



Evaluating electricity service delivery in Msunduzi Municipality

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Declaration

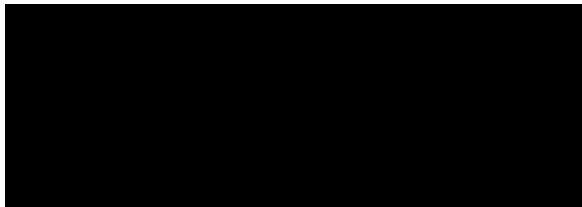
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Abstract

Poor service delivery has become a common problem in South Africa and has led to several social protests. The access to electricity remains a common barrier to providing services. The aim of the study is to evaluate electricity service delivery in Msunduzi Municipality with specific reference to the following: The initiatives put in place by Msunduzi Municipality to prevent power outages; the effects that power outages have on different stakeholders; the consequences of prolonged power outages; the state of service delivery; and the degree to which community members' requirements are being met. A qualitative study was undertaken to enable the researcher to provide answers to the aims of the study. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews which comprised of open-ended questions that were used to gather the data, along with secondary sources that included consultations. Using thematic analysis, the most pertinent themes were found and examined. The key findings emanating from this study showed that there is a necessity of ensuring community participation and of setting up favourable or suitable mechanisms that encourage community participation and allow people to take part in issues that affect their communities. This study also showed that there is also a need for the Municipality to provide a form of relief to its stakeholders in terms of dealing with power shortages. This is so because some of the alternatives used when dealing with power shortages require additional funds which are also an added expense, more especially to those who are struggling financially. Lastly, the Municipality claims that a lack of funding is the primary barrier to providing services as intended, so the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Local Government must make sure that it continuously monitors the financial support it provides to ensure that the Municipality uses the funds appropriately as the Provincial Department placed the Municipality under administration for several years due to misappropriation of funds at the level of the Municipality.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who have been my pillars of strength throughout my academic journey.

To my late grandmother, Phumzile Saraphina Mncwabe., I am forever grateful for your selfless love and sacrifices. You prioritized my education above your own needs, and although you did not live to see the fruits of your labour, I know you are proud of me and watching over me.

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Lastly, to my son, Ziyana iZibusiso Mncwabe, you are my pride and joy. You have given me purpose and motivation to push through challenges.

Thank you for being my inspiration and driving force.

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Isaiah 60:22

"When the time is right, I The Lord, will make it happen ."

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The right to receive basic services in South Africa is an important and fundamental right which should be upheld at all costs. Municipalities have a vital role to play in ensuring the proper delivery of basic services to the communities they serve by providing services that should be made available to people regularly. According to Section 153(b) of the South African Constitution, one of the primary objectives of local governments is to ensure the provision of basic services in a sustainable manner to the communities they serve. As a result, local governments have a greater and more significant role to play in improving the economic and social well-being of their citizens, as well as providing basic services to them, in order to improve the standard of living of all citizens. Local government, whilst providing basic services to the people, needs to ensure that they are developmental in nature so that people's lives are improved. Service delivery in South Africa has become one of the biggest challenges due to local governments being unable to fulfil basic services that they are required to offer in areas in which they operate. As a result of failed service delivery, social protests have increased rapidly in South Africa, primarily due to the dissatisfaction with the quality and accessibility of basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity (Kgobe & Mamokhere, 2023; Narsiah, 2003; 2021). Consequently, whilst providing basic services to the people, local government (i.e., local municipalities) must be developmental in nature so that people's lives are improved. As a result of insufficient electricity, Msunduzi municipality has suffered regular blackouts which, in turn, affects its customers, businesses and the community as a whole (Msunduzi Integrated Development Plan, 2022). Certain areas within the Msunduzi Municipality have been severely impacted by the ongoing power outages. Notably, Imbali and the areas surrounding the Pietermaritzburg central business district have been disproportionately affected.. In some cases, some areas experience extended loadshedding periods, while others face prolonged outages due to substation failures caused by inadequate maintenance (Brisbane 2021; Magubane 2021, 2022; Ngubane 2021; Nxumalo 2021; Xulu 2021). In the Governance Performance Index (2021), Msunduzi Municipality ranked 113 out of 205 municipalities that were ranked, which is indicative of the poor performance of the Msunduzi Municipality, which can be seen in the ongoing problems with service delivery that the Municipality continues to face. This chapter provides an introduction to the study and outlines the background and the rationale for electricity

service delivery challenges in Msunduzi Municipality. This chapter also outlines the importance of local government being entrusted with the responsibility of distributing public resources for service delivery, ultimately aiming to enhance the living standards for all citizens whilst correcting the injustices of the past by making sure that the needs for the historically disadvantaged citizens are met. The chapter also includes the significance of this study. In addition, it also outlines the research problem, research objectives and presents the summaries of each of the subsequent chapters.

1.2. Problem Statement

The South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, declared a state of disaster in 2023 due to the country facing a severe electricity crisis which included prolonged power blackouts, with detrimental effects to the economy and development in the country. The crippling power shortage posed a significant threat to the economy at large and was further confirmation of the government being unable to deliver basic essential services. This is best captured in the following statement:

The municipalities are also struggling to deliver basic municipal services and this should be seen in the broader context of municipal collapse, ineffective provincial interventions in failing municipalities and reported instances of service delivery failure that require judgement on the conduct of municipalities in relation to their basic service delivery mandate (Viljoen & Dube 2023, p.2).

Msunduzi Municipality keeps making headlines regarding poor service delivery and mismanagement of funds, and these problems can be traced back to 2010. Consequently, the Municipality has been left financially destitute, and the Municipality has been unable to recover (Brisbane 2021). This financial difficulty is reflected in Ndou's statement below.

By 2019, Msunduzi Municipality had already been placed under administration. However, despite being placed under administration, no significant improvement has been seen as the Municipality keeps making headlines regarding poor service delivery which keeps on declining due to the Municipality mismanaging its finances, lack of consequences management and its failure to prevent irregular and unauthorised expenditure (Ndou 2024).

The Msunduzi Municipality is facing severe electricity crisis, characterized by prolonged power blackouts, which have a detrimental effect on the economy of the municipality, development, and residents well-being. This crisis is exacerbated by poor governance, corruption, mismanagement of funds, and inadequate infrastructure of maintenance. Furthermore, many businesses go without power for several days, causing many businesses to collapse, especially small businesses that do not have the necessary capacity to deal with power outages.

The city administration's inadequate planning is evident in its failure to effectively communicate power outage and load shedding schedules to residents. As a result, residents are often caught off guard, experiencing sudden and unannounced electricity disruptions without prior warning or notification .. Consequently, people suffer for hours because the power plants/substations are not properly maintained and the city administration has no sense of urgency when people call in to report electricity outages. The Msunduzi Municipality has faced numerous challenges with service provision, particularly with regards to electricity, including billing discrepancies, tax invoice errors and problems with potholes, with the outages of essential services such as electricity and water lasting for weeks at a time (Makhanya 2024; Somduth 2024). In essence, it is the result of years of neglect and inadequate infrastructure maintenance that seems to be a recurring problem. In terms of financial discipline, the Msunduzi Municipality appears to lack any, as evidenced by reports that they owe Eskom R644-million (Six hundred and forty million Rand) as a result of theft of electricity and water, as well as poor revenue collection (Somduth 2024). Moreover, the Municipality has been implicated in a R290-million (Two hundred and ninety million Rand) tender fraud scandal in which the award of the tender was allegedly irregular, and bypassed supply chain management processes (Comins 2020). This means that the Municipality has been unable to meet basic service delivery requirements due to fraud, corruption, and poor governance.

It must be noted that not all residents receive the same treatment; 30% of residents receive accurate and complete service bills, whereas 70% of residents who can pay them do not receive accurate bills (Comins, 2024; Somduth 2024; The Witness 2023). In this study, we will focus on electricity services as they also form a key component of essential needs for people. It is evident from the Msunduzi Municipality Integrated Development Plan and Msunduzi Municipality Annual Report for 2022/2023 that electrical infrastructure is in an extremely poor state. In the Municipality's Annual Report, it is stated that:

The majority of primary substations equipment is outdated which poses risk in case of equipment failure leading to electricity losses which are often caused by illegal connections, by bypassing of meters, aging infrastructure, resulting in frequent and prolonged outages that have devastating impact on the revenue of the city, the economy and the well-being of the residents (Msunduzi Municipality Annual Report 2022/2023, p.46).

1.3. Significance of the study

The frequent power outages remain a regular occurrence that affects residents of the Msunduzi Municipality and are a major concern and burden on its residents. The Msunduzi Municipality has been the subject of numerous media reports on its collapse in the delivery of essential services due to its poor governance, and its financial troubles that are caused by corruption and the misappropriation of the Municipality's funds. This study will address the gap in literature on the experiences of residents in the Msunduzi Municipality regarding the issue of electricity service delivery which has worsened over the years (2020 - Current). It is hoped that this study will enlighten the Msunduzi Municipality on the seriousness of this problem, its effect on all parties involved, and how it has impacted all parties concerned, and how they perceive the problem. This study will further illustrate the coping mechanisms that the different parties involved in the Municipality's service delivery challenges used, and it also provides recommendations for how the municipality may address these problems. These can potentially serve as a guide when using the theory of co-production in responding to the Municipality's service delivery challenges.

1.4. Objectives of the research

The objective of this study is to:

- Identify the strategies being used by people, residents, stakeholders and the Msunduzi Municipality in dealing with the frequent power outages.
- Establish what the Msunduzi Municipality can do to improve the electricity power crisis.
- Establish the impact of power outages on residents, business and various stakeholders

1.5. Research Questions

The specific research questions of the study are:

- What are some of the initiatives that are in place to avoid power outages, and how effective are they?

- What is the impact of power outages on residents, businesses, and the local economy?
- What are the implications of excessive power outages on municipality 's service delivery and the community needs??
- What is the status of service delivery and the extent to which the needs of communities have been addressed?

1.6. Scope of the study

The Msunduzi Municipality is a local municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is part of the uMgungundlovu District Municipality. It includes Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal, and the uMgungundlovu District Municipality is a principal economic centre. The goal of concentrating on this area was to get a comprehensive understanding of the causes of inadequate service delivery, especially with regard to the provision of electricity services. Analysing the effects of subpar electrical service delivery within the Municipality was also in the researcher's best interest. This Municipality has experienced a great deal of neglect and is frequently in the media due to the problems associated with inadequate service delivery and frequent protests. This study area is the Msunduzi Municipality, which consists of about 163,993 households and a population of about 616,536 people. The chosen sample for this study comprised 10 Msunduzi Municipality community residents from the selected wards and five key informants who comprised business owners and municipal officials. The researcher had semi-structured interviews with residents and also semi-structured interviews with officials from the local Msunduzi Municipality. For the business owners, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide. The reason for targeting these participants was to get first-hand knowledge from the affected community members and to gather more information from the services provider in order to understand the problems associated with the provision of electricity services in the Msunduzi Municipality.

1.7. Structure of dissertation

The study will be structured as follows:

Chapter One: (Introduction). This is the introductory part of the study and its context. The introduction includes the background of the study, the problem statement, the research questions, the aims and objectives, and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two: (Literature review). This chapter presents the literature review on the research linking energy with electricity service delivery and presents the theoretical

framework underpinning this research.

Chapter Three: (Methodology). This chapter elaborates on the study area and discusses the research methodology used in the study, the research design, the sampling methods, data collection, the analysis procedure and the ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: (Presentation and discussion of findings). This chapter reports on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the study participants about their perceptions and experiences in regard to poor electricity service delivery in the Msunduzi Municipality.

Chapter Five: (Conclusion). This chapter provides the summary and recommendations based on findings, and in line with the aims and objectives of the study.

1.8. Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher introduced the research topic pertaining to evaluating electricity service delivery in the Msunduzi Local Municipality. This chapter highlighted the background to the study, objectives, research questions and the problem statement, significance, scope of the study and the dissertation structure. The researcher highlighted the service delivery issues in the Msunduzi Municipality and narrowed it down to one single-service delivery issue which is electricity. The following chapter presents the literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Chapter Two

Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will explore a selection of the extensive body of knowledge on electricity service delivery, with a specific focus on the South African context and local government .. The coproduction theory is also highlighted as the chosen theoretical framework for this study. This chapter will involve a review of the local and international literature on the concept of electricity service delivery. The review aims to identify key themes, concepts, and gaps in the literature providing a foundation for the evaluation of electricity service delivery in Msunduzi Municipality. The sections that will be covered include service delivery; principles of public service delivery; legislation governing public service delivery and access to electricity; electricity challenges in Africa and South Africa; the role of local government and Eskom in the provision of electricity; the causes of service delivery challenges in the provision of electricity; the impact of subpar delivery of electricity; the reasons for non-delivery and the related inadequate responses; and the steps that the nation or government can take to address these challenges. The study concludes with the coproduction theory which serves as the study's theoretical framework.

2.2. Service delivery

Campbell (2014) describes service delivery as a common phrase used to describe the distribution of basic resources to citizens, such as water, electricity, sanitation, infrastructure, land and housing. However, in our country, South Africa, that is not the case. The central government, and more importantly, the local governments that have been delegated with the task of ensuring that services are delivered to citizens, have largely failed in the provision of basic services, and this is linked to the rise in social protests associated with service delivery failure (cf. Narsiah, 1997). In order to guarantee the welfare of its citizens, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (of 1996) aims to ensure and regulate the provision of services to citizens, particularly for previously disadvantaged communities. Thus, Section 40 of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) established three tiers of government, with the national, provincial, and local governments working together to fulfil the needs of citizens. Local governments are regarded as the closest form of government to

citizens. These local municipalities are mandated to serve their residents in a cost-effective, efficient, economic and sustainable manner. As far as service delivery is concerned, the White Paper on Transforming Public Services (1997) states that any public institution must deliver services to its communities in an efficient and effective manner. In addition, this White Paper further states that:

Improving public service delivery means redressing the imbalances of the past and, while maintaining service to all levels of the society, focusing on meeting the needs of 40% of South Africans who are living below the poverty line and those, such as the disabled and the black women living in the rural areas who have been previously disadvantaged in terms of service delivery.

The White Paper on Local Government (09 March 1996) was enacted to ensure that local governments clearly understand their roles in terms of their duties as they are the ones who closely interact with communities. Aside from providing services and infrastructure that are crucial to the citizens' well-being, local governments are also tasked with ensuring growth and development, community involvement, and accountability. Further, local government is responsible for discussing the kinds of basic services (e.g., health, water, electricity, sanitation) that the community requires. As part of their efforts, they must also make sure that the poor and most vulnerable citizens, particularly the disadvantaged, which apartheid has been traditionally marginalized have improved access to adequate basic services.

Several social protests have occurred over the past few years (2004 – Current), mainly in black communities with high poverty levels. Many of them are protesting violently and vehemently against poor living conditions, and against a lack or complete absence of service delivery by their local authorities (Swart 2013). The graph (see Figure 1) shows the severity of social protests which have now taken place in South Africa, due to service delivery issues. According to Municipal IQ 2023, Gauteng is still the most afflicted province, followed by KwaZulu-Natal, while the Eastern Cape is also experiencing protests. These protests, in general, have links to high population density. It is recognized by the South African Constitution that the right to protest extends to all citizens who are dissatisfied with the way their needs are being met. They can therefore express their grievances, dissatisfaction, and demands. There may be limitations, however, set by the law such as first obtaining the necessary legal permission to strike and/or march (Swart 2013). However, social protests

have become increasingly violent and destructive, and some citizens who have chosen not to partake have also experienced collateral damage.

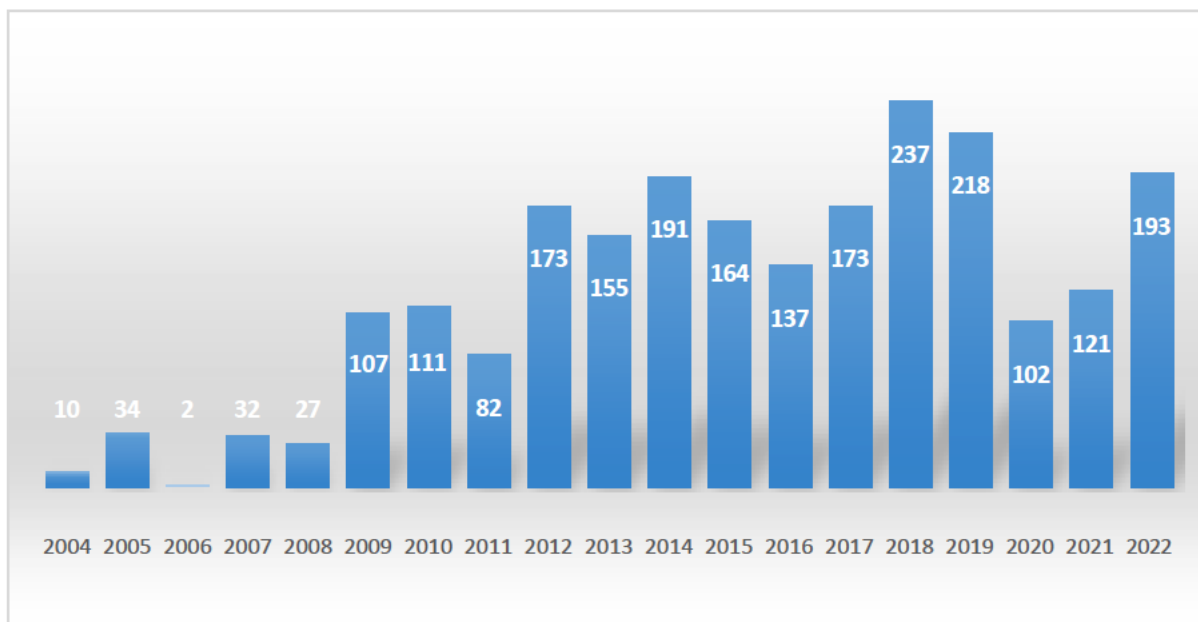


Figure 1: Major Service Delivery Protests in South Africa, by year (Jan 2004-Dec 2022)

Source: Adapted from Municipal IQ Protests numbers for 2022 bounce back to pre-covid numbers -31 Jan

The current situation (2024) in most government departments shows that resources are still being mismanaged and the state is being bankrupted as a result. The Auditor General's Report also demonstrates the ongoing low quality of audit outcomes, with just 38 out of 257 municipalities obtaining clean audits in the local government audit carried out in 2021–2022 and 34 out of 257 municipalities obtaining clean audits in 2022–2023. Thus, Erasmus writes:

The Auditor General has stated that bad financial management was still a common trend resulting in municipalities losing money due to ineffective invoicing and collection procedures, as well as infrastructure deterioration that causes losses of water and energy. Therefore, service delivery has been heavily impacted by financial mismanagement as delinquent creditors such as Eskom and the water boards threatened household access to essential services and hampered company operations (Erasmus 2023).

The audit reports referred to above further demonstrate how municipalities are poorly governed. For Madiba and Erasmus (2023) this is a direct consequence of skills shortages, poor accountability, and poor leadership. The current situation in most government departments shows that resources are still being mismanaged, and the state is being used a cash cow as a result. Furthermore, the Auditor General's Report (2021 -2022) further paints a clear picture as to how local governments are failing to meet their obligations when it comes to service delivery. Another issue that was raised in the Auditor General Report is that most municipalities rely mostly on revenue collected, but the problem is that they do not have adequate systems in place to ensure that they collect what is being owed to them. Hence, they run low on cash and accumulate massive debts, but it can be argued that they are also part of the problem as most government institutions are also owing the municipalities funds, alongside citizens. The municipalities' debt is inexplicable since, despite being given millions or billions of Rand, they misuse the funds and this puts them in debt.

In South Africa, service delivery is not only the responsibility of the national and local governments, but also of state-owned businesses and private companies that apply for tender opportunities under the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment policy. Unfortunately, these businesses and companies are currently linked to poor service delivery and corruption and serve primarily the wealthy. According to Nzimakwe (2023, p, 5), "State-owned enterprise is a generic term used inclusively to denote all types of entities, commercial and non-commercial". State-owned enterprises play an important role in the areas of energy, mining, communication, air and rail transport which are crucial aspects in the country's growth and development, and further help with the diversification of the economy (Opinion 2023). State-owned enterprises play a key role in key industries, including energy, mining, communications, air and rail transport. These enterprises include Eskom, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa, South African Airways, South African Broadcasting Corporation, and the South African Post Office, and the government has entrusted them to make sure that they provide reliable public services and upliftment.

These entities have become a financial burden to the state; instead of generating money they are losing money. The government needs to continually rescue them and this often leads to country-wide social protests, as citizens are aware of corruption, fraudulent activities, collusion, bribery, poor governance, and the mismanagement of public funds. This is also

alluded to in the Auditor-General's Reports in that the South African government has invested billions of rand in state-owned enterprises over the years, but it has received very little return on its investment, with only one audit of the nation's state-owned enterprise found to be clean (Writer,2023). It has been argued that some of the challenges faced with state-owned enterprises in South Africa are self-inflicted. In many economies, the government consumes the majority of goods and services, and in countries like South Africa, the government also participates in the economy by providing certain goods and services. The current situation allows the government to simultaneously provide and consume services and goods through state-owned enterprises. This is already happening with Eskom, which sells electricity to municipalities, with the municipalities, in turn, providing energy to the government departments and other institutions, at a cost.

