to be promoted, your performance will be evaluated to determine whether you are meeting the targets”.

Participant 2 expressed:

“Yes, performance measurement is the first step in making any decision in the municipality.

Every decision taken in this organisation depends on the level of employee performance”.

Participant 4 indicated:

“Of course, we measure employees' performance periodically. Employees' actual performance is measured against the standard to determine how well he/she is doing in the organisation. We then use the performance results as the basis for promotion, training and development, pay raises, etc.”

4.3.2 Objective 1(b): Criteria for measuring employee performance

The second part of objective 1 aimed to identify the criteria for measuring employee performance in the municipality. Using the thematic analysis, the study identified different criteria for assessing employee performance, including work quality, employee output, creativity and innovation, cost reduction, quarterly report, teamwork and problem-solving. The findings are depicted in Figure 4.2.

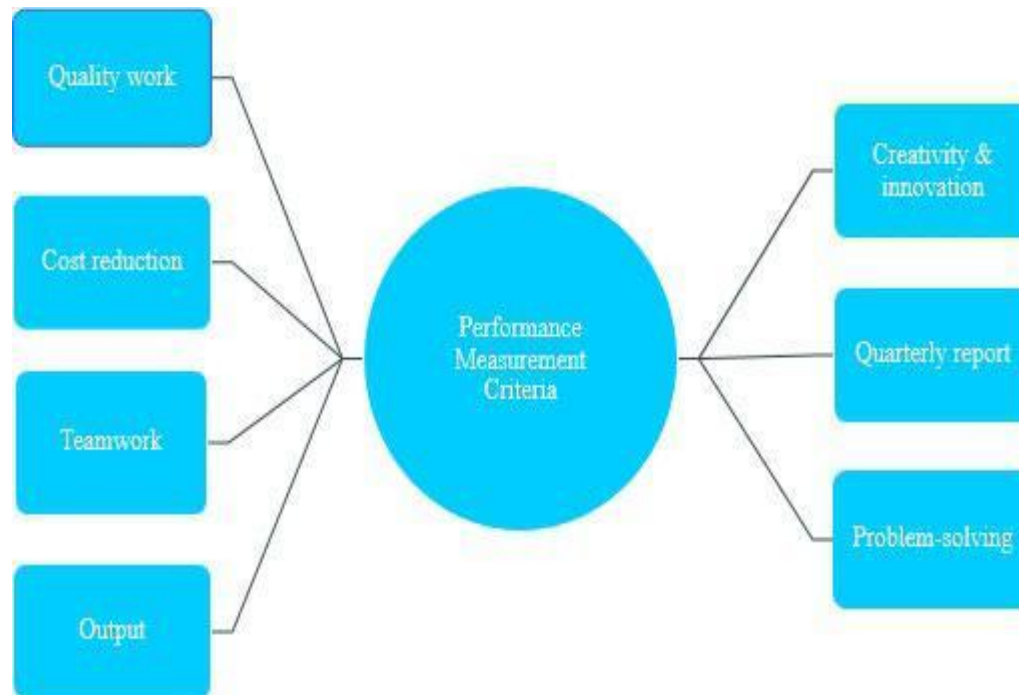


Figure 4.2: Criteria for measuring employee performance

4.3.2.1 Theme 1: Quality work

Many organisations worldwide aspire to deliver high-quality products and services to their customers. It is believed that the supply of a continuous, high-quality product or service to customers creates higher competitive advantages, including competitive barriers, increases customer loyalty, production and supply differentiated products, reduces marketing costs and determines higher prices for companies. From this perspective, many organisations have begun to include quality work as a criterion for evaluating employee performance. From the interviews, the participants (N = 6) confirmed that quality work determined one of the criteria for assessing their performance. The participants expressed that their performance is assessed against the quality of work, products, or services offered to customers. They argued that quality work is ranked higher among the other performance assessment indicators. Below are a few quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 3 said:

“Our performance is assessed against the quality of work we produce or the service offered to clients. The municipality reward employees who have met the quality standard. This performance indicator is crucial because the municipality's target is to deliver high-quality services to the community”.

Participant 4 expressed:

“I know that high-quality work determines one criterion for measuring employee performance in this municipality. The municipality expects every worker to work toward improving the service quality. Therefore, employees who meet the quality standard are rewarded for their performance. The municipality assesses quality work by relying on the number of clients a worker served or attended to daily, weekly, or monthly. Moreover, quality work is determined by the number of customer complaints the worker handles or addresses”.

Participant 5 indicated:

“Quality of work is a key determinant of performance measurement in the municipality. The municipality prides itself on delivering quality service to customers. For this reason, it expects that whatever service is offered to customers meets the specification and standards. Service quality is ranked the highest and attracts high incentives like a pay rise, promotion and bonuses”.

4.3.2.2 Theme 2: Creativity and innovation

In recent years, creativity and innovation have attracted research interest from economists and organisational research practitioners. There is a consensus among scholars that creativity and innovation are positively related to employee performance. There is widespread agreement in the literature that creativity and innovation lead to high performance. The findings from this current study confirmed that creativity and innovation are essential determinants of employee performance in the municipality. Most participants (N = 5) believed that the municipality assessed their performance by considering their creative and innovative skills. The following are some of the iterative voices of the participants that affirm the findings.

Participant 1 indicated:

“The municipality incorporates employees creative and innovative skills into the measure of performance. Employees who exhibit creativity and innovativeness in their work are ranked as high-performers. The municipality believes that creativity and innovation are important attribute to satisfactory service delivery”.

Participant 2 said:

“Most at times, the focus is on how creative and innovative the employee is in his/her work. Those who are more creative and innovative in their work are deemed high performers as compared to those who lack creativity and innovation. The municipality is happier with employees who display high sense of creativity and innovation in performing the tasks”.

Participant 5 expressed:

“To the best of my knowledge, creativity and innovation also form part of the key performance indicators in the municipality. The municipality is looking for people who have the ability to develop novelty solutions to service delivery issues. That is, the municipality want employees who can find sustainable solutions to most of its problems. To conclude, the municipality value people who find novel and effective ways of serving its current customers”

4.3.2.3 Theme 3: Cost reduction

Today, most firms realised that to remain competitive depends on the ability to control and reduce costs. Therefore, most of these firms begin to integrate cost reduction into their performance management system. From the interviews, some of the participants (N = 4) believed that cost reduction constitutes one of the indicators of measuring employee performance. They argued that the municipality is interested in workers who have the ability to ensure efficiency in their work performance. Moreover, the participants expressed that cost reduction is measured in terms of how much the employee spend on addressing a service delivery problem. The following are some of the quotes from the interviews that give credence to the findings.

Participant 2 expressed:

“Cost reduction is also part of the key performance indicators in this municipality. The municipality wants people who are capable of reducing administrative and operational costs. The municipality observes that the only way to remain efficient is to reduce wastages

and costs associated with provision of services. Therefore, employees who are cost efficient are perceived as those meeting the performance targets. These people are rewarded more than those who failed to reduce cost”.

Participant 3 said:

“As an organisation, we believe that cost reduction is critical in achieving our targets. These days, the government's budgetary allocation to localise the government sphere is woefully inadequate. Hence, most municipalities are looking for innovative ways to cut down costs. As part of the performance indicators, the municipality encourages workers to ensure that while performing their tasks, they must endeavor to reduce costs. The municipality compensates people who can cut down costs”.

Participant 5 stated:

“For me, cost reduction is the ultimate goal. To a larger extent, an employee's performance is determined by his/her ability to minimise costs. The municipality ranks higher with people who can reduce costs. This performance score translates into rewards and other incentives. Because of this, many employees will like to work toward reducing operational costs to enjoy the benefits that come along with it”.

4.3.2.4 Theme 4: Quarterly reports

From the interviews, it was found that quarterly report presented by the employees to the municipality's management also forms the basis of their performance evaluation. A few (N = 3) participants argued that the municipality requires them to submit quarterly reports for the tasks performed. They indicated that the reports submitted then form the basis of their overall performance. The following are a few iterative quotes from the interviews that support the research findings.

Participant 5 said:

“I know that submitting quarterly reports on one's activities and tasks also determines his/her performance. The municipality expects every worker to submit a quarterly or annual performance report. Based on the reports, the municipality is able to determine whether the employee is meeting the performance target. Employees who submit timely reports are often considered high achievers or performers, while those who failed to submit the report on time are deemed low performers”.

Participant 6 expressed:

“The municipality also uses the employee's quarterly or yearly report to assess his/her performance. Employees are required to submit either a quarterly or annual report to management for consideration. The municipality then uses these reports to determine whether the employee meets the standard required”.

Participant 8 indicated:

“The municipality also value people who can help reduce cost associated with service delivery. In addition to other key performance indicators, the municipality considers cost reduction. Here, people are expected to perform their tasks without increase in operational costs. The employees are encouraged to find innovative ways accomplishing their tasks without increase in cost. The employees who are able to achieve cost efficiency are recognised and rewarded for such achievement”.