2.3. Principles of public service delivery

Sithomola (2022) indicates that South Africa is a constitutional democracy, which means the constitution takes precedence over anything else and is a determinant of good governance. The integrity of the South African government has been compromised with corruption, state capture, maladministration, fraud, financial malfeasance, as well as poor governance. These deviations generally go unpunished, thereby impeding the post-apartheid progress that must be made. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Chapter 10 (Public Administration) Section 195, established principles regarding public administration that should be observed and used when providing services that will in turn ensure high professional ethics, economic efficiency, effective use of resources, accountability and transparency which will be discussed further below.

High standard of professional ethics

As per Section 195 (1) (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, there must be a high standard of professional ethics promoted and maintained at all spheres of government and all government entities. In order to maintain ethical behaviour, public servants should perform their duties according to their job description and ensure that they do so with the highest level of integrity and honesty, keeping away from corrupt practices. Mamokhere, Musitha and Netshidzivhani (2021), as cited in Sebola (2014), indicate that the ethics of public administration do not align with the actual customs of African diversity. They suggest that these should be redesigned to reflect the country's demography in order to be in line with it. However, this cannot be used as an excuse for unethical behaviour within the public sector. It must be in the nature of civil servants to conduct themselves in an ethical

manner as the Constitution mandates.

Fostering accountability

South Africa's public administration is governed by the basic values and principles laid out in Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Accountability is one of these basic values and principles enshrined in Section 195 (1) (f) of the Constitution. Mamokhere, Musitha & Netshidzivhani (2021) assert that public servants and leaders in municipalities are accountable to the public for their actions and decisions regarding the distribution of allocated budgets, programmes, projects and other public responsibilities. This means that actions taken and implemented must be in line with the existing laws of the country and the ethical considerations as outlined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The concept of accountability presupposes that public servants are able to justify their actions or omissions and that the general public can express their opinions about their abilities since they are mandated to serve the public. The media has been instrumental in holding the government and the public accountable for their actions that have negatively impacted the public.

Fostering transparency

Section 195 (g) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, sets out the values and principles of public administration. This Section provides that all services provided by state organs must be transparent enabling citizens to access information and participation in decision making processes.. This enables those affected to know the decisions that are made because they affect them personally. Chapter two of the Bill of Rights stipulates that information must be made available to anyone who wishes to have access to such information. This enables the public to be aware of what's happening around and this in turn fosters access to information. Mamokhere, 2019, as cited in Musitha & Netshidzivhani,2021, p.4, indicate that the government's failure to be transparent prompts the public to engage in violent protests to express their dissatisfaction with the government's behaviour. Therefore, the government and public servants should be transparent in all their actions and shortcomings to the public to refrain the public from social protests.

Promoting public participation

Public participation is one of the most important fundamental values and principles governing public administration. On the basis of Section 195 (1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, the public is encouraged to participate in policymaking. Moreover, participation is an essential part of the democratization process, even if it is no guarantee that more active participation will lead to more democracy. Participation is the

process of “involvement in the formulation, adoption and implementation of public policies [through] citizen action aimed at influencing decisions that in most cases are ultimately made by public representatives and official bodies” (Mamokhere, Musitha & Netshidzivhani 2021, p.4). Government and public servants must ensure that they practice public participation and are more open and inclusive to the public regarding public participation, which is considered the cornerstone of good governance., This, in turn promotes shared decision making to ensure effective and efficient service delivery.

Responsiveness

Section 195 (1) (e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, states that the government shall respond to the needs and concerns of citizens by ensuring that the demands of the people are met effectively and efficiently. (Mamokhere, 2019, as cited in Musitha & Netshidzivhani,2021, p.4) argue that when citizens feel that their needs are not being addressed, they are more likely to protest because they feel that they are not being listened to. Therefore, responsiveness in this case is perhaps a better means of making the public believe that the government cares about their concerns and needs, by ensuring that it pays immediate attention to all concerns and issues.

Use of resources in an economic, efficient, and effective manner

Public administration should be guided by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. According to Section 195 (1) (b), a public administrator should use state resources in an economic, efficient and effective manner, ensuring value for money. Economy, efficiency and effectiveness are closely linked concepts. Economy, efficiency and effectiveness are commonly referred to as the “3 Es” and are characterized as follows.

- Economy – Getting the right inputs at the lowest cost (or getting a good deal).
- Efficiency – Getting the most of inputs (or getting a lot for the effort).
- Effectiveness - Getting the expected results from the output (or doing the right things).

Equity and fairness

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, requires all public services and institutions to ensure that public services are delivered impartially, fairly, and equitably without bias or discrimination.. According to Section 195 (1) (d), public officers and employees of the public administration shall provide services to citizens impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias. In developing an operational understanding of justice and

fairness. Goggins (2017) argues that public administrators should make certain commitments. Due process, equal protection, rights and services should be provided regardless of personal characteristics. According to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the South African municipalities or the government should ensure that equality and fairness prevail in the distribution of benefits (e.g., food packages and social assistance), that inequalities are eliminated and that previously disadvantaged groups such as women, blacks, and the disabled are given equal opportunities

2.4. Legislature

In South Africa, the national legislature, or parliament, is frequently referred to as the body that makes laws. Its main duties include passing new legislation, amending current legislation, and repealing outdated legislation. The Constitution of South Africa, which is regarded as the country's supreme legislation, provides additional guidance for this job. The government, including the local governments and government institutions are guided by a number of laws and regulations that control public service delivery. These laws and regulations are enumerated below.

2.4.1. Legislation governing public service delivery

The Constitution has entrusted local governments with a number of complex tasks that have a direct impact on the welfare of citizens. The objectives of local governments have been determined by section 152 (1) of the Constitution which are as follows:

- a) to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities,
- b) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner,
- c) to promote social and economic development,
- d) to promote a safe and healthy environment, and
- e) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele, White Paper of 1997) was introduced to bring in a fresh approach to service delivery which is more orientated to putting people first, and allows citizens to hold public servants accountable for the level of service they provide (Kariuki & Tshandu 2014). This approach was referred to as Batho Pele (a Sesotho word meaning “People First”) which consists of 8 service delivery principles which will be discussed below:

Consultation - Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services

they receive and, wherever possible, be given a choice about the services that are offered.

Service standards - Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they know what to expect.

Access - All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.

Courtesy - Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.

Information - Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.

Openness and transparency - Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.

Redress - If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.

Value for money - Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

2.4.2. Legislation governing access to electricity

A number of legislative developments have had a significant impact on the electricity industry, since 1996. The legislative framework allows the electricity sector and municipalities to plan and implement policies in a coherent, transparent and accountable manner (Chessin 2008). The Constitution of South Africa, the Electricity Regulation Act, and the Municipal Systems Act are some of the key legislation governing electricity service delivery in South Africa. These regulations provide a framework for the provision of electricity service delivery outlining the roles and responsibilities of local government, Eskom and other stakeholders. The percentage of South African homes with electricity has increased as a result of the government extension of the electrical infrastructure to formerly unserved localities. The following legislation is pertinent when assessing electricity supply and demand in South Africa:

- Constitution of South Africa, 1996.
- Electricity Regulation Act 4 of 2006
- Electricity Regulation Amendment Act 28 of 2007. Political will and enabling policies and regulations are important in implementing universal access to modern

energy services (Academy of Science of South Africa 2010)

- Eskom Conversion Act 13 of 2001
- Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.
- Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003.
- Municipal Fiscal Powers and Functions Act 12 of 2007.
- Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998
- Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000
- National Energy Regulation Act 40 of 2004.
- Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999.

2.5. Electricity

Access to electricity is indispensable in today's world and essential for both economic activity and daily life and is therefore considered a most important component in the development process of an economy (Phiri & Nyoni 2022). The socio-economic growth would undoubtedly regress if its citizens had an inadequate and insecure source of power. The production and consumption of electricity are widely known to be correlated with economic growth and development in economies with high levels of electricity production and consumption. The three steps involved in providing energy to customers in residential, commercial, industrial, and administrative regions are electrical power generation, transmission, and distribution. Any country's socio-economic progress is founded on its ability to provide its citizens with a steady and sufficient supply of power (Sule, 2010). In the Republic of South Africa, electricity is a democratic right and it is a very important service that the government must provide as it contributes towards improving the standard of living and plays an important role in alleviating poverty (Dube & Moyo 2022). However, some may argue that electricity is a privilege, not a right. This has implications for municipalities, Eskom, local councils, and body corporates which all exert some control over electricity supply.

The right to electricity can also be derived from the Electricity Regulation Act, which aims, among other things, to "facilitate universal access to electricity" (Dube & Moyo 2022). The Act protects the rights of consumers by prohibiting electricity suppliers from reducing or terminating the supply of electricity unless the consumers are insolvent, fail or refuse to pay for the supply of electricity, and where the consumers have breached the terms of payment imposed by the licence (Dube & Moyo 2022). Even though the energy crisis was noted by

government and they were made aware of the implications that the energy crisis could perpetuate, the government introduced the free basic electricity policy providing 50 kilowatt-hours per family. However, this seems not to have worked to the benefit of the citizens due to misappropriation of funds and the incompetence of the local government (Erasmus 2023; Makonese, Kimemia & Annergarn 2022; Zulu 2022).

The free basic electricity policy is described as a limited supply of free basic electricity that is deemed adequate to fulfil the essential energy needs of a typical low-income household, as determined periodically (Makonese, Kimemia & Annegarn 2022). Given this description, it is clear that the amount of free basic electricity, as per this policy, has drawn criticism for not being sufficient to meet basic household energy needs and help the impoverished (Masuku 2024). It also fails to account for the number of people living in each household and our constantly expanding population, which increases the demand for electricity.

This policy approach taken by the municipalities is also unclear to the extent that it has been found that only a few households benefit from this, and leads to those who do not benefit to willingly withdraw from the grid and turn to other unstable sources such as wood, charcoal and paraffin, especially those who are found in informal settlements and those resorting to illegal and unofficial means of connecting to electricity (Masuku 2024, p. 471).

In most cases, Eskom does not conclude electricity supply contracts directly with household customers but concludes electricity supply contracts with municipalities and commercial customers (Dube & Moyo 2022). However, Eskom does not always have an electricity supply obligation to household customers, as it often concludes contracts with municipalities rather than with individual household customers. When Eskom supplies electricity to municipalities, the municipalities do not use all the electricity they receive. For this reason, Eskom sometimes interrupts the supply of electricity to municipalities when they are unable to pay due to high consumer debts, which in turn results in the municipalities no longer receiving electricity, affecting both consumers and the long-term maintenance of municipal services (Khonjelwayo & Nthakheni 2021; Murwirapachena, Kabange & Ifeacho 2023). Consumer debt in South Africa continues to threaten the sustainability of public service provision across all municipalities. For example, it has been reported that households, businesses and government owe South African municipalities about R170 billion for services

rendered (Murwirapachena, Kabange & Ifeacho 2023). Consequently, this debt makes it difficult for municipalities to make bulk purchases of electricity and water which in turn has serious consequences for municipal service provision, with the culture of nonpayment being the common denominator.

According to Lubbe & Rossouw, 2005, as cited in Murwirapachena, Kabange and Ifeacho, 2023, p.620) “The apartheid era, when civil disobedience took the form of refusing to pay rates has been a major force behind the culture of not paying for public services”. Though this can be considered the primary cause of the culture of nonpayment, there is evidence that socio-economic factors including poverty, unemployment, the level of formal education, and one’s racial group also have an impact on the nonpayment of municipal services. According to Murwirapachena, Kabange & Ifeacho (2023), a number of studies have looked at the factors that lead to people in South Africa not paying for public services, and these factors are typically divided into two primary categories, namely, the inability to pay, and the refusal to pay.

2.5.1. Electricity challenges in South Africa

The electricity demand in South Africa comes from five sectors. These are industry, transport, agriculture, commerce and residential. Of these, industry has been the largest consumer of electricity. Over the years the total electricity demand has been increasing which is vastly associated with population growth; however, the electricity reserve margin has been declining leading to the country experiencing its worst major blackouts with ponderous economic losses. The energy crisis in South Africa did not happen overnight, but it has developed over the years and the South African government was warned by the Department of Minerals and Energy in 1998 that the generation surplus of the state-owned power utility Eskom would be completely exhausted by 2007 (Kessides, Bogetic & Maurer 2007; Wentink 2023). This has resulted in Eskom not being able to generate sufficient power for the country and it seems likely that it will continue that way until Eskom comes with a turnaround strategy needed to alleviate the supply shortages. This could have been easily avoided had the country had plans in motion to manage demand and supply through strategies and electricity capacity expansion. To avoid a total collapse of the power grid, Eskom introduced rolling blackouts, better known as load-shedding, which hit the country repeatedly over long periods of time and these have gotten worse. Even though the government has repeatedly made promises to end load-shedding, it has not been able to fulfill those promises (Cohen

2023; Wentink 2023).

(Kruger 2022, as cited in Wentink,2023, p.1) contends that the frequency of load-shedding and unplanned maintenance has steadily increased, while the "energy availability factor" reflects an increase in breakdowns at power plants. The current energy crisis is a result of corruption, looting, and fraudulent dealings within Eskom, rather than environmental or extraneous factors beyond their control (Wentink 2023). These blackouts have not only become increasingly frequent but also have caused significant disruptions in the daily lives and economic activities. The electricity (or power) outages led to many businesses shutting down and losing revenue. In addition, they have not being able to garner new investors into their businesses because these investors feel that they will not generate enough profits due to scheduled, or sometimes unscheduled, power cuts. The lack of electricity is a major challenge that must be overcome if South Africa is to boost generation capacity to end record shortfalls. The continent's most industrialised country has been hit by repeated blackouts since 2008 because the state-owned utility, Eskom, is unable to meet demand from an unreliable fleet of coal-fired power plants that are prone to outages (Trace, 2020). Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the breadth of the nation's electricity problem. These two figures demonstrate how the nation's power outages have gotten worse and have not shown any signs of improving.

Chart 1: Number of calendar days on which rolling blackouts occurred



Figure 2: South Africa - Number of calendar days that rolling electricity blackouts occurred by year (2014-2022)

Source: BusinessTech 2023

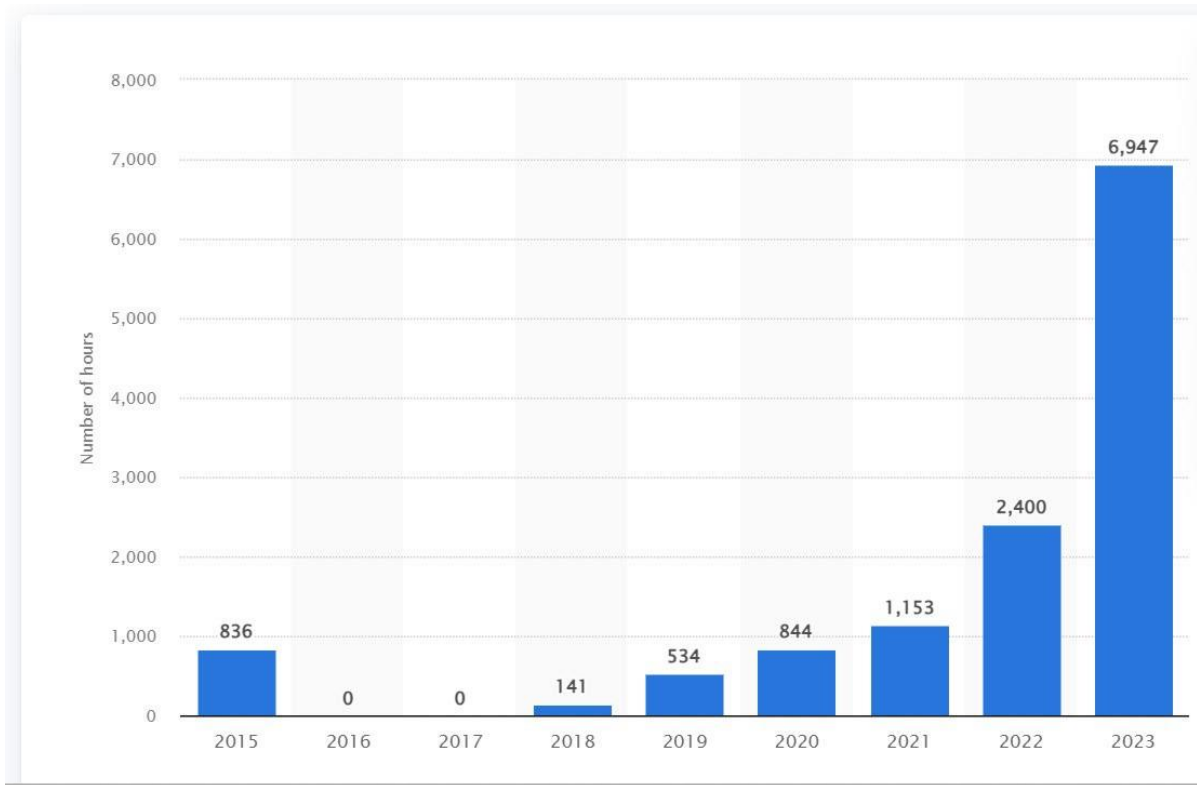


Figure 3: Total Number of load-shedding hours in South Africa (2015-2023)

Sources: Statista

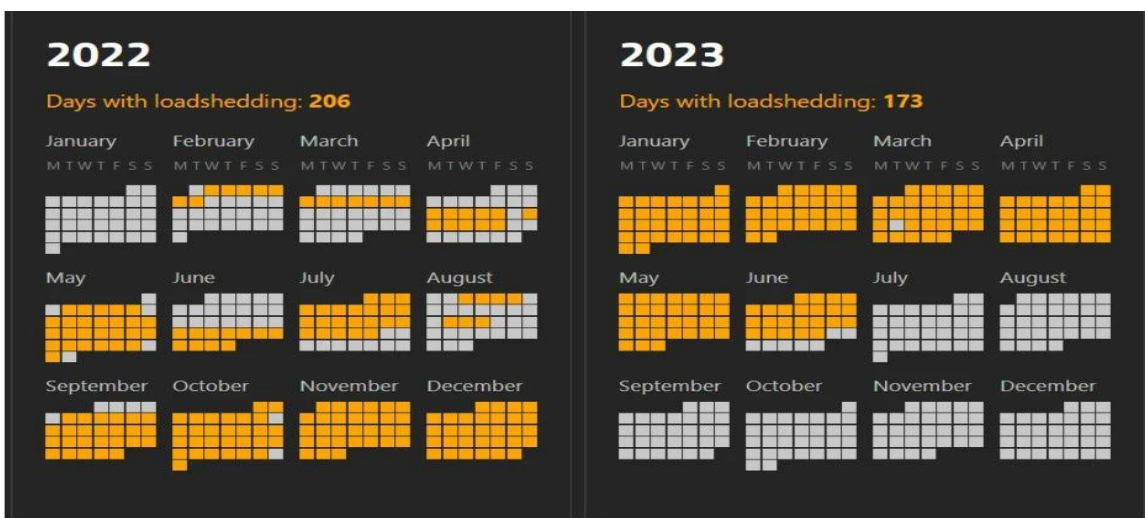


Figure 4.: Days with load-shedding in South Africa (Jan 2022 - Dec 2023)

Source: Business Tech 2023

(Dunn, 2022, as cited in Masuku,2024, p.2) Masuku (2024) claimed that Eskom's utility is on the verge of collapsing. As a result, the power utility is shedding roughly 6,000 megawatts of power per day nationwide to prevent the grid from collapsing after its power stations at Kusile and Kriel were shut down in 2022 (Masuku 2024). This means that millions of homes and businesses across the country lacked electricity for more than eight hours every day. In addition, rising energy prices have made the situation worse and are still interfering with the urban poor people's plans for a decent living because they cannot afford to go completely off the grid (i.e., to use alternative renewable energies such as solar power (Masuku 2024). Families frequently find it difficult to deal with the significant power outages and the electrical price increases given the impact on their everyday lives, including access to, preparation of, and storage of food. Additionally, reports suggest that the nation faced more severe difficulties in 2023, mainly as a result of widespread malfunctions at Eskom's aged power plants and a halt in the renewable energy independent power procurement programme (Chandak 2024; Harding 2023). The electricity crisis in South Africa is further complicated by the alleged coal mafia in Mpumalanga, these illicit operations hijack essential coal supplies, exporting them and severely impacting Eskom's performance. This statement is further confirmed by what is shown in the above Figure 3.

Load-shedding may have seemed like the easy way out to ensure electricity supply, but the governments long term plans have been moving at a very slow pace especially in terms of its energy policy goals. The South African government needs to deal with environmental issues caused by electricity generation from coal, as coal supplies 95% of the country's power supply. This is harmful and unsustainable, and therefore the government needs to adopt policies which focus on renewable energy in an effort to reduce carbon emissions. Fortunately, South Africa has a very high potential for the generation of renewable electricity. Importantly, a number of countries, more especially the European countries, are embracing renewable electricity generation and paving the way for new initiatives. However, Africa and particularly South Africa, lags behind these initiatives (Musango, Amigun & Brent 2011). The widespread deployment of renewable electricity generation, however, is limited by a number of general challenges and barriers. The factors that contribute to these barriers can be categorized as natural factors, economic and financial factors, institutional and regulatory barriers, infrastructure barriers, research and development barriers, human resource barriers, and social barriers. The development of renewable energy requires proper

planning and execution for it to become successful. South Africa might face challenges when implementing renewable energy due to the continued operational and financial challenges and the ongoing theft and corruption associated with Eskom's generation of energy largely from coal. In summary, based on the above discussion, we can confidently state that Eskom's poor management, unprofitable municipality distribution, severe debt, high nonpayment rates on the part of citizens and organs of state, inadequate asset management, and lack of necessary technical resources are the main causes of our country's electricity problems (Viljoen & Dube 2023).

2.5.2. Electricity challenges in Africa

In both developed and developing countries access to electricity is critical for social services such as health and education, and economic growth. The energy sector in every African nation is mostly dependent on conventional resources such as oil, gas, and coal, which account for around 80% of the region's total electrical generation (Agoundedemba, Kim & Kim 2023). The main obstacles to the economic and social growth of the people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is restricted access to modern energy services. Moreover, energy is a vital component of both the production of goods and services, and the standard of living (Byaro & Mmaga 2022; Mensah 2024). Thus, energy plays a very critical role in the development of any nation's economy. However, there is a growing concern as the energy sector is failing to meet the growing demands, whilst at the same time, it should provide a sufficient supply and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Africa's electrical grid is currently underdeveloped, completely excluding a significant portion of the continent which is a contributing factor to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) nations facing significant developmental obstacles due to limited access to electricity and power outages which have become a common feature in many African countries (Associated Press 2023; Byaro & Mmaga 2022; Longa & Van der Zwaan 2020; Mensah 2024).

As a result of the energy crisis, millions of people in Africa have the lowest rates of access to electricity, and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is considered to be the home to almost two-thirds of the world's population without electricity. Unfortunately, this figure is continuously increasing with 81% of Sub-Saharan Africa SSA's population using harmful and inefficient traditional forms of energy for cooking and heating (Agoundedemba, Kim & Kim 2023).

Those who live in rural regions are the ones who suffer the most as access to electricity is about 22% as compared to those who staying in town (Brass, Harris & Mclean 2021; Ngueta, Kaguendo & Noumba 2022).



Source: Based on interviews with World Bank staff from the Africa Energy Department, 2008.

Figure 5: Africa’s Power Supply Crisis

Source: Based on interviews with World Bank Staff from the Africa Energy Department ,2008

More than 30 African nations that are currently suffering from frequent outages and power outages are having to rely on expensively rented power plants as a temporary fix. Regular blackouts result in significant losses of revenue and broken equipment. This totals an average of 6% of turnover for formal businesses and up to 16% for unofficial businesses that are unable to supply their own backup power (Schoeman & Sanders 2018). The lack of electricity can have a financial cost that exceeds 2% of a country’s gross domestic product. In addition, the lack of electricity has reduced the yearly per capita gross domestic product

growth rates by as much as 0.5 percentage points for some nations (Codera Analytics 2023).

According to Eberhard (2015), the 48 countries that make up Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have a combined power generation capacity of approximately 80 gigawatts, and the total is less than 40 gigawatts when South Africa is excluded. The consistent supply of energy remains elusive throughout Africa, from Nigeria, where system collapses are common, to Zimbabwe, where many are forced to work at night because that is the only time there is power (Associated Press 2023). With the power supply for a population more than three times that of South Africa, Nigeria barely has a tenth of South Africa installed generation capacity. Large tracts of Africa's rural areas lack electricity altogether, while the continent's enormous metropolises have inconsistent electricity supplies. Thus, it is estimated that 600 million Africans, or 43% of the continent's population, did not have access to electricity in 2021, with 590 million of them living in Sub-Saharan Africa (Associated Press 2023; Eberhard 2015). This shows that Sub-Saharan Africa has more difficult access to power than many other areas and countries, with the rural areas being the most underserved. This is a glaring example of Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) disadvantage in the global energy market.

Despite having lower greenhouse gas emissions than more developed nations, African countries are particularly vulnerable to changes in climate patterns because of their geographic position (Agoundedemba, Kim & Kim 2023). Thus, there is an increasing need to develop fuel-efficient and carbon-emitting power generation systems, especially in Sub-Saharan areas. Africa presents an important energy situation because of its vast terrain and abundance of natural resources. With significant oil and gas deposits, in addition to an abundance of solar, wind, and geothermal energy, it boasts some of the world's most prolific renewable energy sources. Sub-Saharan Africa has long been considered the one of the least developed regions in terms of technological advancement and economic growth, and access to modern energy has continually lagged behind. Despite the rising need for electrical energy, Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) high concentration of geographically dispersed rural villages presents substantial technical and financial obstacles to building extensive grid connections. The ageing infrastructure, a lack of government control, and a lack of skilled labour to maintain the national grid are just a few of the factors contributing to Africa's appalling electricity supply (Associated Press 2023). The fact that many colonial administrations constructed electrical infrastructure primarily intended for the minority white population and excluding sizable portions of the Black people presents a historical issue which is partly why

South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are in this predicament. Electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa has been historically a state-led service, which has also contributed to the supply failures. In 2002, only slightly more than 20% of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) entire population had access to electricity, compared to 85% in North Africa and Latin America. Africa's energy sector suffers from a number of deficiencies, including limited access, inadequate capacity, poor reliability, and extremely high costs. These and other shortcomings in the power sector threaten Sub-Saharan Africa's long term economic growth and competitiveness (Onyeji, Bazilian & Nussbaumer 2012). Due to a majority of Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) countries being associated with corrupt practices and a history of failure, another issue facing the region is the reluctance of foreign investors to make electricity-related investments (Bos, Chaplin & Mamum 2018; Eberhard 2015). Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries are undoubtedly still behind in terms of increasing access to electricity because they are unable to build more power lines, and guarantee that they are maintained regularly. This is a direct result of a lack of planning, skills, and local participation in the planning process, as well as the inadequate coordination of the processes to be used (Bos, Chaplin & Mamum 2018). While inadequate power networks are undoubtedly a contributing factor, many Sub-Saharan African countries lack sufficient electrical supplies to meet the needs of their population. Clearly, this crisis is caused mostly by the lack of investment in generating capacity to deal with Africa's electricity crisis (Eberhard 2015). Agoundedemba, Kim and Kim (2023) emphasised that numerous obstacles stand in the way of Africa's energy access, including inadequate technology and capacity building, unsustainable renewable energy policies, low levels of foreign investment, little financial support, excessive interest rates on loan facilities, and unstable economies.

2.6. The role of South Africa's local governments in electricity service delivery

Section 153 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) gives local governments executive authority over electricity distribution and the right to administer it. The executive authority includes the right and the duty to enter into service agreements with entities that distribute electricity on its behalf, as well as the responsibility to manage the electricity service on a daily basis through planning and decision making (Baker & Phillips 2019). Moreover, municipalities play a key role in distributing electricity, hence they handle slightly more than 40% of the country's power distribution. The local municipalities buy electricity in bulk from Eskom at wholesale prices, mark it up and resell it to businesses, households and institutions (Baker & Phillips 2019). The revenues from electricity sales are then used to

cross-subsidize other basic services. However, they have difficulty generating enough revenue from the sale of electricity sales due to consumer debt and non-payment, and as a result the financial survival of various local municipalities is at stake (Masuku 2024). The majority of revenue from the sale of electricity is an essential source of income for municipalities. For example, in the first half of 2023, they spent about R50,2 billion on electricity purchases and earned R60 billion from electricity sales. This represents a R9.8 billion surplus that the municipalities used to offset other expenses that they had (Statistics South Africa 2023).

Masuku (2024) contends that the primary issue of household energy poverty in South Africa can be attributed to local government's perception that they do not have a clear mandate to offer impoverished families with free basic infrastructure services, like free power and water. Consequently, although there is an increase in the electrification programme due to policies being implemented, low-income households experience energy poverty and use of traditional fuels. These include wood, charcoal and paraffin which are deemed unsafe and unfriendly to the environment (Llyod, 2014). This is further exacerbated by the spatial legacies of apartheid which have left South Africa with a great deal of geographical diversity in its municipalities. These consist of the number and density of people living there, income levels, institutional, financial, and human resource levels, the quality of services provided, and the related cost structures (Baker & Phillips, 2019). The National Energy Regulator of South Africa controls both municipal and Eskom energy pricing; however, because each municipality can request an additional increase above the Eskom tariff rise and above the National Energy Regulator of South Africa's recommended electricity price, electricity costs still vary throughout municipalities. This means that some of the additional costs are passed on to consumers (Mathopo & Minnaar, 2023; Statistics South Africa 2022). This results in a vicious cycle whereby growing electricity costs drive up consumer prices. Then, more people thus find themselves unable to pay service fees (Mathopo & Minnaar 2023). The municipalities' expenses go up and their revenue goes down as a result, worsening the effect on their finances. This implies that essential services like housing, public safety, and space maintenance are also impacted (South Africa's Municipal Challenges 2021).

2.7. The role of Eskom in electricity service delivery

Being a mining town, Kimberley, South Africa, saw the first recorded usage of electricity in 1882 when electric streetlights were installed to aid in nighttime mining operations (Woode-

Smith 2023). The majority of energy and power in South Africa is produced using coal which is obtained through mining, hence there is a close relationship between coal mining and energy production (Akinbami, Oke & Boduhrin 2021). Moreover, South Africa's energy market is characterized by a monopoly as who supplies about 95% of the nation's electrical needs (or, more than half of all the power produced in Africa) (Akinibami, Oke & Boduhrin 2021). The South African government is the exclusive stakeholder of Eskom (formerly known as Escom), a fully state-owned enterprise, and the Minister of Public Enterprise serves as the stakeholder representative. One-third of South Africa's customers consume 60% of the distribution, which is handled by Eskom. Municipalities, who make up the largest segment of Eskom's clientele, supply the remaining two-thirds (Baker & Phillips 2019). Eskom was initially formed to generate inexpensive electricity for mining, but as a power utility it had an obligation to sustain power to the country at large (Woode-Smith 2018). The first places to produce electricity were municipalities, and non-municipal electricity projects were established to fulfil the expanding energy requirements of the mines about 10 years after gold was discovered (1852). (Akinbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021). The company's history dates back to 1923, when it was first established as the Electricity Supply Commission (Escom) and later as Eskom. It was established as an electricity regulator and subsidiary supplier as a monopolistic governmental organisation (Woode-Smith, 2018). The process of nationalizing electricity was initiated with the Electricity Act of 1922, while private electricity producers were still permitted to supply electricity. As a result, the supply became dispersed among numerous suppliers, each with their own supply criteria and taxes as demand increased (Woode-Smith 2018). However, Escom's regulatory authority over all electrical matters was granted, but other private power producers were still permitted to supply electricity (Woode-Smith 2018). This gave Escom the ultimate power over anything electrical as they became exclusive providers. This purportedly contributed to Escom's downfall's given that it was able to run as a meritocratic organisation which was self-funded, but was able to borrow money from the national treasury (Woode-Smith 2018).The money that Escom made over their electrical supply was only permitted to pay expenses, debt balances, and a tiny amount for reserve funds (Akanbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021; Woode-Smith 2018). In addition to being prohibited from receiving direct public money, Escom was also prohibited from charging a market rate for electricity, which created a disastrous situation (Woode- Smith 2018). The electrification was heavily shaped by the mining industry as they had the greatest need for electricity and were capital holders it also made sense to target places surrounding mines (Akanbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021; Woode-Smith 2018).

South Africa had a sharp rise in the production and supply of electricity during the 1890s and the early 1900s, either to run mining equipment or to provide for municipal lighting (Akanbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021). Consequently, this led to exorbitant electricity bills regrettably due to the small size and inefficiency of power facilities, as well as poor communication amongst users. This meant that Eskom had a long-standing history of inefficient power facilities and poor communication which we still witness today, and this also contributes to poor service delivery. Eskom faced a lot of challenges which further affected its productivity. For example, it failed to meet demand after having acquired other power stations to further satisfy the electricity demand ((Akanbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021; Woode-Smith 2018). In response to challenges that Eskom was experiencing, the government decided to launch a commission of inquiry into the supply of electricity in the Republic of South Africa. This commission was referred to as the De Villiers Commission (Woode-Smith 2018).

The main objective of the De Villiers Commission was to improve the nation's electricity production efficiency and prices, while also restructuring Eskom's management and operations. The Commission criticised Eskom's governance, management, electricity-forecasting methods, investment decisions and accounting. Its recommendations led to changes in the Electricity Act of 1985 and to new Eskom and Electricity Acts in 1987. During this process, Eskom was renamed Eskom, and given a new two-tier governance structure (Akanbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021; Van der Heijden 2013; Woode-Smith 2018). Despite governments efforts, Eskom's problems continued with uncontrolled electricity rates and non-compliant consumers which led to the government changing the Electricity Act and implementing the National Electricity Regulator in place of the Electricity Board (Akinbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021). This modification helped lessen the Eskom's financial burden to some extent; however, over the years thing started to deteriorate despite government efforts. This can most probably be attributed to cadre deployment, Broad-based Economic Empowerment (BEE) and the affirmative action. The Eskom's board and management warned the government that if they do not invest in additional generation capacity there will be a lack of electricity in the years that follow. This failure on the part of the central state resulted in Eskom facing steady electricity shortages since 2007, and the country experiencing load-shedding (Akinbami, Oke & Bodunrin 2021; Woode-Smith 2018). Eskom's monopoly status has resulted in a significant shortage of other power sources, and

the hindering of the establishment of alternative electricity generation sources. As a result, these unfortunate developments have had serious ramifications, as many consumers are expected to switch to alternative sources of power generation (Woode-Smith 2023).

It should be noted that the distribution of electricity was unequal in the past (during the apartheid era) with the white population receiving high levels of services and the black population receiving very poor service. This is still largely the case given the low electrification rates in rural areas and poor communities, and this is a factor resulting in low literacy rates, poor job creation and low improvements in education (Greenberg 2002; Sakodie & Adams 2020).

Finally, it is important for the government to observe what happens to state-owned businesses when excessive political meddling results in the appointment of connected individuals rather than the most qualified candidates who are free from political influence. In such cases, work will be governed by moral standards and principles to ensure that employees perform their jobs to the best of their abilities.

2.8. The causes of service delivery challenges in electricity

South Africa is still facing difficulties in providing basic electricity services. This failure frequently prompts disgruntled citizens to engage in violent and disruptive protests against the supply of services (Ndasana, Vallabh & Mxunyelwa 2022). The failure of a municipality, the government, and Eskom to provide the citizens with adequate electricity frequently sparks protests. Regular and extended rolling blackouts are frequently brought on by insufficient power generation capacity and aging infrastructure. These, in turn, are brought on by a number of problems that are covered in more detail below. This disruption also has an adverse effect on citizens, businesses, health care, foreign investments, and economic growth, in addition to posing safety risks like an increase in crime (Ndasana, Vallabh & Mxunyelwa 2022). South Africa's electricity service delivery challenges are multifaceted. Key factors contributing to these challenges include:

2.8.1. Capacity issues amongst local government and Eskom

Inadequate capacity, particularly in local government hinders effective service delivery. In South Africa, service delivery is at an "abysmal" level, primarily as a result of cadre

deployment and the appointment of people who are underqualified and unskilled (Writer 2023). These are among the reasons why one finds public service providers very incompetent and incapable of doing their jobs. Consequently, cadre deployment and appointment of unqualified individuals who cannot accomplish any of the goals of the organization contribute to the high levels of incompetencies and inefficiency in public service provision (Gqaji, Proches & Green 2016). The cadre deployment policy, which is particularly focused on placing comrades in important posts in the public sector, has also contributed to some of the failures in terms of capacity issues as the cadre deployment system tends to prioritize party loyalty over public interest. Moreover, often unqualified and incompetent individuals who are incapable of providing services on time and effectively are deployed into critical public sector positions (Mlambo, Zubane & Thusi 2022; Writer 2023). Consequently, these deployed comrades lack accountability as they know that they are often protected by their party. This situation leads them to not being accountable for not performing the functions and duties they're supposed to. For example, the Auditor-General (2022) reported that the lack of capacity is the contributing factor to service delivery issues; that municipalities extensively depend on consultants due to inadequate skills and competence in the areas of finance, information technology and the technical divisions that are in charge of infrastructure projects. There is widespread belief that the electricity crisis we are currently experiencing is self-inflicted, and the result of government incompetence and poor leadership. This is because Eskom is a state-led enterprise that is frequently saved by the state. However, the government was warned that our energy utility might not be able to meet the energy needs of the country in the future. As a result, it has been noted that there has been inadequate sub-station maintenance, no new investments that would enable the construction of new power stations to satisfy the demand for electricity, and that Eskom's financial situation is not favourable (Trace 2020; Zuma 2014).

2.8.2. Lack of capacity as a contributing factor to social protests

Protests around service delivery have their roots in South Africa's apartheid era from when protests were used to both target and voice dissatisfaction with service delivery, including electricity provision (Reddy 2016). More precisely, creating social movements and community-based organizations to challenge the apartheid regime was the overarching objective in order for grievances to be attended to.

Protests in the post-1994 period in South Africa can be attributed to a great

deal of concern on the part of citizens who have disgruntled with poor service delivery. Unfortunately, these protests over service delivery in the urban and rural areas have become the norm (Botes 2018; Mamokhere 2023).

We have seen a great spark of social protests over the years (early 2000's -current) associated with non-delivery of services. and these continue to increase as public officials fail to deliver their mandate, which is to deliver basic services to citizens.

The public officials failure to acknowledge that basic services are a fundamental right and that if they are not provided, people will become enraged and may participate in social protests is one reason why we have witnessed a great deal of unhappiness, demonstrations and social protests among the populace over the years (early 2000's -current) (Mamokhere 2023).

These protests are often sparked by the government's and local governments' inability to provide basic services like housing, employment opportunities, water, electricity, and sanitation (Mottiar & Bond 2012; Ndasana,Vallabh & Mxunyelwa 2022). They can also be sparked by specific grievances related to worker strikes, the taxi industry, students, and political instability. In the Republic of South Africa, the Constitution recognizes protests as a human right for all citizens.

(Ngcamu,2019, as cited in Gamede, 2021, p.131) South Africa has been dubbed the protest capital of the world. There are many different things that can cause protests, such as locals being angry about ward or municipality boundaries being redrawn without adequate government consultation, a factor that has resulted in the burning of public infrastructure. Every day, a number of media outlets cover social protests occurring across the South African nation. These protests typically occur in impoverished townships and rural areas, with some of them being particularly violent, causing significant damage to public infrastructure, and turning into uncontrollable altercations with the police (Botes 2018). Numerous studies have shown that the main causes of social uprisings are the government's increasing lack of responsiveness, and those of individuals in important positions in local government, including politicians and bureaucrats. Social protests force the government to respond to community demands for better service delivery because they attract media attention, spark

public outcry, and force them to address the issues raised (Gamede 2021). As a result, protests force the government to take responsibility and action on issues (Botes 2018; Mamokhere 2023). The authors have suggested that it is important to maintain continuous communication with the citizens so that they are well informed about the goals and developments. Consequently, this is likely to ensure that people do not engage in protests when they believe their issues are being acknowledged and taken seriously.

2.8.3. Political interference and instability

Beginning in 1994, South Africa underwent a transformation process, led by the African National Congress government in terms of the Constitution of South Africa. The focus was to rectify the imbalances of the past by reversing the inequality experienced under apartheid (Mokhutso, Marumo & Motswaledi 2023). South African municipalities experience serious challenges in dealing with the interface between politicians and the appointed officials due to their political ties which significantly impact service delivery in South Africa.. Inappropriate political interference in administrative matters and strained relations between key political and administrative officials are a daily occurrence at the municipal level hinder effective governance (Maqoko & Asmah-Andoh 2019). Politicking and the inappropriate interference in municipal administration on the part of politicians has been the primary cause of most municipalities' failure to deliver public service. Political instability and internal strife continue to be significant obstacles towards economic development.

These have discouraged foreign direct investments and make it harder for investors to believe that temporary periods of peace will endure (Writer 2023). The efficient and effective functioning of local government are hampered by the election or appointment of municipal employees who lack the necessary qualifications and who are chosen through nepotism and political patronage (Reddy 2016). In this context, a number of top local government appointments go to people who lack the necessary technical abilities to meet the job criteria. This prevents these individuals from completing the assigned work, and they often engage in fraudulent activity.

(Mafunisa,2003, as cited in Masuku & Jili,2019, p.2) emphasized that political meddling in administration reduces the chance of efficient administration; therefore, policymaking activities should be completely isolated from administration functions, and administrators needed clear goals before they can create an effective administrative function. However,

there is an issue impeding the efficacy and efficiency of public services due to political meddling in municipal operations which cover situations in which local government representatives have undermined council procedures through political means (Masuku & Jili 2019). This, in turn, affects the stability and efficacy of local government. Political ties in South Africa are widely regarded as having a significant impact on how public institutions operate which, in turn, influences decisions about public sector employment. Hence, several cadre deployments have gotten positions through their political ties, but not necessarily based on their technical skills or abilities.

There has been strong political meddling in the management of South Africa's state-owned companies. This has often resulted in leadership crises, with the current shareholder representative model serving as a case study in failure and what not to do (Jacobs 2023). In addition to the composition of the board and the selection of chief executive officers, other management executives can be influenced by the government's shareholder representatives who then become the centre of the organisation's leadership and responsibilities (Jacobs 2023; Zulu 2022). In conclusion, to improve service delivery, it is imperative to ensure that local government officials are hired based on merit, rather than politics ties.(Masuku & Jili 2019). Local government to be productive and carry out its assigned duties, it must collaborate and ensure that when hiring (former) politicians, they should not misuse their authority or political ties to influence their decisions (Maqoko & Asmah-Andoh 2019). Service delivery in South Africa would improve by making sure that all local municipal officials are hired on merit, and not in terms of their political ties. Furthermore, it would be ideal for politicians to refrain from interfering in administrative matters, and administrative staff should diligently implement municipal council policy decisions (Masuku & Jili,2019).