4.3.2.5 Theme 5: Teamwork

In today's work environment, there has been much emphasis on pride and personal achievement, where the concept of teamwork seems to receive little attention from managers and employees. Because of this, most managers see less teamwork as a significant performance tool, resulting in poor organisational performance and productivity. Contrary to the above assertion, this current study observed that teamwork and other measures of team performance positively correlate with employee performance. The participants (N = 5) argued that their municipality incorporates teamwork into the key performance indicators. According to them, most tasks and projects within the municipality require teamwork. Therefore, employees' performance is measured based on their ability to work as a team to accomplish the performance standard. The following are some of the quotes from the interviews that reaffirm the findings.

Participant 1 expressed:

“I will say that teamwork is also part of the performance evaluation criterion. There are certain community projects that require teamwork and collaboration from all employees. For this reason, the municipality expects all the employees to work in a team to accomplish the performance targets. The employee's performance is judged based on the team's contribution”.

Participant 3 said:

“Teamwork also constitutes the performance management criteria in the municipality. Employees are recognised based on their contribution to the teamwork in accomplishing the organisational targets. I believe collective action is a positive force for teamwork in any organisation. Therefore, the municipality can meet service delivery expectations from the constituent through teamwork”.

Participant 7 indicated:

“I know that teamwork also determines the level of an individual’s performance. It is believed that teamwork empowers employees and increases benefits from cooperative work engaged as a group. To me, what I know teamwork is the only way anything gets accomplished with quality and efficiency. I am trying to say that through teamwork, employees can improve their performance, thereby accomplishing the organisational targets”.

4.3.2.6 Theme 6: Problem-solving

Problem-solving represents one of the criteria for determining the leadership effectiveness of managers and employees. Scholars have a consensus that the core competencies necessary for future professionals include problem-solving based on complexity and collaborative approaches. Therefore, many organisations, including municipalities, have begun incorporating problem-solving into their performance evaluation criteria. The findings revealed that problem-solving is part of the criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality. Most (N =

5) participants believed the municipality is interested in employees who can solve problems.

Below are some of the few quotes from the study support the research findings.

Participant 2 said:

“The problem-solving ability is part of the performance evaluation criteria. What I remember is that the municipality considers problem-solving ability. The municipality places much emphasis on technological skills, system thinking and other cognitive abilities of employees. Therefore, those who are able to solve complex problems are in high demand in this municipality”.

Participant 4 indicated:

“The point I want to make here is that problem-solving ability is considered an important determinant of employee performance in this organisation. The organisation is always looking for people with the potential to address service delivery challenges. As you know, service delivery protests are complex issues facing this municipality. Therefore, we are looking for someone with leadership and problem-solving skills”.

4.3.2.7 Theme 7: Output

Organisational literature suggests that different criteria have been fixed in business firms for measuring performance, including output per hour. It has been argued that this performance measurement system helps to find the poor and good performers out of the lot based on performance measurement so that further remedial action can be taken. Most (N = 6) participants argued that quantity is often easier to measure than quality. The findings showed that the number of units produced and product defects or errors are particularly easy ways to pinpoint an employee's output. Here are some few quotes from the interviews that reaffirm the research findings.

Participant 2 said:

“The quantity or output system is also considered a criterion for assessing employee performance. Here, the municipality expects every employee to achieve a certain amount of output daily, weekly, or monthly. The employee with the highest output is considered the high performing one and rewarded accordingly”.

Participant 3 indicated:

“Employee performance metrics like the number of client contacts one has, the number of phone calls one makes, and the number of clients served are part of the output-based system that determines a person's performance. Traditional manufacturing industries often use this performance evaluation method to assess employee performance”.

Participant 7 expressed:

“I know that different industries have different ways of expressing their quantitative output. For example, in traditional manufacturing, the number of units produced is often a reliable quantitative metric for determining employee performance. The municipality wants the employees to achieve some output”.

4.4 Objective 2: Impact of Employee Performance on Service Delivery

Objective 2 assessed the impact of employee performance on service delivery in the municipality. The findings revealed a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery. All the participants (N = 8) were convinced that employee performance positively impacts service delivery in the municipality. The results revealed that the ability of employees to adapt to individual customers' behaviour will result in improvement of service delivery. This implies that a significant positive relationship exists between employee performance and service delivery. The results stated that when employees work harder, it will translate into improving service delivery. Figure 4.3 depicts the findings obtained from the study.

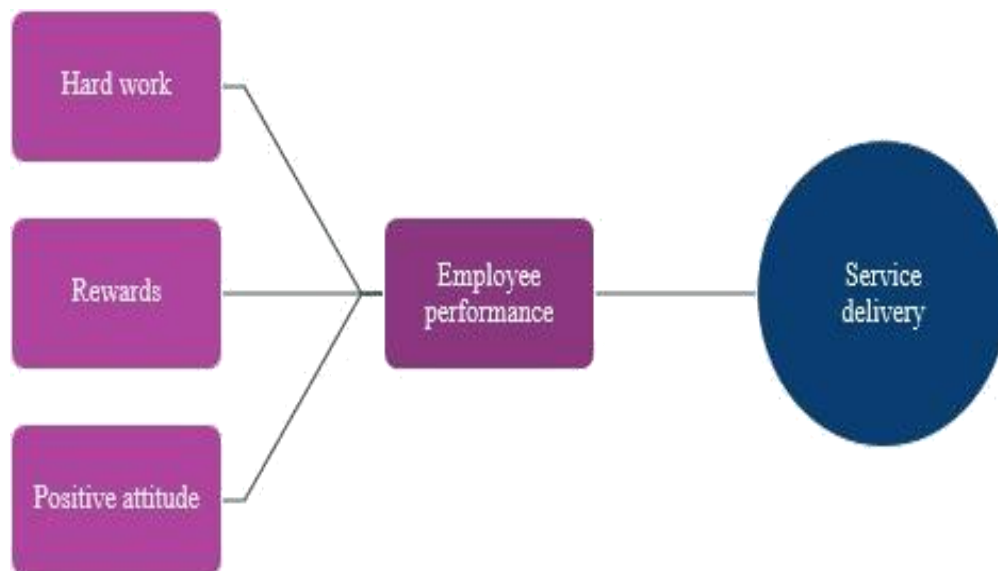


Figure 4.3: Impact of employee performance on service delivery

4.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Hard work

The results showed that employee performance mediates the relationship between hard work and service delivery. The participants (N = 3) argued that hard work impacts employee performance, thereby contributing to improved service delivery. They expressed that through hard work, employees can meet their performance targets, leading to an increase in service delivery. The following are a few quotes from the interviews that give credence to the research findings.

Participant 2 said:

"Yes, hard work enables employees to meet their performance targets which will ultimately results in improved service delivery. There is a saying that hard work pays. Therefore, when employees work harder, they are able to meet the standard performance, which will lead to an increase in service delivery".

Participant 4 indicated:

“You know what, performance and service delivery depend on the energy, effort and contribution of the employee. Yes, there is a relationship between employee performance and service delivery but that can only be realised through hard work exhibited by the employees. There is a certain belief that when employee work hard they can meet the performance target thereby leading to an improvement in service delivery”.

4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Rewards

The findings obtained from the study suggested that although there is a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery, that can only be made possible through rewards. It was found that when employees are rewarded adequately, they turn to work toward meeting the performance standards which ultimately results in improved service delivery. Some of the participants (N = 5) indicated that they preferred rewards because it motivates them to work in accomplishing the performance goals. The following are some of the few quotes from the interviews that reaffirm the findings.

Participant 4 said:

“To me I prefer rewards because it inspires one to work hard in achieving the stated results. I believe that when people are adequately rewarded for their services, they work towards improving performance and service quality. This is to say that good reward system will contribute to employee performance which will have a positive effect on service delivery”.

Participant 5 argued:

“Although an improvement in employee performance will result in improved service delivery, for that to happen will depend on a lot of factors include motivation and rewards. Employee performance will lead service delivery only if the employee is rewarded for their work or services. This is to say that reward is a push factor that will drive employee performance and service delivery. What I meant was that when you increase rewards the employees will work harder to ensure that the service delivery target is met”.

Participant 6 said:

“Yes, even though we can argue that performance leads to improved service delivery, this is only possible when people are paid for the services they rendered. My view is that employee performance will only lead to quality service delivery if the municipality learn to

reward people according to their performance. In doing so, the employees will put in their maximum effort to ensure that the service delivery targets are met”.

4.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Positive attitude

Another finding showed that employee positive attitude is a dimension of performance that impacts service delivery in the municipality. That results showed that to improve employee performance and service delivery, the employee must develop positive attitude, for instance, toward work and clients. From the interviews, a few (N = 3) participants argued that developing a positive attitude toward work will lead to an increase in performance thereby resulting in quality service delivery. They observed that without positive attitude the municipality cannot meet its performance targets and service delivery expectations. The following quotes are from the interviews which support the findings.

Participant 1 indicated:

“Positive attitude counts a lot when it comes to performance and service delivery. For me, what I know is that when people develop positive attitude toward their work it will result in improve performance which will lead to an increase in service delivery. In short, service delivery depends on employee performance and this is made possible through other factors such as a positive attitude of the jobholder. You cannot expect good performance and quality service delivery if the employees do not develop positive attitude toward their work”.

Participant 8 said:

All I want to say here is that employee positive attitude toward work will increase performance which will then result in quality service delivery. Performance is a multi-faceted factor that also depends on the attitude of the one performing the job. What I am saying is that when employee develop a positive attitude toward the work it will contribute to an increase in performance which will in turn, result in service delivery.

4.5 Objective 3: Link Between Employee Performance and Service Delivery

Objective 3 assessed the manner in which employee performance influences service delivery in the municipality. Based on the data, all the participants (N = 8) confirmed a positive link between employee performance and service delivery. According to the participants, an increase in employee performance will increase service delivery. However, the participant believed that the influence of employee performance on service delivery depends on certain factors such as the

organisation's performance policy, coordination and ability of employees to adapt to individual customer's behaviour. The main and sub-themes that support the research findings are presented in Figure 4.4.

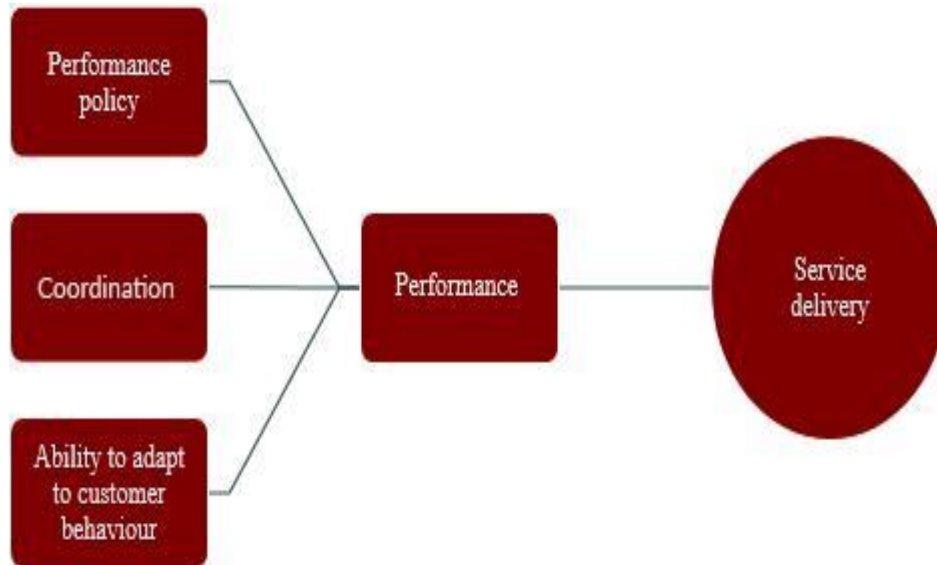


Figure 4.4: The link between employee performance and service delivery

4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Performance policy

Performance policy is considered an important aspect of an organisational and employee performance that influences service delivery. From the interviews, most (N = 4) participants expressed that performance policy is a driving force that leads to improved performance and service delivery. The participants argued that performance policy would guide everyone toward achieving the ultimate performance goals, contributing to quality service delivery. The quotes below are some of the iterative voices of the participants that support the findings.

Participant 3 said:

“When we talk about how employee performance influences service delivery, one cannot deny the fact that an organisational policy guides performance targets. I want to say that to determine how effective employee performance is in influencing service delivery, one has to consider the performance policy. Through an effective performance policy, employees are able to work according to the performance targets, which will help improve service delivery”.

Participant 5 indicated:

“To add to what I have already said, performance management policy is the critical employee performance factor that impacts service delivery. A good performance policy

will help ensure that everyone is working according to the plan and standard. This will then translate into service delivery which is the ultimate goal”.

4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Coordination

Management literature suggests that employee coordination, which refers to the degree to which employees work successfully together to achieve mutually agreed goals, will significantly impact their performance, thereby improving service delivery within the organisation. This current study also confirmed that coordination enables organisations to generate value for their customers. A few participants (N = 3) believed that the organisation reduced double efforts and miscommunication during service delivery through effective coordination. Below are some of the quotes that support the findings.

Participant 4 said:

“Yes, coordination, as part of the driving force behind employee performance, can help improve service delivery in the municipality. This performance matrix enables managers to form judgments of employee performance and how it influences service delivery. Coordination boosts the efficiency of operations and performance, thereby enhancing service delivery”.

Participant 7 argued:

“I know that teamwork and coordination also improve employee performance and service delivery. Coordination plays a critical role in improving employee performance and service delivery. When people cooperate with each other, they can increase performance and improve service delivery”.

Participant 8 indicated:

“You know what, coordination also acts as a vehicle through which performance and service delivery can be improved”. What I am driving at is that coordination mechanisms are very important in the quality service delivery processes”.

4.5.3 Sub-theme 3: Ability of employee to adapt the customers behaviour

The research findings demonstrated that the ability of the employee to adapt to customer behaviour also impacts employee performance and service delivery. The participants (N = 3) argued that adaptable employees, especially if they are empowered, will be better positioned to offer attention to customers and satisfy their individual needs. They believed that the ability of employees to adapt

to individual customers' behaviour would improve service delivery. The following are some of the quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 1 said:

“To the best of my knowledge, the ability of employees to adapt to individual customers' behaviour would improve service delivery in the organisation. Certain jobs require some level of tolerance. People who are able to adapt to the customers' behaviour are more able to deliver better on the job”.

Participant 3 indicated:

“Adaptability also determines employee performance and service delivery. Adaptable employees, especially if they are empowered, will be better positioned to offer attention to customers and satisfy their individual needs”.

4.6 Objective 4: How to Improve Service Delivery Through Employee Performance

Objective 4 examined how to improve service delivery through performance. Based on the data analysis, it was found that quality service delivery can be improved through employee performance. The findings indicated service delivery could be improved through performance activities such as setting performance targets, providing performance feedback to employees, setting performance management objectives and monitoring. These findings are presented in Figure 4.5 below.

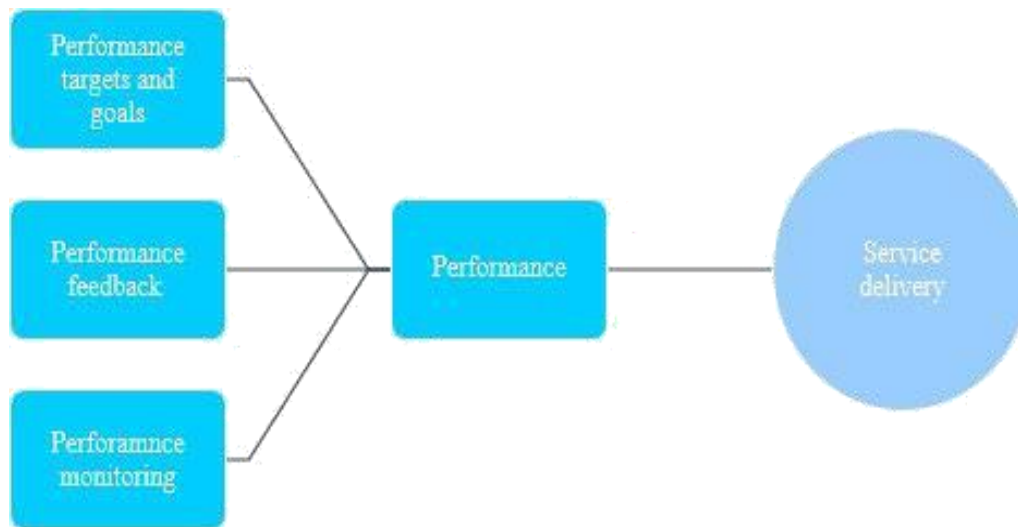


Figure 4.5: How to improve service delivery through employee performance

4.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Performance targets and goals

Throughout literature, it is believed that employees participating in goal-setting can affect the individual's importance evaluation and accessibility of the goal, affecting their sense of control and acceptance of the goal achievement. It has been found setting performance targets and goals enables employees to understand the organisational goals clearly and remain aligned with organisational values. Most participants (N = 5) argued that the employees' willingness to participate in goal-setting would affect their attitudes and behaviours toward improving service delivery. The following are a few iterative voices of the participants that confirm the research findings.

Participant 3 believed:

"I believe that setting appropriate performance goals can enable employees to achieve goals and improve service delivery. In setting goals, employee participation and employees' feedback on completing goals are key elements motivating employees to accomplish a given task. Goal-setting participation will make employees clarify the difficulty goals, feel the organisation's respect and therefore work towards improving the service delivery".