2.8.4. Lack of funding

Goldsmith (2014) has identified the lack of funding as a cause of poor service delivery on the part of government, and this often makes service delivery problematic. Due to the fact that local governments are delegated by government to provide and ensure the delivery of services, they remain dependent on financial support that they receive from government. However, this dependency position stymies local government's ability to deliver public services as government funding cannot be relied upon and does not come exactly when it is needed, and sometimes it is not enough to provide adequate services. The other challenge remains with the general public not paying for the services that they are provided with, and this

also contributes to a massive financial burden. This is summarized in the following statement.

Eskom, the struggling national energy monopoly of South Africa, has in the past announced that it has been unable to purchase diesel for its backup power facilities due to a shortage of funds, therefore relying on the government to come up with emergency cash or face a possibility of rolling out more severe blackouts (Cotterill, 2022; Bloomberg 2024).

This financial distress is contributing to the financial woes that Eskom experiences as it negotiates more loans which it struggles to repay. In turn, Eskom ends up asking for more assistance from the government as it (Eskom) operates at a loss (Bloomberg 2023). Eskom's reliance on requesting additional funds from the government is problematic because the government itself lacks adequate funding, which hinders its capacity to provide public services like power. Service delivery is unclear and inconsistent when dependent on government funding therefore it should be self-sufficient to prevent such situations .

2.8.5. Lack of Accountability

Any nation's public service organizations' primary goal is to provide services to the populace in order to raise their standard of living. Democratic administrations aim to fulfil their commitments; however, there is a danger that corruption and a lack of accountability will undermine this goal because in order to attain excellence in service delivery, public institutions need to be free of corruption and accountable to the public and government (Rana et al. 2019). It is crucial that all branches of government comprehend the roles they are expected to play in resolving the country's current issues since accountability is one of the fundamental pillars of the constitutional democracy of the nation (Moloto, Mkhomazi & Worku 2020). Accountability means having to answer to someone in a position of power or justifying one's acts or inaction by comparing them to certain criteria or expectations. According to Sikhakhane and Reddy (2011), accountability implies that the employees will be expected to take responsibility for the outcomes of their actions and decisions, positive or negative, and for the work that is directly under their control.

Accountability clearly connects actions and the results of individuals, groups, departments,

or business units, and it sometimes creates some challenges for officials, legislators, and the general public. This is so even though accountability demands good governance among responsible officials, legislators, and civil society. Accountability to oneself arises from interactive leadership wherein people must act diligently and with responsibility and strengthen the voice of their citizens to demand greater accountability and responsiveness directly from their public officials and service providers (Msila 2022; Rana et al. 2019). If we want a public service where honesty, reliability, excellence and trust prevail, it must start with the individual. When people are accountable to themselves, they want to follow the values that uplift them. Many public service workers are not accountable to anyone, which is why the public service always bears the brunt of criticism. In conclusion lack of accountability undermine the goal of providing excellent service delivery. Therefore public institutions need to be free from corruption and accountable to the public and government for their actions.

2.8.6. Lack of Decentralization of energy

One of the main goals of decentralization is to enhance the environment and socio-economic development outcomes by strengthening local democratic practices. A growing body of research indicates that energy decentralization can also benefit climate justice by decreasing the carbon footprint of energy systems and increasing access to clean, safe, and reliable energy for communities that have never had such access before (Lawrence 2020). An extremely important and rapidly developing policy issue is that the nation's energy parastatal, Eskom, continues to be the biggest state-owned enterprise on the African continent. Eskom produces the sufficient electricity to rank eleventh as a global producer, and in terms of installed capacity it ranks sixth among African businesses (Lawrence 2020).

The government has requested that Eskom be unbundled into three distinct components, namely, generation, transmission, and distribution companies. This is because of its size which appears to be a source of vulnerability, given its virtual monopoly on the provision of electricity, the protracted governance issues, and skyrocketing costs (see Figure six). Figure six clearly indicates how electricity tariffs and consumer prices have been exorbitant – factors which contribute to a worsening economy. Decentralization and adoption of renewable energy sources could improve access and lower socio-economic poverty. A ready alternative could be to tap renewable energy sources. South Africa's wind and solar energy resources can provide several times its anticipated electricity consumption in 2025, which is 40,000 Giga watts (Lawrence 2020). The gains of this connectivity are even greater, and

they are already less expensive than coal generation and more environmentally friendly. Due to these factors, the increased grid decentralization via the adoption of renewable energy at various scales along with efficient mechanism for participatory energy governance hold promise for improving access and lowering socio-economic poverty in general, as well as energy poverty (Lawrence 2020). In conclusion, the centralized nature of Eskom contributes to their vulnerability due to its virtual monopoly on electricity provision which both Eskom and government need to address as it has significant ramifications.

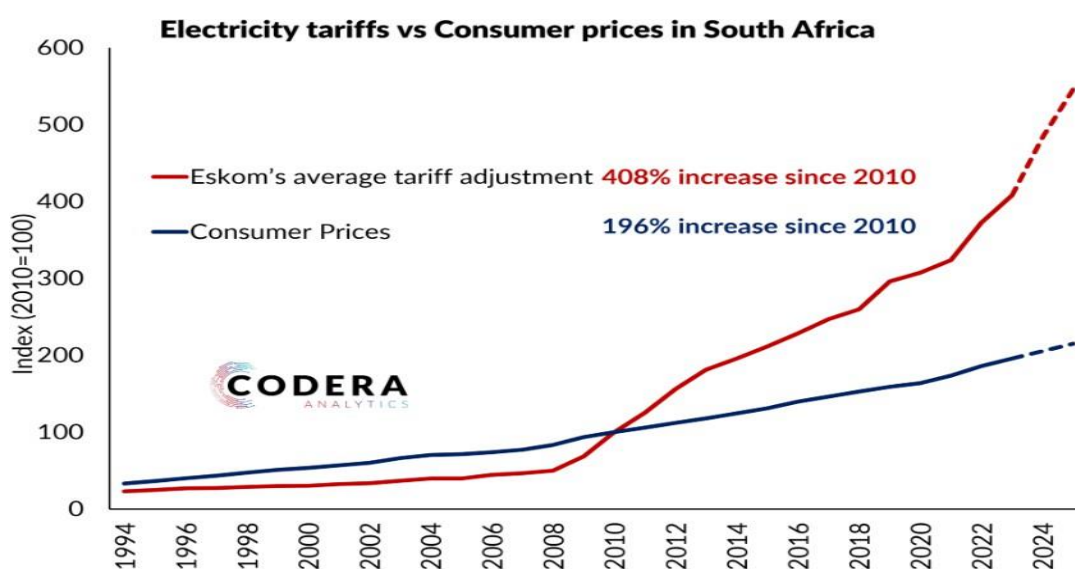


Figure 6: Eskom’s average tariff adjustment of electricity prices vs consumer prices in South Africa (1994 – 2024)

Source: CODERA Analytics

2.8.7. Lack of maintenance of power stations

The majority of power stations work in environments with significant energy losses, which makes it challenging for them to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure that supplies electricity to their consumers. In South Africa, as a result of the energy crisis, the maintenance of the power generation fleet has been delayed since 2007. In an effort to help resolve the energy crisis and keep the lights on, the load-shedding strategy was implemented. By implementing a “keeping the lights on” and load shedding strategy, the fleet's performance

declined, negatively impacting Eskom's ability to meet future electricity demands (Department of Energy 2013). To relieve pressure on the existing power stations, three old, less efficient power stations that were decommissioned in the 1980's and early 1990's were brought back into service. In open cycle gas turbines, diesel-fired units were being used more frequently, but they were expensive to operate. There are concerns that the energy demand/supply balance will remain vulnerable until the new Medupi power station is fully operational, although the exact date for this to happen remained uncertain.

2.8.8. Financial management leading to corruption

There have been reports of widespread corruption in all three branches of government in South Africa, that is, the national, provincial and local government which has led to inadequate service delivery including housing, water, electrification and sanitation .. Tools to detect corruption, abuse of authority and ensure accountability are available, but they are not being used to their full potential (Adams & Fazekas, 2021). Corruption continues to be the major obstacle to progress and calls for more efforts to eradicate it remain in place in order to raise the citizens' standard of living by improving service delivery (Mokhutso, Marumo & Motswaledi 2023). Corruption has been connected to a number of backlog issues in the nation and has led to inadequate service delivery, including housing, water, electrification, and sanitation. As a result, citizens have lost faith in, and become distrustful of, the people who are supposed to be serving them in accordance with their mandate (Masuku & Jili 2019). Hoffman (2013) contends that the state's policies often lessens the efficiency and objectivity of the public sector, and makes space for corruption, a lack of accountability, and transparency. Although the African National Congress has upheld the strategy of cadre deployment, the public believes that it encourages the abuse of power and corruption.

Corruption is another challenge facing municipalities in South Africa and it hinders the ability of government to provide for the effective delivery of services to its citizens (Mokhutso, Marumo & Motswaledi 2023). This, in turn, has led to financial collapse and a bad reputation amongst most municipalities. Nguyen (2023) indicates that Eskom's capacity to provide reliable and consistent electricity supply has been negatively impacted by accusations of corruption and state capture. The utility has racked up enormous debt with an approximate value of R450-billion (Godinho & Hermanus 2018). This has reduced Eskom's ability to make investments in modernizing and upgrading the electricity infrastructure in South Africa. Eskom's operations have been further stressed by this debt load which has

exacerbated the energy crisis and jeopardized the utility's capacity to consistently and reliably supply power to South Africans (Godihno & Hermanus 2018). Allegations of state capture have sparked worries about political meddling within Eskom, since contracts are purportedly given to organizations and people with political clout (Hlengwa 2023; Miles 2019). Transparency has been weakened and funds that should have gone toward vital infrastructure projects have instead been diverted.

2.8.9. State Capture

“State capture refers to the process of obtaining, or capturing, a state regulatory authority without democratic authorization” (Bracking 2018, p.170). Mathebula and Masiya (2022) state that capture is the term used to describe how members of the political and corporate elites manipulate policies and practices through friends, family, and social networks. The term "state capture" was popularised in the South African media to describe the opaque links between the former president (i.e., President Jacob Zuma), his family and supporters inside the ruling ANC party, as well as the Gupta family and their businesses and allies (Bracking 2018).

The strong relationship between South African former President Jacob Zuma and the Gupta family raised concerns about the possibility of state capture. However, some argue that the state capture was part of the dealings of the ruling party which is the African National Congress (ANC) but was concealed by the fact that the South African state has not yet been regarded as a failed or failing state (Bracking 2018, p. 177).

The former Public Protector, Ms Thuli Madonsela, released a devastating report on state capture in 2016, sparking a major development that led to the establishment of the Zondo Commission of Enquiry in 2018, to look into state capture by former President Zuma and the Gupta family (Momoniat 2023). The Zondo Commission was also further tasked with making findings and recommendations regarding the matter of state capture, which turned our country upside down. During President Jacob Zuma administration, state capture or big corruption gained much popularity to the extent that it increased and intensified through control of the contracting authorities for lucrative state-owned enterprises (Bracking 2018; Mamokhere 2018). The state-capture project appeared to be unravelling as political corruption became more apparent. The country erupted in the largest public demonstrations

since 1994, demanding President Zuma's resignation, and several individuals involved in procurement-related, budget matters of state capture resigned or got fired (Bracking 2018).

The Gupta family who were fervent supporters of former President Jacob Zuma were dubbed the "state capture masterminds" who mainly targeted state-owned enterprises in order to influence procurement procedures and obtain tenders (Bracking 2018). Eskom, the largest state-owned enterprise was unsurprisingly a prime target of state capture due to its massive annual budget which allegedly led to its downfall. The Zondo Commission revealed significant wrongdoing in the management of Eskom's operating spending which amounted to approximately R140 billion annually, excluding finance costs, depreciation, and taxes (Godihno & Hermanus 2018). Corruption was most visible in the highest expense items, such as overpriced coal contracts, squeezing incumbents, and questionable acquisitions by the Gupta family with Eskom funding (Godihno & Hermanus 2018; Momoniat 2023). Corruption inside Eskom has also allegedly resulted in the escalation of diesel fuel costs. Moreover, the electricity bills have risen by more than 400% in the past decade due to rent-seeking and corruption, despite declining service quality, while South Africans were faced with load-shedding (Godihno & Hermanus 2018; Momoniat 2023). In addition to the direct and indirect effects of electricity price inflation and erratic supplies on the economy, decreasing investor faith in South Africa - notably in Eskom - has resulted in Eskom struggling to get funding year after year due to its past history pertaining to its financials.

The Gupta family's power extended to the appointment of Cabinet Ministers and Directors on state owned enterprise boards. This resulted in the Gupta family receiving preferential treatment in state contracts, and access to state-provided business finances and licences. Also, if you weren't the Gupta family or Zuma ally, you were easily disposed of (Public Protector of South Africa 2016). The Gupta family was allegedly found to have plundered almost R72,3 billion in the crimes they were accused of (Gerber 2023). However, it has been indicated that the history of poor openness and accountability from Eskom dates back to the apartheid era, and over many years.

2.8.10. Lack of motivation on the part of Eskom employees

An employee who is happy with their position and the company they work for is more likely to be productive and give their job their all, but this is not the case for Eskom employees who appear to be struggling with the complex management system and inadequate employee

support. It has also been mentioned that the low morale of Eskom employees was brought on by a subpar workplace and a dysfunctional corporate culture (Jacobs 2024). It also doesn't help that all employees at Eskom were perceived to be dishonest or incapable, due to the legacy of corruption (Neethling 2024). This has led to a loss of notable skills and expertise due to some employees not wanting to be associated with the negative reputation that has surrounded Eskom. Eskom employees were unhappy and unmotivated, and worked in blame-shifting environment marked by indifferences and ignorance. Further, Eskom does not have a structure in place which serves to recognize good performance. Writer (2024) reported that lack of structure and inability to recognize good performance results in a lack of desire amongst employees to work harder and produce better results.

2.9. Level/State of electricity service delivery in urban and rural areas

Even though South Africa is well ahead of most other African nations, it is still developing as a result of some of the injustices from the apartheid era. In particular, the majority of people in the country are still living in great poverty, particularly the Black citizens. There seems to be little chance that the quality of service delivery will improve, and disgruntled rural residents across the nation have progressively complained about inadequate and poor service delivery. These circumstances have contributed to the high rise in social protests (Inglesi-Lotz 2023). Despite being significant contributors to the country's development and industrialization especially in terms of the historical migrant labour system, rural communities face a conundrum in that they receive very little reliable and helpful information (Moloto, Mkhomazi & Worku 2020). This is because a great percentage of the population is now moving from the rural to the urban areas in search of greater opportunities and development. First of all, when it comes to development and knowledge about things, they fall behind and it seems that no one bothers or ensures that they are kept up to date with the latest developments that are going on.

Rural residents deal with a variety of issues, including a poor quality of social services, unemployment, and low incomes. Also, the high rate of unemployment and the low standard of living in the nation's rural areas have been exacerbated by a lack of access to e-government infrastructure. As a result, many residents from the rural settlements have moved to the urban areas to get better access to government services (Moloto, Mkhomazi & Worku 2020).

The urban areas have a higher electrification rate than rural areas due

to factors such as distance from substations, spatial heterogeneity, low return-on-investment for prospective investors, while the rural residents contend with rough geographical terrains, high electricity production costs, low energy demand, and low electricity bill affordability (Longe, Myeni & Ouahada 2019)

In this regard, energy service provision is critical to improving the quality of life, the overall level of public service delivery, better health and educational outcomes, and greater employment (Sarkadie & Adams 2020). Compared to those who live in metropolitan regions, those who live in rural locations have less social and economic options. Rural residents have numerous difficulties, including lower incomes, greater unemployment, and poor-quality social services including health care and education, and telecommunications infrastructure (Moloto Mkhomazi & Worku, 2020).

Access to electricity is considered a pathway out of poverty, and energy deprivation is a leading contributor to morbidity, political unrest and environmental disruption. In 2014, the average electricity access rate for SSA was 35%, but South Africa had 86%, of which 85% was in rural areas and 87% was in urban areas (Sarkodie & Adams 2020). Furthermore, South Africa stands out from other SSA nations due to its pronounced urban bias in electrification, with a ratio of almost 3.5 times between urban and rural access to power (Sarkodie & Adams 2020). Access to electricity is a condition for economic development, poverty alleviation and reducing inequalities; hence the focus on income inequality is important. For the South African government, it is imperative to function effectively and efficiently, and to provide basic and essential services to all its citizens. A focus (or study) of the monthly strike rates demonstrates that South Africa is headed in the wrong direction, and this is likely to have a detrimental impact on the nation's economy.

2.10. The Impact of poor electricity service delivery

A large number of South African electricity consumers are impacted by the high-impact, low-frequency events such as the power system collapse for prolonged periods of time (Akpeji et al. 2020). As a result, their socio-economic status is affected, including their incomes and employment status, and their mental health and economic opportunities are further impacted by the extreme power outages. Even after apartheid was officially abolished nearly 30 years ago, South Africa is still regarded as the most unequal nation in the world

with a Gini coefficient of 0.67 (Valodia 2023). Racial disparities in wealth, education, employment, and land ownership are strongly correlated with power outages; thus, power outages do not affect everyone equally (Kozak 2023). The less fortunate are left behind while those with higher incomes can afford to use generators to keep their electricity on. The result is that power outages help contribute to inequality.

2.11. The causes of non-delivery of public services

While there is a legislative framework for public involvement that encourages communities to be involved in decision making, it is frequently ignored. One major issue in South Africa is the lack of public involvement in the legislative and decision-making processes of government. This can result in the non-delivery of public services.

2.11.1. Lack of public participation

The South African Constitution clearly places a duty on local governments (or municipalities) to fulfil their mandate of service provision to local communities in a sustainable manner. To lessen poverty and social injustice, citizen participation is crucial for enhancing local governance, having an impact on policymaking, bolstering citizen rights and voices, and increasing institutional responsiveness and accountability (Matloga et al. 2024; Vyas-Doorgapersad 2009). (Cloete et al, 2018, as cited in Matloga et al 2024, p.2) defines public participation as the involvement of members of the public. The author emphasizes that capacity is developed and facilitated through involvement. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Section 152 (1) upholds the value of public participation by requiring all municipalities to guarantee the sustainable delivery of essential services to the public and to encourage the public and the public organizations to participate in local government affairs (Matloga et al. 2024). Similarly, Section 16 (1) indicates local governments must work towards developing a culture of municipal governance that embraces delegated government with a system of inclusive and consultative governance. In doing so, the local governments will restore and create a favourable environment for the public to participate in municipal affairs. (Reddy, 2016, as cited in Matlonga et al, 2024, p.4) argue that the purpose of local government is to foster a sense of community among the populace by allowing them to participate in the political processes that shape their daily lives and increase government transparency. Public protests in most communities highlight the failure of state-sponsored participatory venues to foster true democracy and cooperation in learning (Mchunu & Theron 2013). Therefore, it can be argued that social protests have links with a lack of public

participation in decision making at all levels of leadership. Furthermore, democracies cannot adequately and efficiently address the demands of the people, if the people are not involved (Mchunu & Theron 2013).

There are several barriers to public participation in South Africa despite the country's framework for democratic innovation and public engagement. These include a lack of government response, poor governance, corruption, a lack of public interest, and inadequate resources (Matlonga et al. 2024). These barriers hamper public participation and if they are not addressed, they severely hinder a country's progress towards development. Vyas-Doorgapersad (2009) asserted that another barrier that may prevent participation includes the current disarray of South African cities and the increasing number of informal settlements. The problem associated with participation in local government matters also arises when attempts are made to genuinely include these individuals in the participatory process. This is further exacerbated when they feel compelled to participate based and to fill their free time. In addition, there are obstacles like age and illiteracy among certain citizens (Vyas-Doorgapersad 2009). A study conducted by Matloga et al. (2024) indicated that the majority of their participants firmly agreed that when it comes to providing necessary services, the public is disadvantaged when there is a lack of public participation. Moreover, political instability and public outrage are brought on by the lack of citizen participation. The results of the study further showed that sometimes, people are unable to express their opinions on the services they require in public (Matlonga et al. 2024). Therefore, in order for public participation to have any real value, it must promote the inclusion of all relevant parties including the marginalised people, including the pensioners, young people, and individuals living with impairments (Matloga et al. 2024; Mchunu & Theron 2013).

2.12. The effects of poor electricity service delivery on different sectors

This section focuses on the effects of poor electricity delivery on small businesses, the health care industry, households, and on schools and education.

2.12.1. Effects on small businesses

Small and medium-sized enterprises frequently require assistance in achieving deadlines from customers due to the rise in power outages which adversely affect customer satisfaction and retention. Small and medium-sized enterprises not only struggle with income generation, but other challenges (e.g., employee morale) are significantly increased by load-shedding. Employee productivity needs to increase. Business enterprises also need to reach

sales targets even in the event that vital infrastructure is unavailable, and employers need to effectively interact with suppliers and customers via telecommunication networks. Moreover, equipment damage resulting from power surges is a problem that small and medium-sized businesses encounter. Businesses are unable to transact to function and make money, and restaurants and retail establishments need energy. These enterprises can operate regularly if they have power. In addition, the absence of internet access, cell tower networks and wireless internet are essential to the functioning of many enterprises. Load-shedding stops small and medium-sized enterprises from connecting to their networks, which stops them from using e-banking, online chats and other digital services.

2.12.2. Effects on healthcare industry

Long power outages and surges can have a negative impact on hospital equipment and cause mechanical breakdowns (Nanji 2012). Furthermore, during blackouts and load-shedding, certain hospitals' emergency backup systems may not always activate. This failure leads to casualties for patients in acute care units and surgical rooms. They often rely on backup power generators to counteract power outages which is not a long-term solution as it raises higher running expenses (Nanji 2012). Backup electricity is often only provided to services and priority wards. Medical equipment is destroyed by frequent outages. Upgrading equipment with uninterrupted power supply is necessary for healthcare facilities to avoid harm from power outages. Outages can damage or ruin medication that needs to be stored at specific temperatures. Healthcare professionals are unable to keep vital fluids like blood and plasma safe to use, as well as perishable drugs, at precise temperatures. An additional backlog of surgical procedures is created by load-shedding. Many thousands of patients must also wait a long time to have surgery. The Ministry of Health, and Eskom, met as a result of this problem to try and guarantee patient safety owing to load-shedding. To make matters worse because they must report to work early in the morning or late at night, healthcare staff are vulnerable to criminal activity during power outages.

2.12.3. Effects on households

The availability of electricity is frequently unstable to the extent that it can completely destroy electrical appliances and electronics. This can have a significant impact on an individual's daily life. For example, when electricity is restored, surges can develop and this might destroy delicate electronic generating capacity, and energy costs become excessive.

These disruptions drive up energy costs, restricting the benefits of connectivity, by compelling homes and businesses to utilise substitutes like diesel generators and backup batteries, and these charges take the shape of wider societal effects as well as direct costs to businesses and people (Masinga & Madzivhandila 2024, p.182).

Given one's reliance on electrical equipment, power outages can lead to food spoiling, interrupted communication, and a decreased quality of life (Daily Maverick 2023). This is a big problem since outages that households experience are both frequent and long in duration. (Schmidthaler,2012, as cited in Nkosi & Dikgang,2018, p.37) the costs associated with power outages may be direct, indirect or ongoing. Therefore, costs associated with power outages may be monetary or non-monetary. According to Von Ketelhodt & Wöcke (2008), financial expenditures associated with outages may also be caused by flaws in electrical appliances that must be repaired or replaced. According to Schmidthaler (2012), a welfare loss, particularly if news of the outage is not informed in advance, can generate emotional stress because households do not know when the power will be restored, causing panic and anxiety. According to Pasha & Saleem (2012), the cost of an outage varies with income level. Higher-income earners may lose more during an outage because of their greater reliance on power than low-income earners. Load-shedding impacts all types of homes, but it increases the risks and poses threats to low-income households, which are the most vulnerable in the South African economy (Inglesi-Lotz, 2023).

Furthermore, differences may stem from internal factors such as nature or geography. For example, low-income households often live in locations with outdated and unreliable infrastructure. Higher-income homes and companies in urban regions are more likely to face scheduled load-shedding due to frequent and time-consuming outages (Inglesi-Lotz 2023).

Low-income households and communities may require additional financial resources to fund alternative energy sources and, as a result, may lead to many of them to not being able to access basic services like health care, education, social services, as well as limit their opportunities (Inglesi-Lotz 2023; Pasha & Saleem 2012).

2.12.4. Effects on school and education

The frequent disruption caused by power outages has a significant impact on education because some schools are not designed to allow for natural light in the classroom, or to have a backup source of electricity (Mcain 2022). Moreover, the transition of schools towards a digital era is being derailed, and academic performance suffers as a result of technical and digitally orientated classes that fall behind the required curriculum (Mcain 2022). The inability of home students to adhere to online curricula, and to fulfil their deadlines makes learning challenging, especially when teachers and kids arrive late to school as a result of transportation that has been delayed due to load-shedding.

2.13. What can the country and government do to solve electricity service delivery challenges

The South African nation is currently dealing with a serious electricity problem that has a big impact on the development and expansion of the economy. This, in turn, has affected foreign investors' confidence in South Africa, as well as the inflation and interest rates, raised input costs for producers and retailers, with accompanying job losses and criminality (Viljoen & Dube 2023). Therefore, the way to help solve this problem is to look into the use of renewable energy solutions, enact new legislation and/or make amendments to the legislation, as necessary, and fight the corruption within Eskom to avoid the state's financial bailouts due to the mismanagement of funds and Eskom's failure to run the day-to-day operations appropriately.

2.14. Theoretical framework: Coproduction

This subsection discusses the theoretical lens that the study uses. Elinor Ostrom introduced this theoretical perspective in the 1970s on the basis of research that recognised the citizens' active role in the production of services. Ostrom (1996, p.1073) defined coproduction 'as a process through which inputs from individuals who are not in the same organization are transformed into goods and services'. This theoretical framework is widely accepted as it promotes citizen participation which is needed in order to advance democracy and provide individuals with the ability to take charge of daily decisions that impact them. This theory can be viewed as a type of democracy that allows citizens to get involved in the decision making, planning and provision of public services. This concept promotes collaborative and cooperative working among professionals and public service users. In this view, service users are more than simply recipients; they also contribute time, expertise and/or resources to the process by becoming actively involved (Bovaird et al. 2016; Cheng 2020). Thus, this

theoretical framework is built on the principles that citizens and government should actively participate in the joint production of public services; through coproduction, citizens can actively play a role in the public services that are offered and touch their lives. One may argue that coproduction embodies participatory democracy, and this study takes a direct cue from this idea by promoting citizen and government participation in the creation of public services.

This type of democracy empowers citizenship participation which is considered the key route to improving the delivery of services. This theoretical framework is also in keeping with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. For example, Section 152(1) South African Constitution of 1996 (as amended) encourages the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government matters. In short, this Section of the Constitution encourages coproduction in local government (Ragolane & Khoza 2024). The quality and the provision of services are often compromised without the involvement of users/citizens, and in South Africa, many people are dissatisfied with the services rendered to them and they have turned to social protests which have increased significantly in the last 2 decades to 2024. This study advocates for public participation which will improve public service quality by leveraging the expertise of users and their networks; the need for improved targeting and responsiveness of public services; the possibility of cutting costs through coproduction, and the opportunity for creating synergies between government and civil society that can lead to improved social capital (Bovaird et al. 2016; Sicilia 2016).

In the coproduction theoretical perspective comprises four key components namely commissioning (e.g., public participation in policy making, participatory budgeting), co-design (e.g., user consultative councils and collaborative service designs) and co-assessment (e.g., online satisfaction ratings and citizen-led evaluation), as well as co-delivery (e.g., collaborative service delivery and community led initiatives) which has also been used as early analyses of co-production (Bovaird et al. 2014). Citizen participation in these key components requires different roles; thus triggers and channels are required to mobilize citizens. In general, in a world today, there is a lack of cooperation between the government and citizens, which contributes to low quality public services. This is due in large part to the fact that public employees tend to ignore the public's needs and refer to their own set of rules rather than addressing their citizens' needs in many instances. Coproduction is a crucial approach to the design and delivery of public services, and it creates greater democracy and empowers citizens to take control of the day-to-day decisions that affect their lives. This

process involves collaboration among professionals, service users, their families, and neighbours in an equal and reciprocal relationship to enhance service delivery.

Coproduction has emerged as a cornerstone of public policy reform globally, with diverse articulations as a valuable means of public service reform, a response to the democratic deficit, a pathway to active citizenship and active communities, and a lever for additional resources in public service delivery (Osborne et al. 2016). The essence, namely the involvement of users in planning, operating, and regulating service delivery and policymaking leads to more accountability, better performance, and responsiveness in public goods provision. Ragolane and Khoza (2024) suggest that co-production can also be utilized for policy innovation, political leadership, and local democracy. This approach emphasizes inclusion in creating services for communities and places strong emphasis on inclusivity while developing community services. (Brix, Krogstrup & Mortensen, 2020, as cited in Ragolane & Khoza, 2024, p.139) contend that coproduction results in positive effects, including enhanced quality and efficiency, effectiveness in dealing with vulnerable groups, focusing on the whole person or community, the overlaying of contexts and not just service, and improved citizen well-being from the standpoint of new public governance. Involving citizens as co-evaluators is valuable as it can lead to empowerment, enhanced democracy, ownership, and citizen enthusiasm to coproduce. However, it can also be argued that the drawback of co-production is that even though there are still problems with high inequality — where the privileged benefit more than the underprivileged — the people who stand to gain the most from co-production are frequently those who are less able to participate because of a lack of knowledge. This approach emphasises the value of actively participating and collaborating with the community, in particular to produce services in tandem with the government. The relevance of public involvement in enhancing service delivery is further enhanced within the ideas of co-production. Using coproduction as a lens, this study contends that individuals should actively participate in the creation of the services they consume in order to address issues with service delivery. In conclusion coproduction is essential in addressing the complex challenges facing electricity service delivery, as it enables citizens to contribute to the design, delivery, and evaluation of public services (Brix et al., 2020)

2.15. Conclusion

This chapter presented a literature review on the provision of electricity services, as well as

the legislation and guiding principles with the theoretical framework of the study. The literature review addressed issues with service delivery, principles of public service delivery and legislative governing public service delivery, electricity challenges in Africa and South Africa Africa's and South Africa's electricity problems, the roles of both local government and Eskom in electricity service delivery ,the causes of service delivery challenges which covered capacity issues amongst employees, lack of capacity contributing to social protests ,political interference and instability lack of funding, lack of accountability and decentralization of energy, state capture of power, the reasons behind problems with the delivery of electricity services, the consequences of subpar service delivery, and the reasons for insufficient reactions to subpar service delivery was reviewed.

Chapter three

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The research methodology employed in the study provided a systematic guide to the data collection procedure used to accomplish the objectives of the study. Obtaining the necessary data were very difficult, but the researcher persevered and overcame the obstacles that stood in her way. The researcher made sure that they collected the necessary data for the topic of interest in order to obtain meaningful results. In a qualitative study of this kind, the data collected helped the researcher to understand how people in society produce knowledge, attach meaning to certain events and understand reality. In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, it was essential to select appropriate methodological procedures and techniques and therefore a suitable research design was chosen. The study area, research design, target population, participant sampling, data collection, data analysis techniques, assuring reliability and credibility, delimitations, study limitations, ethical considerations, anonymity and confidentiality, and informed consent, are the sections that are covered and discussed in this Chapter.

3.2. Study Area

This study was conducted in the Msunduzi Local Municipality, commonly referred to as Pietermaritzburg or the “City of Choice” in the uMgungundlovu District of KwaZulu-Natal. Msunduzi Municipality is the second largest municipality in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal and is the capital of the Province. The confirmation of the capital status of Msunduzi has entrenched its role and position as the administrative and political hub of KwaZulu-Natal (Msunduzi Municipality Integrated Development Plan, 2023-2024). The Municipality was created after the 2000 elections, when five previously independent areas were amalgamated to create a large urban area under the jurisdiction of a single council. Its size is now approximately 590 kms² and its population is over 817,725. It is predominantly urban to peri-urban in nature, with areas that incorporate the rural residential (Msunduzi Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2023-2024). Additionally, it is known as the administrative and legislative capital of the province as well as the home of the Comrades Marathon. Msunduzi Municipality is a Category B municipality consisting of 40 wards situated within the uMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal. Among the seven municipalities in the

District, it is the smallest by area. Its proximity to Durban and the Drakensberg Mountain, and the spectacular Midlands, as well as its position as one of the best preserved Victorian cities in the world, means that it has a strong tourism sector. Figure 7 below illustrates the KwaZulu-Natal provincial map, situated in the southeastern region of South Africa. Established in 1994, the province occupies a significant portion of the country's southeastern territory.



Figure 7 KwaZulu-Natal provincial Map

Source: SA-Venues.com



Figure 8: Msunduzi Municipality Demarcation

Source: Google Maps (2017)

For the first five years (2000 - 2005), the powers and functions of the Msunduzi Municipality and the district authority of uMgungundlovu were not properly defined. The challenge of integrating internal systems, policies, procedures and resources among these various municipalities was further compounded by poor financial control. The demarcation and re-demarcation process has led to an increase in the area of jurisdiction of Msunduzi Municipality. This has a bearing on service provision in the sense that service provision responsibilities for the municipality now span a larger area. The selection of Msunduzi Municipality as the study site was driven by the fact that currently and over the past few years (2018 -Current), the Msunduzi Municipality has struggled to receive clean audits and meet its mandate, which is to fulfil the needs of the community it serves. The demarcation and re-demarcation process has led to an increase in the Msunduzi Municipality's jurisdictional area which has a bearing on service provision in the sense that the responsibilities of the Municipality now span a larger area which suffered from service delivery backlogs.

The Msunduzi Municipality has consecutively received qualified audit reports for the past years (2018-Current) and it was placed under provincial administration. This further revealed the broader governance issues resulting from poor skills, bad leadership, and poor internal control systems. In several media reports, the electricity crisis has been attributed to financial mismanagement. This has led the Municipality to owe Eskom R664 million for electricity services. It has struggled to collect revenue for electricity and is faced with illegal electricity connections. Moreover, the Municipality experiences frequent, prolonged power outages due to unmaintained substations (Maliti 2023; Ndaliso 2024). (Mbandlwa ,2021,p.6) states that the deficiency of ethics in leadership has affected the service delivery in Msunduzi Municipality, and has forced the public to embark on public service delivery protests. The Msunduzi Municipality consists of 40 wards, out of which only 5 were selected for the study. These include wards 13, 14, 22, 27, and 33. These wards were chosen as the study sites because they have taken part in multiple social protests that made headlines due to problems with service delivery, unreliable water and electricity, unfair billing practices, and constitutional violations brought on by the lack of essential services (Myeza 2024).

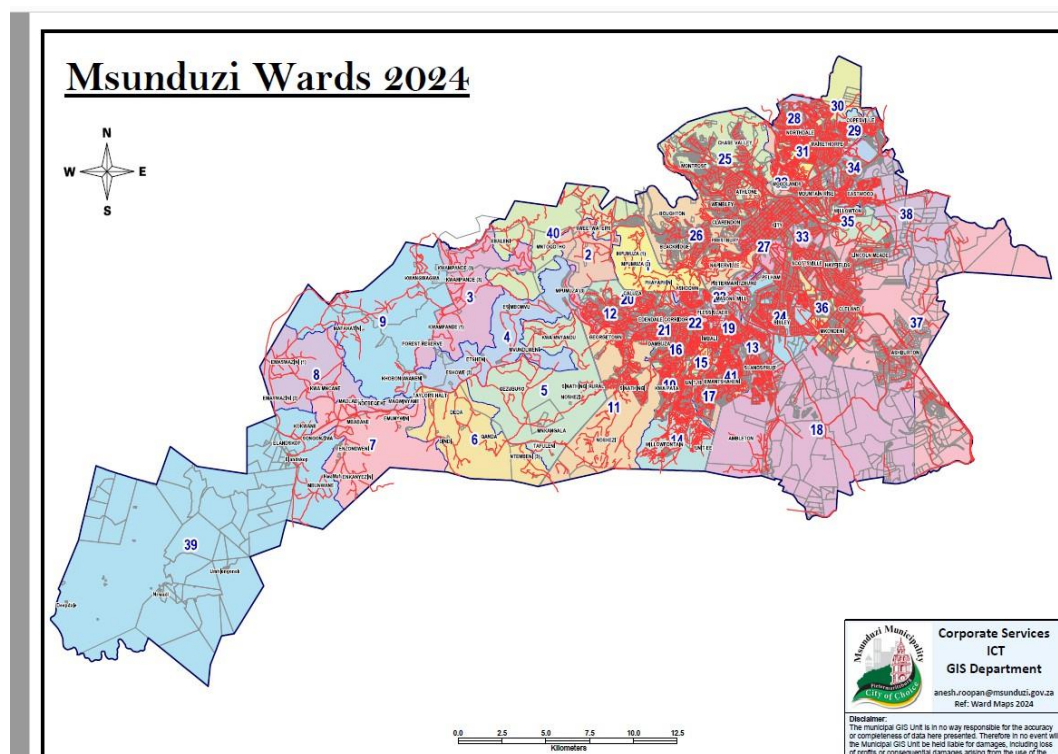


Figure 9: Msunduzi Municipality wards
Source: Msunduzi Municipality website

Ward	Population
13	15,318
14	21,069
22	14,655
27	13,037
33	12,908

Figure 10: The population for each of the selected wards, for 2011, in this study is given in Source: Census 2011

3.3. Research design

A research design describes the framework of methods and techniques in which a study is conducted; it specifies the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Kothari 2004). Sumbi and Deeba (2019) assert that a research design allows you to sketch out of how you will conduct research, and each researcher has a list of research questions that need to be answered – the research design enables one to answer these questions. They are two broadly recognised research designs which can be classified into the quantitative and qualitative research designs. Considering the background of this study and its aims, the study makes use of qualitative research methods to understand the participants views and experiences about inadequate power supply in the Msunduzi Municipality. According to Haradhan (2018, p.2) “Qualitative research involves interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations, and open-ended questions as a means of gathering, analysing, and interpreting data from visual and textual materials as well as oral histories.” In order to ensure the alignment between the problem statement and the research design, a qualitative descriptive research design was chosen. This research study is descriptive as it aims to document the insights from concerned citizens and government officials regarding issues around excessive power outages in the Msunduzi Municipality. Furthermore, this research seeks to address how power outages affected the participants who in this study, as well as the extent and effect of those outages.

3.4. Target Population

The term "population" refers to the parent group from which a sample is drawn (Pandey & Pandey 2015). Thus, a population refers to a typical group that a researcher may be interested in studying in order to obtain data and make conclusions about individuals who have similar traits. Members of the ward committee, employees of the municipality, private sector service

providers, and community members of Msunduzi comprised the population for this specific study.

3.5. Sampling of research participants

Bougie and Sekaran (2020) defined sampling as the process of selecting individuals, entities, or events that represent the whole group that was chosen for study. It is extremely important to determine which sampling method will be used in research so that the appropriate data can be collected, and the research questions can be answered. There is probability and non-probability sampling which entails the selection of the study participants (Taherdoost 2016). In this study, non-probability sampling was used, which permitted the researcher to select participants based on their characteristics, expertise, and knowledge of electricity service delivery in the Msunduzi Municipality. This approach allowed for the deliberate selection of participants who will be able to provide rich, relevant and authentic information to address the research objectives... Having obtained permission from Msunduzi Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal Province, the researcher deliberately and purposefully sought participants to be included in the study based on their experience, knowledge and perception of service delivery pertaining to electricity. This method is found suitable for the study as it ensures that the relevant participants are selected and comply with the reasons for their inclusion, namely, the impact of power outages as it affects them directly or indirectly. Considering that the Municipality continues to suffer from massive power outages, the selected sample possesses the necessary information and characteristics to address the study objectives.

3.5.1. Purposive and snowball sampling

This research utilized both purposive sampling and snowball sampling to recruit the required number of participants. Neuman (2013) describes purposive sampling as a type of sampling suitable for special situations when the researcher uses judgement to select study participants based on their utility to the study. The snowball sampling technique involves identifying a case and then identifying other cases based on the information from that case and repeating the process (Neuman 2013). Purposive sampling was used with the intention to select participants based on their characteristics, expertise and knowledge of the topic. Snowball sampling was employed to identify additional participants through referrals from initial participants. This combination of methods ensured that the sample selected is made up of knowledgeable individuals who were able to provide rich and relevant information for the study. In addition, these methods enabled the researcher to elicit information from

participants who possessed authentic knowledge regarding the study.

3.5.2. Sample size and access

The sample is a set of elements (members or units) from the population that is used to make a statement about the population. A sample can be defined as the process by which individuals or sampling units are selected from the sampling frame (Martínez-Mesa et al. 2016, p.327). There were only 15 people recruited out of the 38 original persons who were identified to be recruited by the researcher. This was largely due on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. Furthermore, the majority of the participants have first-hand experience when it comes to electricity service delivery challenges, and this is further explained in the limitation's sections regarding recruitment of participants. The chosen sample included two Msunduzi Municipality officials, 10 community members from the selected wards, two private sector service providers, and one ward committee member. The selection of participants was based on their availability, willingness to participate and firsthand experience with electricity service delivery challenges. Due to several constraints such as a very large Municipality consisting of many wards, time and financial constraints, the researcher will not include the entire population of the Municipality. Therefore, a sample as a subset of the population was drawn. The Msunduzi Municipality consists of 40 wards and out of these wards, five were selected as they consisted of areas that the researcher wanted to focus on. This is mainly the Imbali township and the Pietermaritzburg central business district because both these areas have been heavily affected by the electricity power outages. Also, most of the participants that the researcher aimed to target were found in these areas. Additionally, Imbali is considered to be the biggest township within the Municipality. Moreover, the majority of people in Imbali live below the poverty line, and when it comes to service delivery they are always dissatisfied and resort to social protest given that the delivery of services is slow. The Pietermaritzburg central business district is also the administrative capital of the Province and this is where most stakeholders are located. While a larger sample size would have been ideal, the selected sample of 15 participants provided valuable insights into the electricity service delivery challenges in the Msunduzi Municipality. The sample size was limited by factors such as participant availability, willingness to participate, and the researcher's resources. Despite these limitations, the sample provided a rich source of data that addressed the research objectives.