Participant 5 said:

"Nowadays, organisations are more concerned about employee involvement in setting organisational goals because this can help improve performance and service delivery. Participation in goal-setting makes the goals more acceptable and leads to more employee involvement, thereby leading to improved service delivery. The municipal managers allow

employees to work together to set up the organisation's goals. This helps the employee with more involvement and proactive behaviour towards providing quality service to clients".

4.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Performance feedback

In the competitive business environment, feedback and goal setting have become integrated management tools used by most firms because they serve informational and motivational functions that enhance an employee's work performance. This study found that employee performance feedback provides information about the correctness, accuracy, and adequacy of work behaviours required to improve service delivery. A few participants (N = 4) believed that feedback is necessary for instilling a sense of competence and accomplishment needed to improve service delivery in the municipality. They argued that through performance feedback, employees are able to accomplish their tasks necessary to improve service quality. The following are some of the quotes from the interviews that support the findings.

Participant 3 said:

"I know that constructive feedback from managers and supervisors concerning how well the employee is performing the work will help improve quality service delivery in the municipality. A good feedback culture improves performance and valued outcomes such as service delivery".

Participant s suggested:

"As I said, feedback is a mechanism that measures the effectiveness of an employee's performance so that corrective actions can be taken to address the performance gap. Positive and constructive feedback is perceived as rewarding and motivates individuals to work hard towards achieving performance goals. That is, through constructive performance feedback, employees are encouraged to keep working toward improving service delivery".

4.6.3 Sub-theme 3: Performance monitoring

In every organisation, performance monitoring matters because it leads to performance increase and employee motivation. The findings revealed that in the municipality, managers set standards for performance that are enforced and maintained with supervisory monitoring. The participants (N = 3) argued that municipal managers are expected to perform the important function of monitoring the performance of subordinates so as to achieve stated goals and improve service

delivery. They also claimed that performance monitoring would help increase efficiency, develop customer service and improve service delivery. Some of the quotes that support the research findings are stated below.

Participant 1 claimed:

“In this municipality, the municipal managers are expected to perform the important function of monitoring the performance of subordinates so as to achieve stated goals and improve service delivery. Therefore, through performance monitoring, the employees are motivated to work toward achieving service delivery standards. All that I want to say is that the municipality can meet its service delivery targets through performance monitoring because the employees know that they are being monitored in terms of whatever they do”.

Participant 3 said:

“It is a fact that performance monitoring would help increase efficiency, develop customer service and improve service delivery when it is properly conducted. Performance monitoring will help influence employees' work behaviour and help them develop a positive attitude toward work and clients”.

4.7 Objective 5: Strategies to Improve Employee Performance

Objective 5 determined the strategies that the municipality can adopt to improve employee performance. Based on the data collected, the study identified employee performance could be improved through training and development, a conducive working environment, employee involvement and participation and job autonomy. These themes that form the basis of the study are presented in Figure 5.6 below.



Figure 4.6: Strategies to improve employee performance

4.7.1 Theme 1: Training and development

Training and development become very important tool that helps employees to obtain new skills and knowledge and become more effective and productive for the organisation. The findings suggested that training and development play a positive role in the organization's success, including employee performance. Most (N = 5) argued that training and development play a significant part in employee performance growth. Moreover, it was found that Employees with access to training and development plans perform better than those without training and development plans. The following are some of the quotes from the interviews that support the research findings.

Participant 1 said:

“To be honest with you, I consider training and development one of the strategies that can help improve employee performance. Employees can obtain the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to improve their performance through training and development. Yes, training and development will help people to be more efficient and effective in performing their designated tasks”.

Participant 3 said:

“The best way to improve employee performance in this organisation is to prioritise employee training and development plans. We also know that through training and development, people acquire the skills and knowledge required to do their jobs more professionally. Therefore, a good training and development programme or plan will assist employees in meeting their performance targets”.

4.7.2 Theme 2: Employee involvement and participation in goal setting

It is believed that employee participation and involvement in goal-setting can affect their performance and accessibility of the goal. The findings suggested that employee participation in goal setting enables employees to understand the organisational goals clearly and remains committed to working towards the goals. A few participants (N = 4) expressed that when employees are involved in goal setting, it will motivate them to remain loyal and committed to the organisation and its goals. In conclusion, they agreed that employee involvement in organisational matters would help improve performance. Here are a few quotes from the interview that support the findings.

Participant 5 believed:

“I will recommend that the employees be involved in the goal setting and performance standards because this process will help them know what is expected from them. Indeed, if the municipality is serious about helping the employee improve their performance, they must be involved in defining the performance targets. When this happens, the employees will know how to perform their tasks”.

Participant 6 said:

“My recommendation will be that the employees should be part of the goal-setting process. You should bear in mind that if the employees are part of the goal-setting agenda, they will not also know the organization's expectations but will ensure that the targets are met. What I am saying is that the participation of the employees in performance goal-setting will enable them to work toward meeting the targets”.

4.7.3 Theme 3: Conducive work environment

Throughout research, most scholars and practitioners have agreed that the working environment plays an important role in employee performance. This study also recommends that to improve employee performance, the organisation should ensure that the employees work in a more conducive work environment. A few (N = 3) participants expressed that a better physical environment will boost employees' performance. They suggested that the organisation should commit resources to ensure that the physical work environment is safe for all the employees to enable them to deliver. The following are some few quotes that give credence to the research findings.

Participant 4 said:

“I will recommend that the organisation ensures a conducive physical working environment to boost employee performance. One cannot deny that employees must work in a more secure environment. Therefore, to ensure that our employees meet their performance targets, they must work in a satisfactory and safe environment. When this is done, they will be happy to give out their best to improve their performance”.

Participant 5 indicated:

“Without employees, this organisational cannot survive. As much as we want people to meet certain targets, we must also ensure their safety. The point I am driving home is that the physical environment must be good for the employees' health and safety. This implies that the municipality should implement systems and measures to ensure that the working environment is free from accidents and ill health. This can motivate the employees to work hard without fear of being injured”.

4.7.4 Theme 4: Job autonomy

There is a common consensus among scholars that job autonomy contributes to enhancing employee performance. Job autonomy is a part of job design that allows employees some degree of freedom, independence and discretion to perform their work. The study discovered that job autonomy enables employees to decide how to perform and accomplish their performance goals. Most participants (N = 4) believed that when people are allowed to decide how to perform their work, they will be challenged to do better. For this reason, it was recommended that the municipality implement an autonomous job system to allow employees to do what is required to achieve the performance targets. Below are a few quotes from the interviews that reaffirm the findings.

Participant 3 claimed:

“Job autonomy should also be part of the strategy for improving employee performance. I will suggest that when people are allowed to do whatever is entrusted to them, they are challenged even to do better. I do not want to talk much, but the suggestion is that the organisation should implement job autonomy to challenge the employees to think outside the box. In doing so, employee performance can be enhanced”.

Participant 5 believed:

“What I am about to say here is that the autonomous job system will also add value to employee performance. Sometimes, people need some degree of freedom to do their work. Therefore, allowing them to choose how to do the work will help in improving their performance. They will look for innovative approaches to perform their tasks better”.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter presented and analysed the data obtained from the participants through interviews. Based on the analysis, it was found that the municipality periodically assesses employee performance. Also, the study identified various criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality, including work quality, employee output, creativity and innovation, cost reduction, quarterly report, teamwork and problem-solving. In addition, the findings revealed a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery.

The participants argued that hard work impacts employee performance, thereby contributing to improved service delivery. Moreover, the findings obtained from the study suggested that although there is a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery, that can only be made possible through rewards. Besides, finding showed that employee positive attitude is a dimension of performance that impacts service delivery in the municipality. Furthermore, the finding showed that performance policy was considered an important aspect of an organisational and employee performance that influences service delivery.

The findings indicated that problem-solving is part of the criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality. The research findings demonstrated that the ability of the employee to adapt to customer behaviour also impacts employee performance and service delivery. It was found that service delivery could be improved through performance activities such as setting performance targets, providing performance feedback to employees, setting performance management objectives and monitoring. Based on the data collected, the study identified employee performance could be improved through training and development, a conducive working environment, employee involvement and participation and job autonomy.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter four above covered the presentation and analysis of the data. This chapter deals with the discussion of the key findings that emerged from the data presentation and analysis. The discussion is aligned with the objectives that guide the investigation, namely: to explore how employee performance is determined within the Zululand District Municipality; to elicit the manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the viewpoint of local labour forum and management; to establish whether there exist a link between employee performance and service delivery in the Zululand District Municipality; to examine how service delivery can be affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum in the Zululand District Municipality; and to elicit the views of the local labour forum and management on how employee performance can be improved in the Zululand District Municipality.