3.5.3. Position of the researcher

The researcher in a qualitative inquiry acts as a key individual for collecting data, observing

behaviour and interviewing participants. Positionality reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study, and it influences how the research is conducted, its outcomes, and its results (Holmes 2019). In the context of this study, this researcher chose this particular study topic due to the fact that the researcher also resides in the Msunduzi Municipality and shares some of the experiences that the participants would have gone through in terms of electricity power problems.

3.6. Demographic characteristics of participants

This section presents the demographic details of participants. There were four categories of participants interviewed. The tables below (Table one, two and three) detail the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1: Sociodemographic details of community members

Participant	Name of Participant (Coded Names)	Gender	Age in Years	Employment Status	No. of People living in the Household	Overall Household Income
1	Community Member 1	Female	67	Pensioner	8	R2,000.00
2	Community Member 2	Female	21	Employed	5	R2,000 and more
3	Community Member 3	Male	38	Employed	6	R2,000 and more
4	Community Member 4	Female	40	Unemployed	9	R2,000 and more
5	Community Member 5	Female	23	Unemployed	7	R1,000 – R,2000
6	Community Member 6	Male	24	Unemployed	6	R2,000 and more
7	Community Member 7	Female	69	Pensioner	11	R2,000.00
8	Community Member 8	Female	60	Retired Pensioner	4	R11,000.00
9	Community Member 9	Male	73	Pensioner	3	R2,000.00
10	Community Member 10	Female	37	Unemployed	5	R2,000 and more

Table 2: Sociodemographic details of stakeholders

Participant	Name of Participant	Gender	Sector	Type of Business	Position
11	Business 1	Female	Private	Fast Food Outlet	Assistant Manager
12	Business 2	Female	Private	Bakery	Baker

Table 3: Sociodemographic municipal officials

Participant	Name of Participant	Designation	Gender	Level of Education	Years in Service	Age
13	Municipal Official 1	Electricity Supply Services	Male	Degree	5	27
14	Municipal Official 2	Administrator	Female	Matriculation	10	39

Table 4: Sociodemographic ward committee members

Participant	Name of Participant	Gender	Age	Years in Service
15	Ward Committee 1	Male	34	2

3.7. Data Collection

Data collection is an essential step in research as it clearly outlines the process that was undertaken using the different sources of information to obtain rich and detailed answers to the questions in this study. The study was advertised through Facebook groups and via WhatsApp. The criteria used to identify participants led to the selection of 15 individuals. After that, the study's details were shared with the chosen participants who chose an interview date based on their availability and schedule.

Before signing the consent forms, the participants were thoroughly advised about the study and informed that they needed to indicate their preferred language. Additionally, the interview questions and the informed consent forms were translated into isiZulu as it was the preferred language of the participants. Participants were able to withdraw at any time and assured of the confidentiality regarding their participation. There were also given an opportunity to ask questions, as necessary. They signed two consent forms which indicated that they fully understood the study and that they agreed to participate in the research and be audio recorded. One consent was given to the participants for their records and the other was kept as part of the researcher's records.

3.7.1. Primary Data

In order to get primary data, semi-structured interviews were used that comprised closed and

open-ended questions. The researcher was able to probe the 15 participants' responses. The majority of the questions were open-ended to address the objectives of the study. This ensured that there are fewer non-responses and incomplete information. In addition, the open-ended questions ensured that all important issues, experiences and challenges were highlighted. Furthermore, every participant was asked the interview questions and this contributed to the themes in the findings (See appendix two for interview questions). In order to build empathy, it is necessary to establish rapport, and building rapport is essential to understanding the participants in greater depth (Neuman 2013). In order to accomplish this, the interview process began with general questions and then changed to study-related questions relating to power outages. By doing so, the participants felt more comfortable with the researcher and responded relatively freely to the interview questions. During the interviews, the researcher ensured that they continuously probed the participants with follow-up questions when their answers were unclear. A password protected USB was used to store the scanned informed consents, while an envelope was used to store the hard copies of the informed consents. Audio recordings were translated into word processing documents using the Verbatim format. These audio recordings, transcriptions, and interview questions together with the scanned signed informed consent forms will be kept for a period off five years before discarding or deleting them.

3.7.2. Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected and analyzed by consulting secondary sources of information. These sources were carefully categorized to help provide useful information for the study and included Acts, government publications, journal articles, newspaper articles and the internet. The internet provided useful information related to the literature review and theoretical framework of the study.

3.8. Data Analysis method

Mohajan (2018) reports that the process of data analysis is actually a dynamic one that involves the recognition of emerging patterns, the identification of key ideas, and the collection of literature.

3.8.1. Thematic analysis

The results of this study were analysed using thematic analysis, which identifies patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify themes, that is the patterns in the data that are relevant or interesting, and then

to use these to address the research questions. For this study, we used Braun and Clarke's (2006) five-phase process for thematic analysis of data. These steps will be discussed in further detail below:

Step 1: Becoming familiar with the data

Braun and Clarke's (2006) immersion usually means repeatedly reading of the data and the active reading of the data towards searching for meanings and patterns. It is ideal to read through the entire data set at least once before one starts coding, as one's ideas and identification of possible patterns will then be shaped. Therefore, the researcher ensured that all the data collected were transcribed. This means that during the transcription, the researcher made sure that they listened carefully to the audio recording several times so that they were familiar with the interview data. Beyond this, the researcher also made sure that they checked the transcript against the original audio recording to ensure accuracy.

Step 2: Generating initial codes

Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that this step begins as soon as one has created an initial list of ideas about what is contained in the data, and what is interesting about it. For the purpose of this research, the researcher coded items relevant to answering the study questions, made notes from the generated codes, and used markers and highlighters to identify possible patterns.

Step 3: Searching for themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that in this phase, the analysis is again focused on at a broader level of themes, rather than codes. The various codes are sorted into potential themes and all the relevant coded data extracts are summarised within the identified theme. The themes were descriptive to ensure that the relevant data patterns were described. The initial themes were identified by looking at similar experiences in the participants' interview transcripts. The sections of the transcripts that spoke of similar experiences were highlighted and grouped together to be reviewed and assessed later before deciding on a single most appropriate theme.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

This step is about refining the identified themes., At this stage some themes may also come to light that are not initially considered themes. This means that some of the other themes can be further divided into additional themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). During this step the researcher ensured that they carefully assessed the themes in order to identify the most appropriate or relevant ones to answer the study questions.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

At this point, one defines and refines the themes that are presented for analysis, and the data within those themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). In this step, the researcher examined all identified themes, and whether the sub-themes interacted and related to one another.

Step 6: Producing the report

This step includes the final analysis of all identified topics, the compilation of the data and the results of the study, and the writing of the report (Braun & Clarke 2006). This step is very important as this is where all the work is presented. The data collected must therefore show the views, experiences and extracts that will be incorporated into the reporting of the findings, which will be discussed in chapter four.

3.9. Ensuring Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln, Lynham & Guba (2011), trustworthiness in a qualitative study is determined by four indicators: its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The researcher thus ensured that the methods of data collection met the requirements of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was maintained by relying not on the researcher's own assumptions but on the participants' responses. To this end, the interviews and discussions were recorded, and the process of data analysis was documented in detail. The researcher ensured that the participants listened attentively during the interviews and ensured that their responses were authentic and honest, which contributed to the trustworthiness of the study.

3.10. Ensuring Credibility

De Vos et al. (2011) regards credibility an alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the enquiry was conducted in a manner that ensured an accurate identification and description of the subject. To ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher made sure that they spent more time with the participants and asked probing questions. The researcher also ensured voluntary participation in the study in order to have people who were willing to genuinely share their experiences and commit to the requirements of the study.

3.11. Delimitations

Delimitations deal with the definitions that researchers set as boundaries or limitations of their work so that the objectives of the study do not become unattainable (Theofanidis &

Fountouki 2018). The study was conducted in Msunduzi Municipality within the selected wards, and therefore generalisations were made cautiously.

3.12. Limitations of the study

The limitations are possible shortcomings that are typically without the researcher's control, and are associated with the selected research design, the statistical model's constraints, funding, or other factors. While identifying the participants for the data collection purposes, the study presented the following limitations:

- For the researcher, balancing work obligations and finishing the dissertation component of the degree proved to be difficult.
- The researcher's aim was to recruit 38 participants, however only 15 participants were recruited and interviewed. To recruit people for a study, it was necessary to dedicate more time. and extent the researcher thought that an advert of the research would appeal to, and be more informative to, potential participants. The study was advertised through various social media platforms, but the expected level of interest and interaction was lacking. This made the data collection process longer than anticipated.
- Small samples can be used in qualitative research. Therefore, this study's sample size was constrained and this made it difficult to extrapolate the study's conclusions outside of Msunduzi Municipality. However, a small sample in this study also offered the chance to gather comprehensive data on participants' experiences in regard to the provision of electrical services
- Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, some potential participants were reluctant to participate in the study, particularly the ward committee members and municipal workers. They feared that their participation would bring shame to their employers. This restriction made the data collecting process even longer because the researcher had to make sure that each participant was fully informed about their choice and was not subjected to any form of coercion

3.13. Ethical Considerations

It is vitally important to protect human subjects during any research through the application of appropriate ethical principles (Arifin 2018). Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative research, ethical considerations are particularly pertinent. Informed consent, as defined by

Lune & Berg (2017), is knowledge that enables individuals to exercise their right to decide whether to participate in a study, free of any elements of fraud, deceit, duress and manipulation. The researcher ensured the ethical standing of the study in several ways. First, an ethical clearance indicating that this study was compliant to the University of KwaZulu-Natal ethical guidelines was obtained so that participants can be approached and recruited for the study (see Appendix five). In addition, a letter was obtained from Msunduzi Municipality which gave permission for municipal workers to be interviewed (see Appendix four). A study poster (see Appendix three) was also used to recruit potential participants. This approval was obtained to use in various social media platforms. The researcher ensured that there was no harm to the participants by following the guidelines as outlined in the application for ethical clearance.

3.14. Anonymity and confidentiality

According to Hennick et al. (2011), confidentiality and anonymity are used interchangeably in the research literature, but in research ethics they are different terms. Confidentiality means that information obtained from participants that could lead to their identification or relationship to the information reported is not shared with anyone, and that only members of the research team with certain permissions have access to the data (Arifin 2018;Hennink,Hutter & Bailey 2020,Kang & Hang 2023) Anonymity, on the other hand, means that participants can be identified from the study data without knowing their actual identity; moreover, names were not mentioned in the reporting of results (Hennink,Hutter & Bailey 2020 ;Kang & Hang 2023). Therefore, the confidentiality of the participants was respected by the researcher. Failure to respect confidentiality often results in a researcher having difficulty obtaining data from participants, and persuading participants to cooperate. To ensure confidentiality, only the study team and those doing the transcription need to have access to the recordings. According to Hennink, Hutter & Bailey (2020), the interview tapes must be stored in a secure location where only authorised researchers have access. In this research, the interview tapes were securely stored.

3.15. Informed Consent

The process of obtaining consent begins with it being freely given (voluntary), participants understanding what is being asked of them, and persons involved being competent to consent. Second, the participants in the study must be adequately informed about the research, understand the information, and have freedom of choice to choose whether to participate or

not. Third, after explaining the research process thoroughly to the participants, their agreement to participate in study is obtained (Arifin 2018). Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the consent process consisted of two documents, namely, the information sheet, and a declaration of consent. The information sheet that the researcher presented covered the aims of the study, data collection instruments, duration of data collection, risks/benefits of the study, the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) contact details, and the principal investigator's, the supervisor's and student's contact details.

The information sheet also included details on how the participant's confidentiality and privacy would be maintained, the costs and benefits of participating in the research, and what would be done to actively minimise potential risks. Other considerations in the information sheet included how the study findings would be appropriately disseminated among the research participants, as well as the social value of the study. The declaration of consent solicited the participants' confirmation that they understood the research process and affirmed their rights (including the right to refuse participation and/or withdraw from the study without any negative consequences). It also included a request for permission to audio-record their interviews. The form had provision for the signatures of the participant and researcher, and the date.

3.16. Conclusion

This chapter described the research approach that was used in this investigation. The research design, sample strategy, and sampling techniques used in this study are all presented in this chapter. In addition, the chapter describes the procedures and instruments used for gathering data for the research. In the last sections, the chapter explains ways of ensuring trustworthiness and credibility, the delimitations and limitations of the research, and the ethical considerations. The study's outcomes are discussed, and the empirical findings are presented in the next chapter

Chapter four

Results and discussion

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain the results of the investigation into the provision of electricity services in Msunduzi Municipality, as well as to analyse and discuss the data obtained. This relates to the important concepts and information that arose from the participant narratives which were divided and categorized under themes, patterns, and trends in order to facilitate the data analysis. Consequently, information was categorized into themes and sub-themes during the transcribing process. It has been difficult to address the many service delivery issues that persist even after 30 years of democracy in South Africa. Unfortunately, and based on our electricity supply system, it appears that the electricity challenges are far from over. Regarding this particular research, which concentrated on the electricity supply challenges in the Msunduzi Municipality, we know that individuals frequently experienced poor-quality service in relation to electricity. Electricity is crucial for everyday life and plays a significant role given that people depend on it for a variety of reasons that are a part of their regular routine.

Interviews with the participants took place between mid-December 2023 and early March 2024. The participants were drawn from the Msunduzi Municipality's chosen wards (13, 14, 22, 27, and 33). The study's participants were chosen based on their interest in the research issue and their ability to provide insightful information. The purpose of the study was to investigate how the Msunduzi Municipality performs in terms of electricity service delivery. Thematic analysis was used to gather, collate, and analyse the data. Earlier, the literature review entailed looking and assessing secondary material from a variety of sources, including the Acts of the South African Parliament, government publications, journal papers, newspaper stories, and the internet. Between mid-December 2023 and early March 2024, primary data were gathered using the interview guide. The data were transcribed, translated and cleaned. The anonymity of participants was maintained as their names were coded.

Table 5: Themes identified through analysis of data

Theme	Sub-Theme
Reporting and communication shortcomings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to key information • Lack of awareness and participation in meetings taking place on issues affecting the community • Poor communication and reporting by ward committee members.
Lack of responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor turnaround time when assisting community members with electricity related concerns.
Reasons for power outages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor governance, • Lack of alternative methods • Resource contrasts
Impact of power outages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on livelihoods • Impact on businesses
Consequences emanating from electricity service delivery challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-payment culture • Social protests
Mechanisms used in dealing with power outages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying informed • Use power backup alternative supplies.

The interviews that were conducted in this study were transcribed and analysed using a thematic analysis. Several themes were identified during the analysis stage and in the interpretation of the data and have been presented in the above table (see Table five). The first theme that was identified was the Municipality's reporting and communication shortcomings. This theme had three subthemes: lack of access to key information, lack of awareness and participation in meetings taking place on issues affecting the community and poor communication, and thirdly, the reporting by ward committee members. The second theme that was identified was lack of responsiveness. This theme had one sub-theme: poor turnaround when assisting community members with electricity related concerns. The third

theme identified was reasons for poor electricity issues. This theme had three sub-themes, namely, poor governance, lack of alternative methods, and resource contrasts. The fourth theme identified was impact of power outages. This theme had two sub-themes: Impact on livelihoods, and the impact on business. The fifth theme identified was consequences emanating from electricity service delivery challenges. This theme had three sub-themes: non-payment culture, sentiments of mistrust of capabilities, and social protests. The sixth theme identified was mechanisms used in dealing with power outages. This theme had two sub-themes: staying informed, and use of backup alternative supplies.

The table above represents all the themes and sub-themes that were identified in this study. Excerpts from the interviews were utilized to bolster the themes mentioned below. The researcher's questions are listed under each theme to provide the necessary context.

4.2. Reporting and communication shortcomings

The interviewer asked the participants to discuss the reporting techniques that were used to share information about local issues, and whether they were aware of any current policies. In order to comprehend the reporting and communication challenges that existed in the communities and investigate how this affects community members, the researcher investigated this subtheme. The participants expressed grave worries that various policies they should be aware of — and that it is the duty of ward committee members or councillor to inform the community of — are not known to them. In addition, it was evident that the participants were not taking part in any community engagement activities, such as community meetings. This indicated a high degree of non-public participation. That being said, many appeared to be abstaining from exercising their democratic right to public participation. As a result, the researcher has included excerpts to demonstrate some of respondents' difficulties under the section, "reporting and communication shortcomings."

The first sub-theme is about the lack of access to key information.

4.2.1. Lack of access to key information

Participants were asked if they have ever heard of the free basic electricity policy.

With the exception of one participant, all the others indicated that they had not heard of the free basic electricity policy. The one participant (or respondent) indicated that they heard about it and they were benefiting from it.

Participants shared the following responses: "No, I have never heard of it." (Community member 1, personal communication, 18 December 2023.)

Another participant concurred: “No, I have never heard about it; what is it about?”

(Community Member 3, personal communication, 20 December 2023)

The responses above makes it clear that the participants did not have important information about key issues that could be helpful to them. Nevertheless, if they did know, they might have asked why they were not benefiting from it, or they might have sought out information about it. On the other hand, the one participant who acknowledged that they were aware of, and were benefitting from, the free basic electricity policy stated, “Yes. I am benefiting from it which does help make a difference when it comes to my electricity bill” (Community Member 7, personal communication, 05 January 2024).

While the abovementioned participant (i.e., Community Member 7) was aware of the free basic electricity policy, they found the policy beneficial, and it improved their lives. However, this policy was not well-known with the majority of the participants. It was also possible that some people were benefiting from the free basic electricity policy even though they are unaware of it. This shows that there was a lack of relevant information which could be beneficial to the community to understand the development and service delivery processes, and their implementation. The effective access to information is essential to enabling citizens to exercise their democratic right as outlined in service delivery charter on the Batho Pele principles.

The second subtheme that prevailed was the lack of awareness and participation in the community meetings that took place on issues affecting the community.

4.2.2. Lack of awareness and participation in meetings on issues affecting the community

Three participants shared the following information regarding their lack of awareness and participation in meetings on issues affecting their community.

No, I don't know them well because I am now elderly, and I haven't seen or heard them take care of the difficulties and challenges that the community seems to need their help with (Community member 1, personal communication, 18 December 2023.)

On the other hand, Community member 5 stated the following, “I am not aware of any

meetings occurring” (personal communication, 03 January 2024). A third participant indicated that they were not aware of anything associated with community meetings and that they only get a chance to hear about them when campaigning for elections to the various spheres of government occur. This respondent stated as follows, “I am not aware of them; all I know is that we get to hear about meetings when it’s time for campaigning for votes and then, that’s it” (Community member 2, personal communication, 19 December 2024).

It can be concluded from the above statements that the lack of awareness and participation in community meetings on issues affecting the community contributed toward the three respondents not knowing their rights. On this basis, one assumes that it was difficult for communities to have been serviced, and that it was difficult for them to challenge certain matters as they did not know whom to turn to, or how to handle a situation. Given that the community was unaware of their rights and the procedures to follow if these rights were violated, some municipal officials seemed to have acted without consequence. All municipalities are required by the South African Constitution, Section 152 (1) to promote community involvement and participation in local government activities. Consequently, increasing public participation is one way open to local governments to advance democracy.

4.2.3. Poor communication and reporting by ward committee members

The South African government instituted the ward committee system in December 2000 to fortify democracy, in compliance with Sections 72–78 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998. These Sections of this Act sought to bridge the divide between the various communities and the municipal system, and the goal was to improve service delivery (Thornhill & Madumo 2011). Ward committee members were scheduled to provide an important role in information sharing between the communities and the municipal councils regarding issues, needs and expectations of the communities they served. The ward committees are expected to play a key role in facilitating public engagement and in creating initiatives to support developments in their wards, despite the multitude of obstacles that municipalities encounter. The participants raised serious concerns regarding ward committee members and their lack of visibility and poor communication regarding community-related issues or the failure of the local municipalities to respond to community issues. Three of the participants stated the following regarding their lack of knowledge of the ward committee members within their communities: “No, I don’t know anyone, and if I did it would imply that they are carrying out their duties” (Community member 2, personal communication, 19 December 2023); “No, I do not know them” (Community member 7, personal communication, 05 January 2024); and, “No, I have never”

(Community member 5, personal communication, 03 January 2024).

The above responses serve as an indication that ward committee members are not well-known in the community, and that they lacked visibility. This was blatant evidence that their low profile interfered with community involvement in terms of the legislative framework approved for public participation. This means they still lacked the capacity to play the critical role expected of them which was to navigate a closer relationship between citizens and local government. In addition, the responses below revealed that the ward committee members made empty promises and failed to communicate and report on issues that the community members advised them of. In terms of the above, it seemed that these ward committee members were not doing their job which was to foster a close working relationship between the community members and local government. Thus, one participant stated the following:

Sure, I am aware of them, but they never seem to follow through on issues reported but just feed us empty promises. The only time we see them being active within the community is during the election campaigns, and after that we hardly get to see an activity taking place around the community (Community member 3, personal communication, 20 December 2023).

Almost similar sentiments were echoed by another community member who claimed that:

Yes, they are not actively engaged in problems affecting the community, like they do not give updates and engage with the community regarding social issues that the community is faced with (Community member 8, personal communication, 08 January 2024).

These responses that these participants expressed are worrying concerns on how the ward committee members and the local Msunduzi Municipality failed to address the sampled community issues or give feedback on the suggestions that were made.

It is important to note that the interviews with the ward committee member and the municipal official confirmed that the ward committees existed, but that they lacked the training and expertise to carry out their duties. The guidelines on ward committees indicate that they must

convene consultative meetings at least once every quarter with their constituents (or wards) and hold public meetings as well. In addition to reporting back to the community on issues and on the matters that impacted them, these meetings are meant to give the ward committee and ward councillors the ability to record community suggestions on service delivery issues and other ward-related issues. The community members struggled to understand the procedures involved in community development and service delivery due to the lack of information shared with them. The community members concerns were not limited to inadequate reporting or communication, but they also revealed resentment towards the Msunduzi Municipality and the mechanisms of the ward committees.

4.3. Lack of responsiveness

People's dissatisfaction, in general, can be attributed to the widespread lack of responsiveness on the part of the local and national governments. This has led to the sense that the people were not given priority when they voiced their concerns and grievances about the community issues that they were not satisfied with. This stemmed from the fact that the problems and issues they reported were either not resolved or that these took a long time to be resolved. In consequence, many of the community issues were linked to social protests. Consequently, a subtheme that prevailed was poor turnaround time on the part of the local municipality when assisting community members with electricity related concerns.

4.3.1. Poor turnaround time when assisting community members with electricity related concerns

Participants were asked if they were faced with electrical problems and had reported them to the local municipality, and what was the turnaround time for getting assistance?

Four participants shared the following responses:

- a) “Typically, its takes longer to receive assistance, which is between 0-2 hours, or even a whole day” (Community member 3, personal communication ,20 December 2023),
- b) “It takes about 24-hours or more to get assistance from Eskom” (Community member 4, personal communication, 03 January 2024),
- c) “Usually, it takes a short while, or the worst-case scenario is a full day during which you won't have electricity” (Community member 5, personal communication,03 January 2024), and
- d) “It normally takes about 5-hours or more” (Community member 7, personal communication ,05 January 2024).

The responses referred to above indicate that the response time for resolving electricity-related problems is extremely slow, and in some instances, this is done on the next day. Additionally, based on people's reactions and their facial expressions during the interviews, it was evident that they have accepted the very low expectations, and that nothing seems to be done about it. The poor efficiency on the part of the Msunduzi Municipality can be linked to extended waiting periods which lower service quality. This indicates that poor governance often leaves the Municipality's customers feeling that the quality of the service they receive is inadequate. This finding concurs with the statement that Mudzusi, Munhedzi & Mahole (2024) made regarding the provision of municipal services and the long turn-around time to address repairs.

4.4. Reasons for power outages

They are several issues which have contributed to power outages which the government and the municipality refuse to confront. Consequently, this causes the problem to continue.

The first sub-theme is about poor governance.

4.4.1. Poor governance

It emerged from this study that the Msunduzi Municipality's electricity challenges are a result of poor governance. The Municipality has been featured in multiple media publications concerning problems associated with power outages as well as other essential service delivery issues. These problems have been so detrimental to the Municipality that the KwaZulu-Natal provincial administration has placed it under administration on several occasions on the basis of the auditor-general's reports. Unfortunately, the Municipality has not witnessed any significant improvements in financial management and service delivery, despite this intervention and its subsequent extensions. Several media reports indicate that the Municipality is steadily collapsing, hence it struggles to deliver municipal services efficiently. The Msunduzi Municipality has been facing ongoing issues with electricity related to aging infrastructure, vandalism, and poor or inadequate maintenance, all of which have led to the breakdown of essential infrastructure, such as water and electricity (Magubane 2022). The responses of two respondents are given below. These responses indicate how governance issues have affected service provision.

The municipality is simply incompetent; it cannot care for its citizens, particularly the elderly. People frequently participate in social protest and

are always complaining about service delivery issues which do not get addressed (Community member 1, personal communication, 18 December 2023)

The second respondent expressed similar sentiments:

It's very bad that they are using taxpayers' money for nothing. We constantly experience power outages from the blue, and we firmly think that this isn't due to load-shedding (Community member 5, personal communication, 03 January 2024)

Given that local governments are trusted to provide services to the public because of their close proximity to the local residents and have generally failed to do so, there have been violent protests across South Africa over service delivery and the unfavourable audit results (Thusi & Selepe 2023). These events are closely linked to poor governance, a lack of accountability, and a lack of integrity on the part of local government. Thusi & Selepe (2023) add that good governance promotes more accountability and more efficient resource management for better decision making in the public sphere. However, we have already noted that the Msunduzi municipality lacks good governance given that it was placed under administration. Selepe and Thusi (2023) further argued that good governance and human rights are inextricably linked. This implies that without adhering to fundamental human rights, public servants at all levels of government are likely to flout laws and regulations, and be tempted to embezzle public funds – thereby violating the people's fundamental rights (Thusi & Selepe 2023). Thus, this study in the Msunduzi Municipality points to the fact that the local Municipality's officials are possibly violating the human rights of local citizens, and causing its citizens to suffer from subpar service delivery. In order to enhance the state of the public sector and encourage good governance, the words of Thusi & Selepe (2023) are relevant, namely, that local government must encourage transparency and accountability which are crucial to public service delivery given that many citizens depend on the government to offer services.

4.4.2. Lack of alternate methods to deal with power outages

this study established that the lack of alternative methods to deal with power outages in the Msunduzi Municipality is one of the reasons as to why people still struggle. The majority of participants contended that there is a lack of strategies on the part of the Municipality to deal

with power outages. The participants indicated that most of the strategies employed were not enough, and that the local government was not doing anything to remedy the situation or provide alternatives to help. The participants indicated that most of the alternate methods that they used to deal with the lack of electricity were costly, and some of the measures were very harmful to the environment. This was a clear indication that the local government had not looked into introducing renewable energy forms which are relatively inexpensive and less harmful to the environment. These views and perspectives are captured in the following comments of three of the respondents.

They are insufficient as there isn't a forest where we live, making it difficult for us to obtain wood unless we want to purchase it which adds to the cost, they you did not budget for. Some people use can gas whilst others are frightened of it since its unsafe (Community member 1, personal communication, 18 December 2023).

The second participant noted the following:

No, there are not enough we still need more strategies, and the majority of these strategies call for larger sums of money, which you may not have had in your budget at times. Like usage of paraffin, wood and gas they are extremely unsafe and destructive to the environment. This especially true if they are children nearby in which case you should take extra safety precautions (Community member 4, personal communication, 03 January 2024).

This view was also echoed by a third participant (and is a reflection of the views of many others):

The strategies that people need to use when experiencing power outages are an added expense, and it is better if the Municipality assisted us in this matter. The use of gas and generators require money, but not everyone can be able to use these if they do not have money. It would have been better if we had installed a solar system in our house as it is a cost-effective alternate when one experiences power cuts (Community member 9, personal communication, 08 January 2024).

The above responses suggest that the Municipality's electrical problems appear to be exacerbated by the absence of alternative sources of power. Indeed, the lack of alternate sources of energy is both a challenge to the residents and the local authority. In the case of the Municipality, this challenge seems to be grounded in its fiscal problems.

4.4.3. Resource Contrasts

This Msunduzi Municipality study established that one of the elements influencing the resolution of the severe power outages that occurred in the Municipality is the disparity in resources. The interviews conducted in this research also revealed that the Municipality's overall underperformance was caused by economic unrest (2018- Current), which had a detrimental effect on the area's ability to provide power services. The study established that most participants blamed the Msunduzi Municipality's lack of power services and the upkeep of infrastructure on insufficient funding from the government. Moreover, the Msunduzi Municipality was so short on funds that it was unable to provide for its citizens, and as a result, could not address the issue of the lack of electricity and the power supply problems. The study also established that the majority of participants blamed the Msunduzi Municipality's lack of electrical services on insufficient funding on the government. Conversely, an assessment done in the National Treasury during Msunduzi Municipality's budget and benchmark engagement for the 2022/2023 medium-term revenue and expenditure found that service delivery was on the decline due to the poor financial governance. This was principally due to the Municipality's failure to collect revenue from their debtors which included government departments (The Witness 2023). The failure on the part of the Municipality to collect its revenue from its debtors meant that the Municipality was unable to provide for the needs of its citizens nor address the ongoing electrical problems in the Municipality. In consequence, there are a variety of problems, including a high rate of network failures brought on by ageing infrastructure, electrical problems, unauthorised connections, infrastructure vandalism, switching operations brought on by load shedding, and conducting disconnections and reconnections. All these issues have forced the Municipality's electricity department to handle frequent outages with meagre resources and staffing issues.

In an interview with one of the municipal workers, they were asked if the Municipality has enough finances to help carry out their jobs efficiently and effectively. These were the sentiments that the municipal worker presented during the interview:

Due to cash flow issues, the Municipality currently does not have enough money to pay certain of its service suppliers, which further jeopardises the quality of service. The Municipality is currently dealing with a number of financial difficulties, which I believe have impacted service delivery within the city. However, we have been informed that these issues are being addressed in order to enable us to perform our duties more successfully and clear the backlog in service delivery (Municipal worker 1, personal communication, personal communication, 10 January 2024)

The response above further indicates that financial constraints within the Municipality contribute to the lack of electricity service. The Municipality faces an uphill task due to the financial difficulties it faced. This also suggests that there is a pervasive culture of non-compliance and non-payment in the Msunduzi Municipality that has a terrible impact on general governance and financial stability. Given that financial malpractice in the public sector obstructs the provision of services to citizens, the concepts of financial malpractice and good service delivery are irreconcilable. In short, if there is financial misconduct on the part of a public authority (such as a local municipal authority), this will result in erratic, ineffective and unnecessary spending (Thusi & Selepe 2023).

4.5. Impact of power outages

Power outages can have catastrophic consequences for businesses, residents, and the general public's health, even though electricity is sometimes considered a basic necessity for modern existence. Regardless of the source (e.g., natural disasters, deteriorating infrastructure, physical or cyberattacks) these electricity outages have significant ramifications that go beyond short-term irritation to homes and businesses. Electricity, water and sanitation services are only a few examples of many technologically mediated services that make modern communities run, with the wellbeing of individuals depending on these services (Wiese & Van De Westhuizen 2024). If these services are not functioning at their full or optimal capacity, there are significant social and economic ramification which have severe consequences. The lack of a reliable electricity supply does not only hinder economic progress, but also affects individuals negatively.

4.5.1. Impact on livelihoods

The majority of citizens' social and economic lives are disrupted as a result of inadequate power service delivery. Most participants admitted that having inadequate access to power has a significant impact on their ability to survive. As a result of certain homes and businesses not having access to consistent electricity households suffer financial hardship, and may have to constantly unplug their electrical devices and/or face power surges when power is restored. Some households also struggle to use alternative methods, like buying wood or refilling gas, which is typically an additional expense that they did not budget for. As a result, individuals experience extreme energy poverty as a result of the disruptions to their daily routines and the difficulties of needing to employ alternate means of survival even though they lack the financial resources to do so. The two responses below illustrate how the shortage or unavailability of electricity poses a threat to their way of life:

I was just getting ready to turn on the stove and start cooking when the electricity went off. This reminded me that I had to switch it off as many of my appliances as possible given that many electrical appliances have been ruined due to the constant power outages experienced within my community. I'm confused and unsure of what to do. Maybe, I should start a fire outside because I'm not sure when the electricity will return .I wish I had a gas stove to make my life easier, but this is an annoyance as it will now interfere with my scheduled daily activities because using wood to light a fire requires more work and time (Community member 2, personal communication, 19 December 2023).

In fact, the poor quality of the electricity service delivery takes up a lot of the time I should be spending on other things to help support my family financially. In turn, it causes hassles for my family as well, because of the limited financial resources we have and the need to budget for additional costs incurred as a result of the energy problems in my community. Despite the fact that we still pay for power, it's something we hardly ever have, so eventually I fear I'll turn to stealing electricity rather than paying for it (Community member 10, personal communication, 08 January 2024).

The responses of these two respondents typified those of the other interviewees. In short, power outages have an influence on their everyday lives, which has a big impact on how well

they perform their duties, especially as carers and household members. The findings of this Msunduzi Municipality study are in keeping with the research that Mchunu, Onatu & Gumbo (2023) undertook, namely, that the lack of access to electricity has negative impacts of an individual and their family and contributes to a loss of their daily productivity.

4.5.2. Impact on business

Power outages have forced many businesses to spend money on backup power solutions like generators, in order to deal with the massive power cuts. Clearly, many businesses would not have backup power solutions, like generators, had South Africa not experienced massive power cuts. The majority of businesses, particularly small ones in rural and township regions with minimal resources, are unable to operate during blackouts and are unable to incur the additional costs of installing power backup systems. Power outages have various negative effects on businesses, including operational expenses, real service delivery levels, customer satisfaction, and competitiveness. The responses below illustrate how businesses in the Msunduzi Municipality were deeply affected when it came to operational expenses:

Due to the fact that we now need to purchase diesel for the generator in the event that our backup power runs out, and because much of our stock deteriorates rapidly from repeated power outages, operating costs have gone up (Business participant 1, personal communication, 11 March 2024).

Another business participant noted the following:

I am struggling to make ends meet because of my running expenses. After all, I have put flour, eggs, milk, and sugar into the dough that I will be using for baking, and if it is disturbed and cannot be utilized, I will have to prepare another one (Business participant 2, personal communication, 13 March 2024).

In addition, Business participant 2 indicated how businesses are deeply affected during electricity shortages, when it comes to turnover:

Because of the frequent power outages, the profit I made in the past is not the same as what I make now. For example, (if) I have an order for cakes that must

be completed by 11 a. m., but the power is interrupted at 9 a. m. even before the baking the dough is ruined and all that goes to waste. However, if one is aware of this electricity interruption, one can better organize one's time and push through (Business participant 2, personal communication, 13 March 2024).

In a similar response, Business participant 1 advised as follows:

... we are losing revenue as a result of frequently having to close the store when the generator or backup power supply fails. This is terrible since the company's ability to succeed depends heavily on its ability to make sales. If sales are down, there could be severe consequences, including the loss of jobs and the company's ability to continue operating (Business participant 1, personal communication, 11 March 2024).

Based on the above responses, it is evident that power disruptions negatively impacted the two businesses, regardless of their size. It drove the one company to make additional investments in alternative sources of energy that will help it survive during electricity blackouts, thereby raising its operational costs. The results of this study are in line with what has been found in previous studies which revealed that power outages had a significant influence on production lines, sales, and turnover rates. These factors directly affected the profits and turnover rates of businesses. A study on the impact of power outages on small businesses in Johannesburg, for example, also revealed that the businesses in this study experienced significant losses in revenue and customers. This Johannesburg study further showed that if the produce of the small businesses needed to be refrigerated and had to be thrown away, additional costs were incurred. Moreover, some of these businesses also had to hire security personnel as crime rates continued to rise because thieves took advantage of power outages. The thieves were often responsible for cable theft, which further delayed the restoration of electricity because the cables needed to be replaced (Schoeman & Saunders 2018).

4.6. Consequences emanating from electricity service delivery challenges

This study established that the participants' lack of faith in the Msunduzi Municipality was a result of the unsatisfactory delivery of energy services. They stated that participating in

social protests was their sole means of spreading awareness and making their voices heard, and they believed the culture of non-payment was more suitable if one was not receiving what one should as a citizen of the Municipality. Additionally, the results of this study showed that individuals who pay for services experienced greater suffering than those who did not pay for the service.

4.6.1. Culture of non-payment

The sustainability of public service delivery is threatened by the high consumer debt that is prevalent in South Africa. Traces of the culture of non-payment can be traced back to the apartheid era where there was widespread civil disobedience and the boycotting of rate payments. Several authors have provided evidence that socio-economic characteristics, including unemployment, poverty, formal education level, race group, the culture of entitlement, discontent with quality of services received, employee corruption, the rise in the prices of municipal services, communication breakdowns, and issues with government decision making contribute to the high consumer debt especially at the level of the local municipalities. This is further emphasised by the participants responses. For example, Community member 1 (personal communication, 18 December 2023) stated, “Unfortunately, not everyone has the means to pay for electricity. Some people had difficulty getting electricity connected to their homes, so they turned to stealing it”.

Another participant noted that:

I don't hold it against people who don't pay for electricity because those who do frequently experience terrible blackouts when their power is temporarily switched off, as a result of other people's failure to pay (Community member 6, personal communication, 04 January 2024).

The above perspective was also echoed by another participant who stated how costly and dissatisfied they were with the electricity they received., Consequently, they changed their perspective on the culture of non-payment:

Because electricity is so expensive, I find it difficult to support my family

and myself for the entire month. In addition, load shedding and power outages complicate matters and make it understandable why some people choose to go without paying for their electricity (Community member 10, personal communication, 08 January 2024).

The participants' responses above suggest that the dissatisfaction with service delivery in respect of the provision of electricity may give rise to a culture of nonpayment without considering the consequences. Nonpayment has been found to negatively impact a municipality's financial performance. This, in turn, results in increased issues or burdens when entities such as municipalities lack the funds for maintenance and become overly indebted.

4.6.2. Social Protests

Social protests are most likely brought on by people's discontent with the availability of essential city amenities, like power, water, and toilets. It may be brought on by a lack of housing, high rates of unemployment, and extreme poverty, particularly in informal settlements (Ndasana, Vallabh & Mxunyelwa 2022). The narratives that follow illustrate selected participants' perspectives regarding social protests related to service delivery.

They are, in my opinion, quite beneficial if people are looking for solutions and actions to various problems they may be facing since, as history has shown, nothing gets resolved if people stay silent (Community member 8, personal communication, 08 January 2024).

Another participant noted that, "People need to do whatever means are necessary in order to be heard, even if that means engaging in social protests" (Community member 7, personal communication, 05 January 2024).

Based on the above responses, it is clear that selected community members decided on the need to engage in social protests in order to be heard. However, we must not disregard the other negative outcomes of social protest, such as violence and the disruption of daily

activities. This was emphasized in the following response:

It is okay as long as the community protests in silence and nothing disturbs the community's resources, but it is bad when they destroy items that are important to the community since it takes time to repair or restore these items to a proper state (Community member 5, personal communication, 03 January 2024).

Another participant expressed similar thoughts:

Absolutely, I disagree with it (i.e., social protests) as there is often road closures, violence ... , and danger. Some people are being forced to join the strike even if they do not want to, which causes them not to go to work, with further consequences in their workplace. Lastly, it is harmful since it ruins items that the community uses (Community member 3, personal communication, 20 December 2024).

The above participants' responses revealed that their opinions on social protests were divided, as they highlighted both the benefits and drawbacks of social protests. While social protests can be disruptive and violent, they are also good since they garner attention to meet community demands.

4.7. Mechanism used in dealing with power outages

People have employed a variety of strategies to cope with power outages given that this is the new normal that they must get used to. Given that the world is powered by energy, having to live without electricity is quite disruptive. People who face power outages utilise solar installations, gas, firewood, generators, and stay informed regarding the latest information on electricity disruptions and engage in other backup power options.

4.7.1. Staying informed

It emerged from this study in the Msunduzi Municipality that the respondents have resorted to ensuring that they keep themselves up to date with the latest information regarding power outages. This included installing apps on their phone and they followed the updates on the news. This is expressed in the following quotation: "I have downloaded the load-shedding

app to alert me on the load-shedding schedule ahead of the scheduled power outage” (Community member 10, personal communication.08 January 2024).

Another participant noted that:

I keep an eye on the scheduled times. For instance, if the electricity goes out at one in the evening, I set an alarm to wake me up at three in the morning so that I can start baking. Additionally, you never know when power outages will occur, so you might as well take action to make the most of it (Business owner 2, personal communication, 13 March 2024).

The responses above clearly indicate that people are making sure that they updated regarding the latest information regarding power outages in the Msunduzi Municipality.

4.7.2. Use of power backup as alternative energy supplies

There are various power backup and alternative energy supplies that people use when dealing with power outages. These include gas, firewood, generators and backup power facilities. However, from the responses in this study, it is clear that the participants only employed a few of these alternatives to cope with power outages. These strategies were given as follows: “People typically use gas, generators, and solar power, but businesses depend on generators and backup power in the event that electricity is unavailable” (Community member 4, personal communication, provide date).

Another participant noted that:

Since there is no other means to produce electricity on your own, people simply take it, which means stealing it via illegal connections. Then, others use gas and solar power, which is highly expensive and only available to a selected few who can afford it, while some use wood to cook outside (Community member 1, personal communication, 18 December 2023).

Another participant noted:

We rely significantly on the back-up system of power supply to function when there is no electricity, so we don't really have any procedures in place. We also

make sure the generator has enough fuel to run when the backup system fails
(Business owner 2, personal communication, 13 March 2024)

It is evident from the aforementioned responses that individuals use a variety of coping mechanisms to manage and endure power disruptions. Based on the feedback from the participants, it appears that the majority of strategies do not utilise renewable energy sources, which is something they should definitely start researching.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter's main topics were the presentation of results and a discussion of the participants' demographics, the reporting and communication deficiencies on the part of the Msunduzi Municipality, a lack of responsiveness on the part of the Municipality, the causes and effects of power outages, the fallout from poor service delivery, and the mechanisms employed to deal with power outages. It was established that the Msunduzi Municipality faced numerous difficulties in providing a reliable electrical service. The study found that inadequate governance, a lack of resources, a lack of public participation, a slow turnaround time, and difficulty accessing important information influenced the participants' electricity supplies. The failure to provide electricity on a permanent basis impacted on the respondents' means of subsistence, contributed to a culture of nonpayment, generated social demonstrations, and public mistrust of the Municipality. The people living in Msunduzi Municipality, however, used a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with the difficulties brought on by the lack of a regular supply of electricity. However, some people found that the techniques being employed were insufficient and costly, particularly for those who were having financial difficulties. These respondents continued to face difficulties associated with the lack of a regular electricity supply. Therefore, the South African government (central and local) must become involved and help those who cannot afford to use alternate means of energy. In addition, there is the need to consider using renewable energy as an alternative to coal-based electricity power stations.

Chapter five

Summary, Conclusion and recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings from the previous chapters and draws inferences from them. This concluding chapter provides recommendations on how to ensure that the difficulties related to the supply of electricity that were outlined in the previous chapters can be mitigated. This research examined electricity service delivery challenges that existed in Msunduzi Municipality. The strategies adopted that the community members and business owners used to cope with the electricity issues were discussed in this study, but the strategies used were costly and served as an added expense to the participants who participated in this research. The first chapter presented the background of the study and the problem in the study area that comprised selected wards in Msunduzi Municipality. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the objectives of the study, the research questions, the scope of the study, the clarification of key terms, and the structure of the dissertation.

The literature review and the theoretical framework that underpinned this research were provided in Chapter II. In the literature review, this study focused on service delivery, the principles underpinning service delivery, and the legislation governing service delivery. Moreover, stemming from both the research questions and objectives of the study, the literature reviewed the electricity challenges in South Africa and Africa, it looked into the role of local government in electricity distribution in South Africa, the causes of the problems associated with electricity service delivery, the impact of poor electricity service delivery, the causes of non-delivery, and what the country and the Msunduzi Municipality can do to solve the electricity service delivery problems.

The third chapter examined the research methodology and outlined the qualitative methodologies used in this study which allowed for more thorough data collecting. The study comprised selected Msunduzi Municipality citizens who lived in the designated wards and included a sample of 10 community members and five key informants who included a ward committee member, two municipality officials, and two business owners. The participants in this study were chosen using a combination of snowball and purposeful sampling techniques. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were used in the study to gain deep knowledge of the problems regarding the supply of power services in the Msunduzi

Municipality. Finally (chapter IV), this study used the thematic approach as part of data analysis and then this research presented the findings of the study. The results indicated that the Msunduzi Municipality was a hub of electricity challenges. The Municipality, unfortunately, did not take any extra precautions to remedy the problems affecting the supply of electricity in the wards selected for study. These problems included a poor responsiveness on the part of the Municipality, poor governance, the lack of public participation, and resource and financial constraints. All of these difficulties and problems impacted negatively on the community members and businesses, given that they lost trust in the Municipality's capabilities to resolve the electricity problems. From the electricity problems, several other consequences resulted that included the disturbance of daily activities, livelihood challenges, negative business profitability and the stifled growth of businesses.

The study evaluated data from participants using semi-structured interviews. Thus, the following objectives which underpinned this study were addressed:

- Identify the strategies being used by people, residents, stakeholders and the Msunduzi Municipality in dealing with the frequent power outages.
- Establish what the Msunduzi Municipality can do to improve the electricity power crisis.
- Establish the impact of power outages on residents, businesses and various stakeholders

5.2. Evaluation of objectives

5.2.1. Objective One: Identify the strategies being used by people, residents, stakeholders and the Msunduzi Municipality in dealing with frequent power outages

Frequent power outages have become a norm in the daily lives of most South to the extent that it causes major disruptions to our lives. Several studies conducted reveal that power outages affect individuals and multiple sectors of the economy. Hence, it has become very necessary for individuals and the economy to build coping mechanism to deal with the frequent power outages problem (Syfuchfycuchy 2023). The study undertaken in the Msunduzi Municipality established that the frequent power outages within the Municipality have helped people to adopt several techniques to deal with frequent power outages because it continues to be a constant in their everyday life. This study showed that the participants ensured that they stayed informed regarding the load-shedding schedule so that they were able to take the necessary precautions during load shedding and prepare before it starts. In addition, this Msunduzi Municipality study showed that the respondents also used gas, wood, solar power, generators, and backup power. On the other hand, some of the respondents complained that

some of these alternative sources of energy required them to make additional provisions in their budgets which was difficult given the added expenses which they could ill-afford. The Msunduzi Municipality study also showed that the respondents did not make use of renewable sources of energy. Thus, it is important for the people to be introduced to new sources of renewable energy given that the issue with electricity outages will persist in the future.

5.2.2. Objective two: Establish what the Msunduzi Municipality can do to improve the electricity power crisis

The results suggest that the Msunduzi Municipality is not doing anything significant to address the electricity crisis. This is because the Municipality continues to make headlines for its poor service delivery issues. The participants in this research reported that when they vent their problems, the Municipality just gives them empty promises. In addition, the respondents in this study stated that there were not enough opportunities or spaces where they can actively engage the Municipality and offer suggestions to resolve the electricity problems. Most participants also indicated that they had not attended community meetings because they were not aware of these meetings nor did they hear about them in their communities. The researcher proposed that the Municipality relook at their billing structure, that prior debt be written off, and that the residents start on a clean slate and look into the possibility of using different sources of energy, such as renewable energy.

5.2.3. Objective three: Establish the impact of power outages on residents, businesses and various stakeholders

The results of this study in the Msunduzi Municipality showed that the impact of power outages was very significant as it had catastrophic consequences for various stakeholders such as businesses, residents, general public health, and the economy, at large. These consequences are a cause of considerable concern, and the Municipality needs to address these.

5.3. Recommendations

This study noted that Msunduzi Municipality has experienced a host of several service delivery issues that are covered in several media reports. However, in this research, the focus was on the electricity challenges. Moreover, these challenges presented a plethora of livelihoods problems for the whole Municipality. As such, it is important that recommendations be made to address these challenges. In this regard, this study proposed the

following recommendations in order to help the government (especially policy makers, the Msunduzi Municipality, and the residents to improve and address the electricity issues. In this way, public trust in the Municipality will be reestablished:

Enhance Ward Committee effectiveness

- Regularly monitor and evaluate the performance of ward committee members.
- Provide ongoing training and development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- Ensure that ward committee members are accountable to the community and the municipality

Secure adequate resources

- Foster partnerships with the private sector to access funding, expertise, and technology.
- Explore alternative funding models, such as public-private partnerships or community-based initiatives.
- Ensure transparent and accountable management of resources.

Inclusive and people centred policies

- Develop policies that prioritize community needs and participation.
- Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs.
- Foster collaboration between the municipality, community organizations, and other stakeholders

Improved financial management

- Ensure transparent and accountable management of intergovernmental transfers.
- Develop a comprehensive financial recovery plan to address the municipality's funding shortfall.
- Strengthen financial reporting and auditing mechanisms.

Enhanced Public Participation

- Develop strategies to increase awareness and encourage public participation in municipal decision-making.
- Establish accessible and responsive communication channels for community

members to report issues and provide feedback.

- Foster partnerships with community organizations and other stakeholders to promote public participation

Improved Response Rate and Turnaround Time

- Develop and implement a customer service charter that outlines response times and standards
- Develop and implement a customer service charter that outlines response times and standards.
- Establish a system for tracking and monitoring community requests and complaints.
- Provide regular feedback and updates to community members on the status of their requests.

Addressing Intra-Political Infighting

- Develop strategies to mitigate the impact of intra-political infighting on service delivery.
- Establish mechanisms for conflict resolution and mediation.
- Foster a culture of collaboration and accountability within the municipality.

Infrastructure Development

- Develop a comprehensive infrastructure development plan to address the municipality's electricity challenges.
- Prioritize the maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure.
- Explore alternative energy sources and innovative solutions to address electricity challenges.

5.4. Conclusion

It is hoped that the Msunduzi Municipality will resolve all of the problems with service that have beset its citizens, especially the issue of the electricity supply failure. To guarantee that they carry out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities and fulfill the Municipality's mandate, the Municipality must make sure that the individual that they hire possess the necessary skills, expertise and training. In order to rebuild public confidence and guarantee that residents have access to dependable and effective

electricity service, the Municipality must immediately address the service delivery problems it faces, according to the study's findings. According to the study, the Msunduzi Municipality has a lot of problems such as lack of funding, bad financial management and low public involvement. The abovementioned recommendations offer a framework of resolving these issues that they face.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Informed consent form and participant information sheet

Informed Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

_____ (Participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

Have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

Have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

Understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Have been made aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

I Hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview Yes/No

Participant Name & Surname: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name & Surname: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Evaluating Electricity Service Delivery in Msunduzi Municipality

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Nompilo Mncwabe and I am doing research with Prof Sagie Narsiah ,a Senior lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences towards a Master's degree at the at the University Of KwaZulu-Natal. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Evaluating Electricity Service Delivery in Msunduzi Municipality.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As part of this research, I am investigating the extent to which community members' needs are met by electricity service delivery in Msunduzi Municipality. Additionally, it will examine if people are participating in decision making and seeks to contribute knowledge towards policy formulation and improving service delivery, as well as the impact and implications of this problem on society.

WHAT AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

As a member of the community member residing in Msunduzi Municipality ,you were chosen to take part in the study so that the researcher can have accurate Information from the residents experiencing the problem of electricity service delivery .It will also be an opportunity for the researcher to have an in-depth analysis of what the residents think are the causes of problem and how it can be fixed .As an official working for the Msunduzi Municipality ,you are being invited to participate in the study so that the researcher can get more information on what the challenges are from the service provider and what they think cab be done to come up with the lasting solution in order to provide enough quality electricity services to Msunduzi Municipality .

NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

You will be required to sit for an in-depth interview for approximately an hour. Each interview will be audio recorded. The researcher might also take notes during the interviews. Please note that only the student and the supervisor will be able to access the interview recording .If any other person accesses them ,it will only be for academic reasons .Your participation in this study will ne strictly confidential and anonymous .

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participating. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep with and be asked to sign written informed consent form. You are free to withdraw at any point if you wish to do so .

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

It is important to take part in this study because it will be an opportunity for the community to voice concerns and suggest possible solutions to the problem of electricity service delivery in Msunduzi Municipality. Findings and recommendations will be shared with Msunduzi Municipality so that they incorporate ideas which came from the affected community in order to solve the electricity crisis.

ARE THEY ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

Some inconvenience in terms time might affect some participants. The researcher will set appointments with participants so that they will agree on the day and time which will be suitable for them.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one ,apart from the researcher and members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research .No one will be able to connect to you to the answers you give .Your answers will be given a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data ,any publications ,or any other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings ,this will be done to ensure confidentiality .Your data will be collected ,processed and stored according to the South African Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act of 2013

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No payment or incentive will be provided to participants.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. A copy of this approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you wish to do so.

SOURCE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you want any information regarding your **rights as a research participant, or complaints regarding this research study** you may contact the Ethics office using the details below .

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION Research Office, Westville Campus Govan Mbeki Building Private Bag X 54001 Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA Tel: 27 31 260 4557 /8350/3587

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS /RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings ,please contact Nompilo Mncwabe on [REDACTED] or 212509767@stu.ukzn.ac.za Should you require any further additional information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study ,please contact Nompilo Mncwabe .

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted you may contact Prof Sagie Narsiah on +27312602470 or narsiahi@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for taking your time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study .

[REDACTED]

Nompilo Mncwabe

Interview Questions for Community Members

1. Age group

18-25	26-25	36-45	46+
-------	-------	-------	-----

2. What is your gender?

Male	Female
------	--------

3. Are you currently employed?

Yes	No
-----	----

4. How many people are living in your household?

1-3	4-7	8-12	13+
-----	-----	------	-----

5. What is your overall household income?

0-R500	R500-R1000	R1000-R2000	R2000 and more
--------	------------	-------------	----------------

6. Do you have access to electricity in your community?

Yes	No
-----	----

7. What is your average household's expenditure on electricity?

0-R500	R500-R1000	R1000-R2000	R2000 and more
--------	------------	-------------	----------------

8. Is your electricity prepaid or metered?

.....

.....

9. Do you afford your electricity bill? If not why not

.....

.....

10.How would you rate access to electricity in your community ?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
-----------	------	------	------

11. Does your community often experience electricity shortages or disconnections? If yes how often

12.At this point today do you have electricity?

13. If answered yes on point 13. Has the electricity been out for two or more hours

13. Does your community often experience electricity shortages or disconnections? If yes how often

14.When you experiencing issues regarding electricity and have reported it what is the turnaround time for response?

0-2 hours	3-5	6-8hrs	+24 hours or more
-----------	-----	--------	-------------------

15. Have you ever heard of the free basic electricity policy?

16.If answered yes on point 15. Are you benefiting from the basic Electricity policy ?

17.What is your preference between prepaid and metered and do you think it should be installed in all households in the Municipality?

18. Can you please elaborate on Electricity service operations in Msunduzi Municipality

19. What strategies are being used by community members or businesses in dealing with power outages?

20. Please elaborate if these strategies being used are sufficient enough in dealing with power outages ?

21. What do you think the municipality should do in terms of addressing illegal electricity connections rather than resorting to disconnections which often sometimes affect those who pay for electricity?

22. What is your stance in regards to the non-payment culture?

23. How should the municipality address the electricity problems?

24. Do you know members of your ward committee. If yes do you think they actively engaged in problems faced by the community ?

25. How often does your community have community meetings where issues affecting the community are being discussed? If so are issues being discussed resolved.

26. Did you ever participate in a social protest and, if so, what was the cause of it?

27. What is your take regarding social protest as a means of being heard ?

Interview Questions for Ward Committee Members

1. How can you best describe your role in terms of addressing issues that exist in your community?

2. How does your ward promote or ensure public participation towards improving access to the provision of electricity usage?
3. What are the procedures and protocol used in your ward in addressing the provision of basic services?
4. What is the legislature or charters being followed or used in your community?
5. How do the community members communicate with ward committees? Please elaborate
6. What is the chain of custody when addressing a certain issue?
7. How are ward committees established in your community?
8. What are some of the challenges that face ward committee?
9. Is the relationship with community members healthy or is it distraught?

Interview questions for Municipality officials

1. What qualifications do you have?
2. Can you explain your skills related to your job?
3. Do you think your department has enough staff to respond to the needs of Msunduzi Municipality residents?
4. Do you think your department, or the municipality has enough finances to discharge your duties effectively?
5. Is the management supporting you in order to effectively provide service delivery effectively?
6. Do you think the Municipality is effectively meeting its mandate in terms of providing efficient electricity provision? and please give supporting evidence
7. Is your area prone to frequent power outages and what are your views on that, especially since you work for a municipality.
8. What is the municipality doing in ensuring efficient electricity service delivery?
9. How do you feel about protests as a means of making their voices heard?

Appendix 3
Recruitment Poster

Volunteers needed

For research study regarding service delivery pertaining to electricity in Msunduzi Municipality

In particular, the city has suffered major blackouts due to ongoing challenges with electricity, affecting customers, businesses, and the community at large.



ARE YOU :

18 Years or Older

Ability to read or write.

Living in Msunduzi Municipality

Head of a household /Ward committee member

/Business Owner /Public or Private service provider

If you would like to take part or find out more use the contact details below

Email : 212509767@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Cell/WhatsApp: [REDACTED]



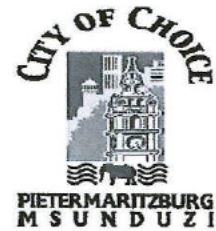
Appendix 4

Gate Keeper Letter

The Msunduzi Municipality OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Private Bag X 321
Pietermaritzburg
3200
(033) 392 2882

City Hall, Chief Albert Luthuli Street
Pietermaritzburg
3201
www.msunduzi.gov.za



Enq: M C Jackson

Tel. 033 392 2882

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Nompilo Mncwabe
Student No. 212509767

14 November 2022

Per Email: 21509767@stu.ukzn.ac.za

GATEKEEPER'S LETTER – EVALUATING ELECTRICITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY

Your correspondence regarding the above has reference.

Please be advised that you hereby granted permission to conduct your research within Msunduzi Municipality, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Correspondence from your institution confirming ethical clearance;
- (ii) Ensure that the Office of the City Manager is informed when you commence your research in the municipality.
- (iii) You will forward a copy of the completed research report to the Office of the Municipal Manager, c/o Ms. Madeleine Jackson as per the above contact details;
- (iv) None of the information and/or findings obtained during the research project will be used to construe the Municipality in a negative light and/or against the Municipality in any court of law.
- (v) The municipality will not be responsible and expected to provide resources for your study such as transport, research assistants, etc.
- (vi) Permission must be obtained from the municipality prior to any publication or paper that will be published or presented containing municipal information.

[REDACTED]
SENIOR MANAGER: OFFICE OF CITY MANAGER

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Telephone/uCingo: 033 3922002
Facsimile/iFekiel: 0868047309

Private Bag / Isikhwama: X321
Pietermaritzburg/ePietermaritzburg 3200

Appendix 5

Ethics Approval Letter



14 August 2023

Nompilo Mncwabe (212509767)
School Of Social Sciences
Howard College

Dear N Mncwabe,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005714/2023
Project title: Evaluating electricity service delivery in Msunduzi municipality
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 07 June 2023 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 14 August 2024.

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 Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

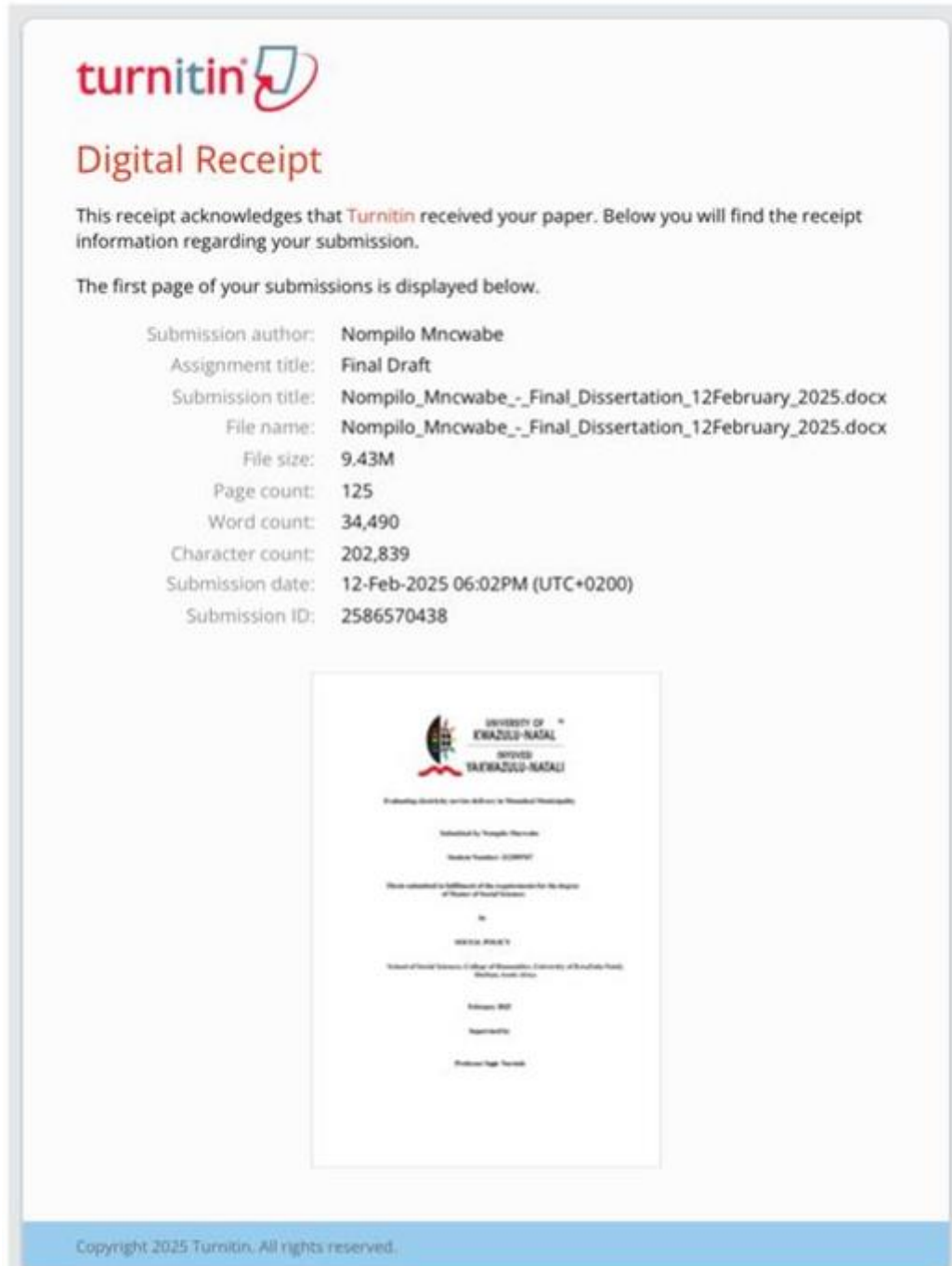
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 6

Turnitin Report




turnitin

Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author: **Nompilo Mncwabe**
Assignment title: **Final Draft**
Submission title: **Nompilo_Mncwabe_-_Final_Dissertation_12February_2025.docx**
File name: **Nompilo_Mncwabe_-_Final_Dissertation_12February_2025.docx**
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