5.2 Objective 1: Criteria for Measuring Employee Performance

Objective 1 explored the determinants or criteria for measuring employee performance within the organisation. Based on the data presentation and analysis, the study identified different criteria for assessing employee performance, including work quality, employee output, creativity and innovation, cost reduction, quarterly report, teamwork and problem-solving. These findings are discussed are follows:

5.2.1 Quality of work

The findings revealed that many organisations, including Zululand District Municipality have begun to include quality work as a criterion for evaluating employee performance. From the interviews, the study found that quality work determined one of the criteria for assessing employee performance. For instance, most participants expressed that their performance is assessed against the quality of work, products, or services offered to customers. It was further discovered that quality work was ranked higher among the other performance assessment indicators. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Chirasha et al., 2018; Zakaria et al., 2020). Chirasha et al. (2018) identified eight (8) criteria used to measure employee's performance at Gweru and Kwekwe City Councils in Zimbabwe including, quality work. Moreover, from the perspective of the NPM, different criteria were introduced in business firms to measure performance such as, shift quality of work.

In South Africa, the 'Excellence Model' is the standard framework for measuring performance within the public and private sectors. The model focuses on quality service delivery to customers. The 1997 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) set out citizen-centred principles to ensure that the government provides relevant services that meet the public expectations (DPSA, 2014). According to Bataineh (2017), employee performance is the combination of efficiency and effectiveness of the employee's daily tasks to meet the stakeholders' expectations. According to Synovia and Burchel (2017), organisations should consider quality work when creating metrics and performance indicators.

5.2.2 Employee output

The findings suggested that most participants agreed that quantity is often easier to measure than quality. It was found that the number of units produced and product defects or errors are particularly easy ways to pinpoint an employee's output. These findings from this study are also supported by existing research (Mbore & Cheruiyot, 2017). It has been argued that only output, the easiest way to measure constitutions, is one of the important criteria for evaluating employee performance (Mbore & Cheruiyot, 2017). There are different ways to measure this employee performance metric, including the number of sales, units produced, and product defects or errors. However, the authors suggest that when sales are complex, the number of sales becomes less reliable because lower frequency and randomness/luck will play a significant role in the successful outcome of the sale. Most industries have different ways of expressing their quantitative output. For instance, in traditional manufacturing industries, the number of units produced is considered the reliable quantitative metric.

5.2.3 Creativity and innovation

Moreover, the findings showed that creativity and innovation are also some criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality. From the interviews, most participants expressed that the municipality evaluated their performance by considering their creative and innovative skills. Dhammika (2013) discovers that the performance of employees in Sri Lanka within the public sector is assessed based on behavioural factors such as, innovation. According to Tuffaha (2020), consensus prevails among scholars that are important in daily tasks and assignment. Khalili (2018) points out that creativity is a fundamental step in innovation, which influences employee performance. Creativity involves developing new and useful solutions for an organisation's challenges, whereas innovation involves implementing or applying new and valuable thoughts in the workplace (Khalili, 2018).

In their study, Nguyen and Le (2019), argue that fostering innovation and creativity in the organisation has several advantages and positive consequences on employee's psychology, behaviour and performance. Alzghoul et al. (2018) argue that a workplace climate that encourages creativity and innovation has a positive impact on employee's job satisfaction, job commitment and job performance. Ismail et al. (2019) conclude that most organisations rely on employees' creativity and innovation to determine the extent of their performance.

5.2.4 Cost reduction

The study cost reduction was an important determinant of employee performance in the municipality. From the interviews, some of the participants believed that cost reduction constitutes one of the indicators of measuring employee performance. They argued that the municipality is interested in workers who have the ability to ensure efficiency in their work performance. The findings revealed that cost reduction is measured in terms of how much the employee spend on addressing a service delivery problem. The findings are consistent with previous studies. For instance, Chirasha et al. (2018) have identified eight criteria used to measure employee's performance at Gweru and Kwekwe City Councils in Zimbabwe, including controlling of costs.

5.2.5 Teamwork

In today's work environment, there has been much emphasis on pride and personal achievement, where the concept of teamwork seems to receive little attention from managers and employees. this current study observed that teamwork and other measures of team performance positively correlate with employee performance. The participants argued that their municipality incorporates teamwork into the key performance indicators. According to them, most tasks and projects within the municipality require teamwork. Therefore, the study concludes that employees' performance is measured based on their ability to work as a team to accomplish the performance standard. Dhammika (2013) found that the performance of employees in Sri Lankan within the public sector is assessed based on behavioural factors team. In their study, Chirasha et al. (2018) also identified team working as one of the criteria for assessing employee's performance at Gweru and Kwekwe City Councils in Zimbabwe.

5.2.6 Problem-solving

The findings revealed that problem-solving was one of the criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality. For instance, from the interviews, most participants believed the municipality is interested in employees who can solve problems. These current findings also confirm the results of a previous study by Chirasha et al. (2018), who identified problem-

slaving as one of the eight criteria for evaluating employee performance. Synovia and Burchel (2017) also share a similar view that most organisations consider problem-solving as a determinant of employee performance. In performance management, employers' value good problem-solving skills because it helps to determine employee competencies such as logic, creativity, resilience, imagination, lateral thinking and determination.

It has been argued that problem solving skills help people cope with various challenges and demands in their lives and take responsibility of their actions (Matemba, Awinja & Otieno, 2014). According to Jyung et al. (2020) jobs that require problem-solving skills for abstract tasks are expected to increase because problem-solving skills is considered an important criterion for determining employee competency and performance in most firms. Problem-solving has been conceptualised as the abilities to solve problems for personal, work, and civic purposes by setting up appropriate goals and plans (Jyung et al., 2020).

5.3 Objective 2: Impact of Employee Performance on Service Delivery

Objective 2 investigated the impact of employee performance on service delivery in the municipality. The findings revealed a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery. For instance, all the participants were convinced that employee performance positively impacts service delivery in the municipality. The results revealed that the ability of employees to adapt to individual customers' behaviour will result in improvement of service delivery. The results further stated that hard work will translate into improving service delivery. Previous studies. A study by Lodorfos et al. (2015) on the impact of service delivery system effectiveness on service quality reveals that employee's role performance, effectiveness of coordination and effectiveness of process' control had positive influence on service quality in the organisation. Mose (2016) also confirms a significant relationship between employee performance and service delivery.

Lages et al. (2020) observe that service firms strive to encourage their employees to develop attitudes that support service delivery. Lages et al. (2020) found a direct relationship between shared values and emotional exhaustion and an indirect relationship between emotional exhaustion and service delivery performance via affective organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Moreover, the authors argue that customer service quality in organisations is often affected by poor employee performance.

5.4 Objective 3: Link Between Employee Performance and Service Delivery

Objective 3 assessed the manner in which employee performance influences service delivery in the municipality. Based on the data, all the participants confirmed a positive link between

employee performance and service delivery. According to the participants, an increase in employee performance will increase service delivery. However, the participant believed that the influence of employee performance on service delivery depends on certain factors such as the organisation's performance policy, coordination and ability of employees to adapt to individual customer's behaviour. The ability of employees to adapt to individual customers' behaviour will result in improvement of service delivery. A more adaptable employees, especially if they are empowered, will be better positioned to offer attention to customers and satisfy their individual needs. However, Sony and Mekoth (2012) argued that employees who do not have the necessary ability or willingness to adapt their behaviour to the circumstances and follow their supervisors' instructions cannot deliver high quality of service .

Ng'aru and Wafula (2015) claimed that quality of service delivery could be achieved in the public sector through public policy reforms that emphasise the need to enhance the quality of services provided to the public. According to Demirbag et al. (2012), coordination enables organisations to generate value for their customers. Lages et al. (2020) believe that service firms strive to encourage their employees to develop attitudes that support service delivery.

5.5 Objective 4: How to Improve Service Delivery Through Employee Performance

Objective 4 examined how to improve service delivery through performance. Based on the data analysis, it was found that quality service delivery can be improved through employee performance. The findings indicated service delivery could be improved through performance activities such as setting performance targets, providing performance feedback to employees, setting performance management objectives and monitoring. These findings are discussed below.

5.5.1 Performance targets

It has been found setting performance targets and goals enables employees to understand the organisational goals clearly and remain aligned with organisational values. Most participants argued that the employees' willingness to participate in goal-setting would affect their attitudes and behaviours toward improving service delivery. Mauya (2015) argues that performance targets are vital components of management control systems by serving as a standard against which performance is often evaluated in service at the end of a specified period. The author suggests that in Kenya, public sector employees are rewarded based on how they meet the performance targets set up in performance contracts. Mauya (2015) concludes that to improve service delivery in Kenya, employees are expected to meet the performance standards or targets set up by the government. Similarly, Asmus, Karl, Mohnen and Reinhart (2015), confirm that performance targets improved employee performance and service delivery in an organisation.

According to Tooranloo, Azadi, and Ali (2017), performance management strategies such as goal setting had a significant impact on service delivery in public institutions.

5.5.2 Performance feedback

In the competitive business environment, feedback and goal setting have become integrated management tools used by most firms because they serve informational and motivational functions that enhance an employee's work performance. This study found that employee performance feedback provides information about the correctness, accuracy, and adequacy of work behaviours required to improve service delivery. A few participants believed that feedback is necessary for instilling a sense of competence and accomplishment needed to improve service delivery in the municipality. They argued that through performance feedback, employees are able to accomplish their tasks necessary to improve service quality. A study by Chirasha et al. (2018) suggests that in Kenya, the government used the performance feedback as a technique to improve performance and service delivery.

According to Gnepp, Klayman, Williamson and Barlas (2020), the primary goal of performance feedback is to motivate and direct positive behaviour change. Mertens, Schollaert, and Anseel (2021) argue that scholars and practitioners in the field of performance management have advocated an increase in the exchange of feedback in the workplace because of the benefits such as improved performance and quality customer service.

5.5.3 Performance monitoring

Performance monitoring matters in every organisation because it leads to performance increase, employee motivation and improved service delivery. The findings revealed that in the municipality, managers set standards for performance that are enforced and maintained with supervisory monitoring. The participants argued that municipal managers are expected to perform the important function of monitoring the performance of subordinates so as to achieve stated goals and improve service delivery. The study concluded that performance monitoring helped increase efficiency, develop customer service and improve service delivery. The findings are consistent with a study Mbore and Cheruiyot (2017), who state that performance monitoring leads to improved employee performance and quality service delivery. Employee performance monitoring is a critical success factor for meeting the organisation's strategic goals without any difficulties.

5.6 Objective 5: Strategies to improve employee performance

Objective 5 determined the strategies that the municipality can adopt to improve employee performance. Based on the data collected, the study identified employee performance could be improved through training and development, a conducive working environment, employee involvement and participation and job autonomy. These findings are discussed as follows:

5.6.1 Training and development

Training and development become very important tool that helps employees to obtain new skills and knowledge and become more effective and productive for the organisation. The findings suggested that training and development play a positive role in the organization's success, including employee performance. Most argued that training and development play a significant part in employee performance growth. Moreover, it was found that employees with access to training and development plans perform better than those without training and development plans. Shadare (2010) points out that one of the strongest arguments favouring employee training and development is that it helps develop the proper and effective human capital required to achieve organisational goals.

In their study, Kum et al (2014) found that training and development lead to better employee performance. Therefore, it is recommended that organisations invest in employee training and development for sustainable competitive advantage. Ampomah (2016) concurs that training and development are key determinants for improving employee performance in most organisations. The study further found most employees are motivated by training and development, leading to higher performance. Similarly, Asfaw et al. (2015) confirm that training and development positively correlated with employee performance and effectiveness.

According to Bangura (2017), training and development is a strategic tool that enhances employee performance in an organisation. Darshani (2018) observes a significant impact of training and development on employee job performance. In a recent study, Yimam (2022) established that training design, training needs assessment, training delivery style and training evaluation have significant positive effect on employees' performance.

5.7.2 Employee involvement and participation in goal setting

The findings suggested that employee participation in goal setting enables employees to understand the organisational goals clearly and remains committed to working towards the goals. A few participants expressed that when employees are involved in goal setting, it will motivate them to remain loyal and committed to the organisation and its goals. In conclusion, they agreed that employee involvement in organisational matters would help improve

performance. It has been found that work involvement plays a vital role in determining employees' work performance. Job involvement represents workers' commitment to their work.

Job involvement refers to workers' dedication and concern for their work. Noe et al. (2016) believe that job involvement denotes the level of identification of a person in the work he/she does. It has been argued that a person with high job involvement values his/her job as important to his life. Doing an excellent job at work will contribute to their self-esteem. This feeling will psychologically get the workers to perform the task and total confidence in getting the job done (Thevanes & Dirojan, 2018).

Rachmawati and Mauludin (2018), in their study, discovered a significant influence of job involvement on job performance. Job involvement leads to enhanced satisfaction and increased employee performance. Rustemi et al. (2021) also confirmed that allowing employees to participate in the planning process such as setting organisational objectives and goals will result in crease individual and organisational performance. By contrast, Prasetyo et al. (2021) found that job involvement has no significant influence on employee performance.

5.7.3 Conducive work environment

This study also recommends that to improve employee performance, the organisation should ensure that the employees work in a more conducive work environment. A few participants expressed that a better physical environment will boost employees' performance. They suggested that the organisation should commit resources to ensure that the physical work environment is safe for all the employees to enable them to deliver. Work environment constitutes the physical dimension of the organisation in which staff perform their functions (Foldspang et al., 2014; Jain & Kaur, 2014). According to Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017), convenient and ergonomic office design encouraged the employees and increased their performance significantly. Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) point out that situational constraints such as noise, office furniture, ventilation and light, are the major work environment conditions that have negative impact on job performance and should gain more attention. Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) point out that convenient and ergonomic office design encouraged the employees and increased their performance significantly. Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019) analysed the factors affecting employee performance and found that job environment and management support have direct influence on job performance.

In their study, Hafeez et al. (2019) established that working environment and employee performance are positively correlated. According to Zhenjing et al. (2022), a positive work environment improves employee performance. Zhenjing et al. (2022) argued that employees'

motivation to work hard, their efficiency and performance are shaped by the influence of the quality of the workplace. The authors conclude that once employees get a favourable working environment, they become more dedicated to their assigned tasks, ultimately improving their performance (Zhenjing et al., 2022).

In a survey by Alemu (2022), the findings on modeling the employees' performance against the workplace environment factors showed a 5% significant level, and the multiple linear regression model was statistically significant (p-value 0.001). Muslih and Damanik (2022) also confirm that partially and simultaneously, work environment and workload have a significant effect on employee performance.

5.7.4 Job autonomy

There is a common consensus among scholars that job autonomy contributes to enhancing employee performance. The study discovered that job autonomy enables employees to decide how to perform and accomplish their performance goals. Most participants believed that when people are allowed to decide how to perform their work, they will be challenged to do better. For this reason, it was recommended that the municipality implement an autonomous job system to allow employees to do what is required to achieve the performance targets. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies that established a close association between job autonomy and employee performance. Noe et al. (2006, p.162) found that job autonomy is positively associated with employee performance. Another study suggests that employees with increased job autonomy have more flexibility in their work because they choose how to execute their jobs more efficiently, and therefore, their performance is improved (Morgenson et al., 2005). In a similar study, Parker, et al. (2006) expressed that job autonomy is positively related to commitment and proactivity

Additionally, Dysvik and Kuvaas (2011) report a relationship between job autonomy and employee performance, which is moderated by intrinsic motivation. Saragih (2011) argues that a significant positive exists between job autonomy and employee performance due to increasing satisfaction, self-efficacy, and mitigating job stress. Khoshnaw and Alavi (2020) also confirm that among other, job autonomy is one of the predictors of employee performance. In a similar study, Muecke and Iseke (2019) found that job autonomy leads to better job performance.

5.8 Chapter Summary

The study discussed the findings that were obtained from the study. It was found that work quality, employee output, creativity and innovation, cost reduction, quarterly report, teamwork

and problem-solving were the key criteria for measuring employee performance. Also, the discussion suggests a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery. It was found that quality service delivery can be improved through employee performance. The discussion reveals service delivery could be improved through performance activities such as setting performance targets, providing performance feedback to employees, setting performance management objectives and monitoring. Also, the extant literature shows that employee performance could be improved through training and development, a conducive working environment, employee involvement and participation and job autonomy. The next chapter provides the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The chapter above discussed the major findings obtained from the primary research. This chapter draws a conclusion and presents the recommendations of the study based on the results. The research objectives that guide the conclusion and recommendations are: to explore how employee performance is determined within the Zululand District Municipality; to elicit the manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the viewpoint of local labour forum and management; to establish whether there exist a link between employee performance and service delivery in the Zululand District Municipality; to examine how service delivery can be affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum in the Zululand District Municipality; and to elicit the views of the local labour forum and management on how employee performance can be improved in the Zululand District Municipality. These objectives were thoroughly investigated and achieved via the qualitative study. The following section provides a summary of the conclusion based on the research findings.

6.2 Research Objectives

To achieve the broad aim of the study, the following specific objectives will be investigated.

- To explore how employee performance is determined within the Zululand District Municipality;
- To elicit the manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the viewpoint of local labour forum and management;
- To establish whether there exists a link between employee performance and service delivery in the Zululand District Municipality;
- To examine how service delivery can be affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum in the Zululand District Municipality; and
- To elicit the views of the local labour forum and management on how employee performance can be improved in the Zululand District Municipality.

6.3 Research Questions

To achieve the broad aim of the study, the following research questions will be answered.

- How is employee performance being determined within the Zululand District Municipality?
- What is the manner in which employee performance impacts on service delivery from the view point of local labour forum and management?

- What type of relationship exists between employee performance and service delivery in the Zululand District Municipality?
- How is service delivery affected by utilising employee performance to the maximum the Zululand District Municipality? and
- What are the views of the local labour forum and management on how employee performance can be improved in the Zululand District Municipality?

6.4 Summary of the Findings from the Primary Research

The section below provides the summary of the findings from the primary research.

6.4.1 Objective 1: Criteria for Measuring Employee Performance

Objective 1 explored the determinants or criteria for measuring employee performance within the organisation. Based on the data presentation and analysis, the study identified different criteria for assessing employee performance, including work quality, employee output, creativity and innovation, cost reduction, quarterly report, teamwork and problem-solving.

The findings revealed that many organisations, including Zululand District Municipality have begun to include quality work as a criterion for evaluating employee performance. The study found that quality work determined one of the criteria for assessing employee performance. For instance, most participants expressed that their performance is assessed against the quality of work, products, or services offered to customers. The study concludes that quality work was ranked higher among the other performance assessment indicators.

Besides, the findings suggested that most participants agreed that quantity is often easier to measure than quality. It was found that the number of units produced and product defects or errors are particularly easy ways to pinpoint an employee's output.

In addition, creativity and innovation were identified as important determinants of employee performance. This current study confirmed that creativity and innovation are essential determinants of employee performance in the municipality. Most participants believed that the municipality assessed their performance by considering their creative and innovative skills.

Also, cost reduction was considered an important determinant of employee performance in the municipality. From the interviews, some of the participants believed that cost reduction constitutes one of the indicators of measuring employee performance. They argued that the municipality is interested in workers who have the ability to ensure efficiency in their work performance. Moreover, the participants expressed that cost reduction is measured in terms of how much the employee spend on addressing a service delivery problem.

Furthermore, it was found that quarterly report presented by the employees to the management also forms the basis of performance evaluation. A few participants argued that the municipality requires them to submit quarterly reports for the tasks performed. They indicated that the reports submitted then form the basis of their overall performance.

Lastly, the study revealed that teamwork and other measures of team performance positively correlate with employee performance. The participants argued that their municipality incorporates teamwork into the key performance indicators. According to them, most tasks and projects within the municipality require teamwork. Therefore, employees' performance is measured based on their ability to work as a team to accomplish the performance standard.

6.4.2 Objective 2: Impact of Employee Performance on Service Delivery

Objective 2 assessed the impact of employee performance on service delivery in the municipality. The findings revealed a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery. All the participants were convinced that employee performance positively impacts service delivery in the municipality. The results revealed that the ability of employees to adapt to individual customers' behaviour will result in improvement of service delivery. The results stated that when employees work harder, it will translate into improving service delivery. Thus, through hard work, employees can meet their performance targets, leading to an increase in service delivery. Besides, the study found that when employees are rewarded adequately, they turn to work toward meeting the performance standards which ultimately results in improved service delivery. Some participants indicated that they preferred rewards because it motivates them to work in accomplishing the performance goals.

Another finding showed that employee positive attitude is a dimension of performance that impacts service delivery in the municipality. That results showed that to improve employee performance and service delivery, the employee must develop positive attitude, for instance, toward work and clients. From the interviews, a few participants argued that developing a positive attitude toward work will lead to an increase in performance thereby resulting in quality service delivery. The study concludes that without positive employee attitude the municipality cannot meet its performance targets and service delivery expectations.

6.4.3 Objective 3: Link between Employee Performance and Service Delivery

Objective 3 assessed the manner in which employee performance influences service delivery in the municipality. Based on the data, all the participants confirmed a positive link between employee performance and service delivery. They claimed that an increase in employee performance will increase service delivery. Moreover, the participants believed that the

influence of employee performance on service delivery depends on certain factors such as the organisation's performance policy, coordination and ability of employees to adapt to individual customer's behaviour.

The findings suggested that performance policy is considered an important aspect of an organisational and employee performance that influences service delivery. For instance, most participants expressed that performance policy is a driving force that leads to improved performance and service delivery. They argued that performance policy would guide everyone toward achieving the ultimate performance goals, contributing to quality service delivery.

Besides, the study confirmed that coordination enables organisations to generate value for their customers. A few participants believed that the organisation reduced double efforts and miscommunication during service delivery through effective coordination.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that the ability of the employee to adapt to customer behaviour also impacts employee performance and service delivery. It was found that adaptable employees, especially if they are empowered, will be better positioned to offer attention to customers and satisfy their individual needs. The study concludes that the ability of employees to adapt to individual customers' behaviour would improve service delivery.

6.4.4 Objective 4: How to Improve Service Delivery Through Employee Performance

Objective 4 examined how to improve service delivery through performance. Based on the data analysis, it was found that quality service delivery can be improved through employee performance. The findings indicated service delivery could be improved through performance activities such as setting performance targets, providing performance feedback to employees, setting performance management objectives and monitoring. It has been found setting performance targets and goals enables employees to understand the organisational goals clearly and remain aligned with organisational values. Most participants argued that their willingness to participate in goal-setting would affect their attitudes and behaviours toward improving service delivery.

In addition, the study found that employee performance feedback provides information about the correctness, accuracy, and adequacy of work behaviours required to improve service delivery. A few participants believed that feedback is necessary for instilling a sense of competence and accomplishment needed to improve service delivery in the municipality. They argued that through performance feedback, employees are able to accomplish their tasks necessary to improve service quality.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that in the municipality, managers set standards for performance that are enforced and maintained with supervisory monitoring. The participants argued that municipal managers are expected to perform the important function of monitoring the performance of subordinates so as to achieve stated goals and improve service delivery. They also claimed that performance monitoring would help increase efficiency, develop customer service and improve service delivery.

6.4.5 Objective 5: Strategies to Improve Employee Performance

Objective 5 determined the strategies that the municipality can adopt to improve employee performance. Based on the data collected, the study identified employee performance could be improved through training and development, a conducive working environment, employee involvement and participation and job autonomy. The findings suggested that training and development play a positive role in the organization's success, including employee performance. Most argued that training and development play a significant part in employee performance growth. Moreover, it was found that employees with access to training and development plans perform better than those without training and development plans.

Also, the findings indicated that employee participation in goal setting enables them to understand the organisational goals clearly and remains committed to working towards the goals. A few participants expressed that when employees are involved in goal setting, it will motivate them to remain loyal and committed to the organisation and its goals. In conclusion, they agreed that their involvement in organisational matters would help improve performance.

Throughout research, most scholars and practitioners have agreed that the working environment plays an important role in employee performance. This study also recommends that to improve employee performance, the organisation should ensure that the employees work in a more conducive work environment. A few participants expressed that a better physical environment will boost their performance. They suggested that the organisation should commit resources to ensure that the physical work environment is safe for all the employees to enable them to deliver.

There is a common consensus among scholars that job autonomy contributes to enhancing employee performance. Job autonomy is a part of job design that allows employees some degree of freedom, independence and discretion to perform their work. The study discovered that job autonomy enables employees to decide how to perform and accomplish their performance goals. Most participants believed that when people are allowed to decide how to perform their work, they will be challenged to do better. For this reason, the study concludes

that the municipality implement an autonomous job system to allow employees to do what is required to achieve the performance targets.

6.5 Recommendations of the Study

From the study of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed:

6.5.1 Recommendation 1: Investment in employee training and development

Management literature suggests a consensus among scholars that training and development programs are essential for organisational sustainability and employee growth. Training and development is a planned and systematic activity designed to help employees gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to improve their performance. The findings from this study is also consistent with previous studies, which state that training and development become very important tool that helps employees to obtain new skills and knowledge and become more effective and productive for the organisation. Based on the findings, the study recommends that organisations, including Zululand District Municipality, continue to invest in their employees to help them become more productive. The study recommends that an investment in employee training and development will enable the municipality to adapt to the changing markets, compete, innovate, improve services, and attain its goals. Also, the study recommends that opportunity for training and development should target especially employees who lack the requisite skills, knowledge and attitude required to excel in their performance.

6.5.2 Recommendation 2: Regular performance monitoring and evaluation

In South Africa, evidence suggests that the cause of poor work performance in the public sector was because the policy was incorrectly implemented. Therefore, many governments, including South Africa, have implemented performance monitoring and evaluation policies and programmes to address the performance gap. For instance, in South Africa, the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency was created to address unsatisfactory performance, especially in the public sector. The study found that in South Africa, municipal managers are expected to perform the important function of monitoring the performance of subordinates so as to achieve stated goals and improve service delivery. Against this background, the study recommends regular monitoring and evaluation of employee performance to determine whether they are meeting the standard so that corrective actions can be taken, if there are any. A good performance monitoring and evaluation system will help identify and track areas for improvement to achieve better performance. The study recommends regular performance monitoring and evaluation to help enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and improve performance and service delivery. Furthermore, to ensure regular

performance monitoring and evaluation, the study recommends that the municipality appoint competent people with knowledge, skills and experience in monitoring and evaluation.

6.5.3 Recommendation 3: Provision of timely performance feedback

Performance feedback has proven to be an effective human resource management that enhances employee work performance. In management literature, performance feedback provides information about the correctness, accuracy and adequacy of work behaviours. The findings from the current study suggested that performance feedback is necessary for instilling a sense of competence and accomplishment needed to improve service delivery in the municipality. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the municipality provides timely feedback to employees on how well they are meeting the performance targets. It is further recommended that the performance feedback highlights employees' strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement. In addition, the study recommends that the performance feedback results be used for important decisions such as training and development, promotion, rewards and bonuses and retrenchment when the need arises.

6.5.4 Recommendation 4: Employee involvement in goal setting and performance targets

Involvement and participation have been considered as an important tool for gaining commitment and loyalty in an organisation. Employee participation in goal setting can help them clarify the challenging and feasible goals, increase their autonomy, improve their enthusiasm at work and change their behaviours. The study found that setting performance targets and goals enables employees to understand the organisational goals clearly and remain aligned with organisational values. Moreover, the findings suggested that employees' willingness to participate in goal-setting would affect their attitudes and behaviours toward improving service delivery. Against these backdrops, the study recommends employee involvement and participation in goal setting and performance targets. It is recommended that employee participation in goal setting will encourage commitment and creates a sense of ownership in achieving the targeted goals. Furthermore, the study recommends that employee participation and involvement in goal setting will encourage the acceptance of greater responsibility for their work and achieve better results. Additionally, the study recommends that employee participation in goal setting and performance targets will foster creative thinking and problem-solving in the municipality.

6.5.5 Recommendation 5: Provision of a conducive work environment

Providing and maintaining a positive work environment helps boost employee morale, motivation, retention and performance. In South Africa, it is a legislative requirement that employers take necessary health and safety measures to ensure that their employees work in a

satisfactory and safe environment. Studies have confirmed that provision of a conducive work environment constitutes as aspect of health and safety measures that improves employee performance. This study recommends that to improve employee performance, the organisation should ensure that the employees work in a more conducive work environment. For instance, the participants expressed that a better physical environment will boost employees' performance. Moreover, they suggested that the organisation should commit resources to ensure that the physical work environment is safe for all the employees to enable them to deliver. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the municipality take necessary measures to ensure that the employees work in a satisfactory and healthy work environment.

6.5.6 Recommendation 6: Design and implementation of autonomous job system

It is generally believed that employees develop self-reliance and resilience when they have autonomous jobs. Job autonomy is a part of job design that allows employees some degree of freedom, independence and discretion to perform their work. The study discovered that job autonomy enables employees to decide how to perform and accomplish their performance goals. Most participants believed that when they are allowed to decide how to perform their work, they will be challenged to do better. Against this background, it is recommended that the municipality implement an autonomous job system to allow employees to do what is required to achieve the performance targets. This study suggests that an autonomous job system will increase employee job satisfaction, resulting in improved performance and service delivery. Furthermore, this study suggests that the design and implementation of the autonomous job will help employees feel more in control of their work and their work lives. Therefore, the study recommends that the municipality continue to design and implement an effective autonomous job.

6.6 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The scope of the was limited to the employees and managers in the Zululand District Municipality. This implies that the findings that emerged from the study can only be applied to the municipality. Therefore, future research should focus on more than one municipality in South Africa. Additionally, the study adopted the qualitative research method to investigate the phenomenon. It is believed that qualitative studies lack verification of the research findings. Another limitation of qualitative research is that it is not statistically representative. Therefore, to address the limitations of this method, the study suggests that future studies adopt mixed-methods research. Furthermore, another limitation of this study is the small number of sample

size used. The sample size used in this study was not representative. To ensure the representation of the sample, future research should ensure that more samples are selected.

6.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter dealt with the conclusion and recommendations of the study. Based on the analysis, it was found that the municipality periodically assesses employee performance. Also, the study identified various criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality, including work quality, employee output, creativity and innovation, cost reduction, quarterly report, teamwork and problem-solving. In addition, the findings revealed a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery. The participants argued that hard work impacts employee performance, thereby contributing to improved service delivery. Moreover, the findings obtained from the study suggested that although there is a positive relationship between employee performance and service delivery, that can only be made possible through rewards.

Besides, finding showed that employee positive attitude is a dimension of performance that impacts service delivery in the municipality. Furthermore, the finding showed that performance policy was considered an important aspect of an organisational and employee performance that influences service delivery. The findings indicated that problem-solving is part of the criteria for assessing employee performance in the municipality. The research findings demonstrated that the ability of the employee to adapt to customer behaviour also impacts employee performance and service delivery. It was found that service delivery could be improved through performance activities such as setting performance targets, providing performance feedback to employees, setting performance management objectives and monitoring. Based on the data collected, the study identified employee performance could be improved through training and development, a conducive working environment, employee involvement and participation and job autonomy.

With reference to the findings, the following recommendations were provided: investment in employee training and development; regular performance monitoring and evaluation; provision of timely performance feedback; employee involvement in goal setting and performance targets; provision of a conducive work environment and design and implementation of autonomous job system.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL



College of Law and Management Studies

School of Management, Information Technology and Governance

Research Title: Perceptions of management and local labour forum on employee performance and service delivery at Zululand district municipality

Section A: Demographic Information

This part of the questionnaire contains questions on the demographic information of the participants.

Please indicate your selection with an X.

1. Kindly indicate your gender

1	Male	
2	Female	
3	Other (Please specify	

2. Please provide the age group you belong to

1	18-25 years	
2	26-30 years	
3	31-35 years	
4	36-40 years	
5	41-45 years	
6	46-50 years	
7	51-60 years	
8	61 years and above	

Kindly indicate the ethnic group you

3. belong to

1	African	
2	Indian	
3	Coloured	
4	White	
5	Other (please specify)	

4. Please indicate your highest qualification

1	Matric	
2	Diploma	
2	Postgraduate Diploma	
3	Bachelor's Degree	
4	Honours/BTech	
5	Masters	
6	Doctorate	
7	Other (please specify)	

5. Please indicate how long you have been working in this municipality

1	< 2 years	
2	2-5 years	
3	6-10 years	
4	11-15 years	
5	16-20 years	
6	> 21 years	

6. Kindly indicate the position you occupy in this municipality

1	Employee	
2	Supervisor	
3	Officer	
4	Manager	
5	Director	
6	Chief Finance Officer	
7	Other (Please specify)	

Section B: Objective 1- Criteria for Measuring Employee Performance

- B1. Does the municipality measure employees' performance? Yes/No.
If yes, explain the criteria and methods used by the municipality to assess employees' Performance

.....

.....

- B3. If yes to the above question, describe the most appropriate criteria and methods would you suggest to the municipality.

.....

.....

Section C: Objective 2- Impact of Employee Performance on Service

Delivery C1. How does employee performance impacts service delivery in the municipality?

.....

.....

Section D: Objective 3- The Link Between Employee Performance and Service Delivery

- D1. Does employee performance impact service delivery in the municipality? Yes/No
- D2. If yes, please describe the manner in which employee performance affects service delivery.
-
-

Section E: Objective 4-How to Improve Service Delivery through Employee

Performance E1. How can service delivery be improved through employee performance?

.....

.....

Section F: Objective 5- Strategies to Improve Employee Performance

F1. What strategies can be adopted by the municipality to improve employee performance?

.....

.....

Thanks for the Participation

APPENDIX B: ETHICS APPROVAL



13 December 2022

Gugulethu Nonkululeko Zamazikode Nkwanyana (213505987)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear GNZ Nkwanyana,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004999/2022

Project title: Perceptions of management and local labour forum on employee performance and service delivery at Zululand district municipality

Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 14 November 2022 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 13 December 2023.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

APPENDIX C: GATEKEEPER'S PERMISSION LETTER

Zululand

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
UMKHANDLU WESIFUNDA



Private Bag X76
Ulundi
3836

Tel/Ucingo: 035 870 0812
Fax/Ukasi: 035 870 0735
035 870 1541

Ref: 10/2/13

Enq: Mr RN Hlongwa

Email: nhlogwa@zululand.org.za

Date: 20/06/2022

213505987@stu.ukzn.ac.za

084 576 4445

Dear Mrs., GNZ Maphisa

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

We received your letter dated 24 February 2022, requesting permission to conduct research within our municipality for the study titled **"AN ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL LABOUR FORUM ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY AT ZULULAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY."**

This request is accepted. Authority is given for:

- The primary focus is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of local labour forum and management on the impact of employee performance on service delivery at a localised sphere of government.
- *As per your request, the following personnel will be interviewed:*
 - ✓ CFO
 - ✓ 4 Directors
 - ✓ 8 LLF MEMBERS
 - ✓ COO

Therefore, the Municipality grants you permission to obtain the information relevant to the study.

We wish you all the best in your studies.

Regards,


RN HLONGWA
ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER