

**An eThekweni Water Sector perspective:
Characteristics of leaders required for
effective stakeholder management**

Prathna Gopi

U19401664

A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science,
University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Business Administration.

29 March 2021

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the eThekweni region has experienced a deterioration in the service delivery of water by its municipalities. A review of available literature indicated that in the current era of managing for all stakeholders, effective stakeholder management was a key area of focus for service delivery improvement.

Stakeholder management is context specific, therefore the purpose of this study was to identify and understand the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector. An exploratory, qualitative, embedded case study approach was adopted since this area of study has been relatively unexplored. A cross-sectional time horizon combined with purposive sampling was used to undertake 16 semi-structured interviews with senior managers within the eThekweni Water Sector, ensuring diversity in the knowledge and views obtained.

This study has determined that effective stakeholder engagement entails ensuring that stakeholders are identified correctly, common goals amongst stakeholders are agreed upon, and all engagements and communication are documented and structured. This study further confirms the view that leaders within the eThekweni Water Sector have a wide variety of stakeholders to manage, and that one of the main characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management is the ability to manage relationships. These findings are illustrated through the development of two conceptual frameworks which can be used by leaders in the eThekweni Water Sector to effectively manage stakeholders, as well as scholars for future research.

KEYWORDS

Stakeholder Management

Leaders

Local Government

Service Delivery

Water Sector

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Prathna Gopi

29 March 2021

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| CEO | – Chief Executive Officer |
| DEA | – Department of Environmental Affairs |
| DWS | – Department of Water and Sanitation |
| EWS | – eThekweni Water Sector |
| EMWSD | – eThekweni Municipality Water and Sanitation Department |
| GIBS | – Gordon Institute of Business Science |
| IDP | – Integrated Development Plan |
| SCM | – Supply Chain Management |
| SLA | – Service Level Agreement |
| WRC | – Water Research Commission |

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

It is the intention of this research to critically explore and understand the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector (EWS) of South Africa. Two conceptual theoretical frameworks to illustrate the characteristics required by leaders and a guide for implementing effective stakeholder management will be proposed. This will provide leaders with the opportunity to advance their stakeholder management capabilities for improved service delivery.

The eThekweni Water Sector forms part of local government and was used as the case study to anchor the context of this research. This enabled an inductive, qualitative, embedded case study approach to explore the aspect of stakeholder management as a construct of leadership. For the purposes of this study leaders are personnel at a senior management level or higher in the eThekweni Water Sector.

Understanding the complexity of stakeholder management is vitally important if improved service delivery in local government is the objective. Leaders at local government level often interface with several stakeholders to continuously achieve successful service delivery. Municipal leaders do recognise that they are responsible for creating platforms which encourage participation and stakeholder engagement. It is however, pointed out that they are not always aware of the characteristics, nor do they always possess the knowledge of what is required for effective stakeholder management (Molale, 2019).

A well-known study by the seminal authors Freeman and McVea (2001), is often cited in research on stakeholder theory. Freeman and McVea (2001) explain that stakeholders are “any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization’s objectives” (para. 2). This suggests that effective stakeholder management is the ability to manage all stakeholders who can affect, or be affected by an organisation or their decisions, to achieve a particular objective. The objective at hand is the improved delivery of safe water to all citizens of eThekweni by the eThekweni Water Sector, facilitated by managing the needs of different groups of stakeholders (Dal Maso, Mazzi, Soscia, & Terzani, 2018).

Freeman (1984), points out that, “We must not leave out any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the organization’s purpose, because that group may

prevent our accomplishments” (p. 52). Taken together, these studies by Freeman support the notion that effective stakeholder management is required for improved service delivery in the eThekweni Water Sector.

Previous published studies are limited in that they present stakeholder management and characteristics of leaders as stand-alone subjects. Contributions to extant literature will be made by this research, through investigating the characteristics required by leaders to enable effective stakeholder management in a South African local government context (Amoatey & Hayibor, 2017). Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) concur with the need for future research to be undertaken regarding elements which may contribute to effective stakeholder management. Molale (2019), also argues for the importance of stakeholder management, contributing towards improved service delivery. He further explained the need for such studies based in a South African, local government context.

The research to date in the area of stakeholder theory and leadership has often not been context specific. By focusing on a specific context, this research also makes a methodological contribution through the process by which it was undertaken. It takes the form of an embedded case study to explore the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector. An inductive qualitative content analysis was used to examine the results obtained from the one-on-one interviews with senior managers in the eThekweni Water Sector. This was combined with a deductive approach to anchor the study in scholarly literature.

The retroductive content analysis of the results has been instrumental in understanding and developing conceptual frameworks, thereby making a theoretical contribution. The frameworks illustrate the characteristics required of a leader for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector, and how effective stakeholder management can be undertaken. It is based upon stakeholder characteristics and aspects of effective stakeholder management identified from literature. These frameworks indicate how the above factors influence each other to determine an overall set of characteristics for effective stakeholder management, which are intended to facilitate improved service delivery in the eThekweni Water Sector.

Following a review of the report by Molale (2019), it is evident that the South African government has been dedicating significant resources to address service delivery to

the citizenry, yet it is still failing to achieve its objectives. As explained by Freeman (1984), any stakeholder who can affect the accomplishment of an objective must not be left out by the organisation. This suggests that leaders have a responsibility to engage all relevant stakeholders and manage their expectations. It is therefore important to address the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management as a key enabler to leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector in realising service delivery goals.

It is intended for such research to become instrumental, the frameworks formulated from the findings can be used by leaders of local government to improve their stakeholder management capabilities in a South African context. The conceptual frameworks may also be useful to leaders from other developing countries with emerging economies, for implementation within their governance structures. Developing countries may stand to benefit directly through improved service delivery by equipping leaders with the characteristics to better manage their stakeholders.

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in the role which stakeholder management can play in solve problems related to service delivery. As shared above much uncertainty still exists concerning the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management in the context of local government in an emerging economy such as South Africa (Molale, 2019). The remainder of Chapter One argues the relevance of identifying the characteristics required of leaders for effective stakeholder management, contributing to improved service delivery. Also, outlining the need for the research, based on service delivery goals not met in the eThekweni Water Sector. This is done by clearly articulating the contextual background, and research objectives aligned to the research problem.

1.1 Contextual Background to the Research Problem

There has been a recent renewed interest in stakeholder management to formulate solutions in response to critical water shortages experienced in many parts of the world (Megdal, Eden, & Shamir, 2017). Khojastehpour and Shams (2020), argue that organisations and leaders have an increasing responsibility towards a wide variety of stakeholders and are expected to fulfil their varied expectations and objectives. It is therefore suggested that effective stakeholder management plays an important role in the governance of water (Megdal et al., 2017).

In the context of stakeholder management, leaders have a responsibility to nurture trust and cultivate strong, sustainable relationships amongst all relevant and associated parties (Maak & Pless, 2006). Resulting in the achievement of clearly defined objectives. In view of all that has been mentioned thus far, one may suppose that understanding the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management is important for improving service delivery in the eThekweni Water Sector.

The objectives and operations of the eThekweni Water Sector of South Africa is rooted in the Water Services Act (1997) which relates to the provision of water services (Statistics South Africa, 2017). It is a collection of organisations that exist on a municipal level in local government, which deliver particular administrative services (Govender & Reddy, 2019). Whilst the eThekweni Water Sector is comprised of both water and sanitation services, this research will focus solely on the EWS and its role in producing and supplying water to residents and businesses within eThekweni. The organisations responsible for this service are the Water Services Provider known as Umgeni water and the Water Services Authority regarded as eThekweni Municipality Water and Sanitation Department (EMWSD). Both organisations formed the embedded case study investigation for this research.

Midin, Joseph, and Mohamad (2016), pointed out that to advance sustainable development which meets the socio-economic needs of the citizens of an emerging economy such as South Africa, effective stakeholder management is essential. Within the public sector governance and administrative environment, there are numerous stakeholders with which leaders need to interface, hence the added importance of the appreciation of stakeholder management (Malakoana, & Gounden, 2008; Government of South Africa, 2000; Wilson, Megdal et al., 2017).

The eThekweni Municipal region is the third largest in South Africa. The projected population of eThekweni as of 2021 is approximately 3.2 million according to United Nations (2019), and continues to grow. This number is supported by the Statistics South Africa (2020) report which indicated that household growth (2.4% per annum) exceeded population growth (1.3% per annum) for the period 2002 – 2019. Having considered the above statistics, it seems that migration and the considerable growth in the number of households will have a significant impact on service delivery as households are a primary recipient of basic services (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

The report from Statistics South Africa (2017) pointed out that the provision of basic services is fundamental to improving the quality of life of the citizenry. These basic services include an adequate and safe water supply, sanitation, refuse disposal and a stable electricity supply, all of which are the most fundamental needs for the well-being and dignity of humans (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

The number of households which are serviced by the EWS in KwaZulu-Natal rose from two million households in 2002 to three million households in 2019, representing a 33% increase (Statistics South Africa, 2020). This is in stark contrast to the comparatively smaller, ten percent increase in households which gained access to piped or tap water over the period 2002-2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). In addition to this, 32.6% of households in KwaZulu-Natal reported interruptions to their water supply which lasted for a period longer than two days (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Collectively, these figures illustrated the critical need for improved service delivery from the eThekweni Water Sector.

Whilst South Africa has made great strides towards becoming a developed economy in some areas, the country is still failing to achieve its self-imposed goals related to the delivery of services (Govender & Reddy, 2019). Although there are varied reasons attributed to these failures, it is seen that a high level of stakeholder engagement is required of employees in the eThekweni Water Sector (Midin et al., 2016).

Local government service delivery was failing to adequately contribute to achieving South Africa's national and provincial development goals, as evidenced through a review of the success rates in achieving the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Goals (Molale, 2019). Ndevu and Muller (2017), asserted that local government is ostensibly closest to the average citizen. Leaders of local government were therefore often directly responsible for stakeholder engagement in so far as service delivery is concerned. It was therefore imperative to develop a clear understanding of the stakeholder management characteristics required to effectively manage such interfaces.

Molale (2019) claimed that local government, of which eThekweni Water Sector is a part, was responsible for developing an Integrated Development Plan which detailed how developmental goals would be met. One of the defining requirements of the Integrated Development Plan were the high levels of stakeholder engagement

required from citizens, businesses, environmental organisations, communities and other relevant stakeholders who will be directly or indirectly impacted by the development goals of local government and municipalities (Molale, 2019). The study undertaken by Molale (2019), painted a dismal picture of the lack of stakeholder engagement. One such example was the low levels of participation from the above-mentioned groups to align performance of the eThekweni Water Sector with the Integrated Development Plan goals. This resulted in a lack of accountability and unmet sustainable development goals for improved service delivery in the water sector (Molale, 2019).

Gumbi and Rangongo (2018), also argue that the eThekweni Water Sector faces capacity challenges with an existing water supply system which is under stress. The eThekweni Water Sector is therefore unable to provide enough water to all citizens, which presents an obstacle to the growth of communities. This is evidenced by the increased levels of poverty in certain communities, leading to violent protests and unrest (Molale, 2019). The study by Alexander et al. (2018) further claims that between 2005 to 2017, there were over 14,000 protests, several of which resulted in violence and damage to infrastructure.

One of the primary reasons ascribed to the failures of improved service delivery, was documented in the report by Molale (2019). He explains that stakeholders are disengaged from the goals and objectives of local government and municipalities. He further points out that there remains a lack of alignment between certain stakeholders such as communities that are the recipient of services, and local government. In view of all that has been mentioned, it is suggested that effective stakeholder management is a requirement of leaders within the eThekweni Water Sector.

1.2 Effective Stakeholder Management to Improve Service Delivery

The study by Dal Maso, Mazzi, Soscia, and Terzani (2018) illustrates the importance of stakeholder theory and the role it plays in bridging the gap between organisational performance and societal expectations. This theory aligns internal management practices and external wants and pressures, hence the link between stakeholder theory and stakeholder management (Dal Maso et al., 2018).

According to Freeman (2010), the central idea upon which stakeholder theory is built is the understanding and creation of joint interests for all stakeholders. Similarly,

Kujala, Lehtimäki, and Freeman (2019), postulated that in order to create value for multiple stakeholders, a leader must understand the importance of creating value through every relationship. They further propose that value creation is not just for the organisation or owner, but rather for every stakeholder impacted by any decision.

In order to address the water challenges within eThekweni, the municipality has undertaken stakeholder engagement through a partnership with the Water Research Commission (Mayisela, 2020). Whilst this suggests that stakeholder engagement and management is becoming increasingly more relevant and important, research indicates that it is not being undertaken effectively. This is evidenced by the increasing number of protests due to poor service delivery (Alexander et al., 2018).

Due to the complexity of working in an environment with increasing levels of civil protest, Sebidi and Madue (2018), maintains that leaders require the skills and ability to align relevant stakeholders with a shared vision. Such an approach enables a more responsive government sector, aligned with the expectations of the community. In the same vein, Walsh (2005) noted that the complex environment which leaders are expected to function within is the new status quo going into the future. Due to ineffective stakeholder management, service delivery in the context of providing water to the people remains a challenge (Sebidi & Madue, 2018). Sebidi and Madue (2018), observe that certain challenges faced by South African municipalities can be overcome by effective stakeholder management. Collectively, the evidence indicates that there is a need to understand the characteristics required of leaders in the eThekweni Water Sector for improved service delivery.

1.3 Motivation for the Study

The real-world problem necessitating this research as described in a study by Malakoana, Qwabe, and Zondi (2020), is the expectation of consistent, high quality, water supply to the citizens of eThekweni. Malakoana et al. (2020), observed that when these expectations are not met, it results in dissatisfaction and often mass protests which turn violent. One of the challenges contributing to the dissatisfaction of citizens was the failure of effective stakeholder management at local government level (Malakoana et al., 2020). Citizens of informal settlements argued that there was a culture of unresponsiveness and a lack of consultation, transparency and overall communication (Malakoana et al., 2020). As such, local government, inclusive of the eThekweni Water Sector have a responsibility to improve interaction with

communities, to better understand all stakeholders affected by an outcome or decision.

The study by Gumbi and Rangongo (2018), recognised that some of the solutions to improving basic service delivery involved collaborations between citizens, groups of citizens, public and private organisations, non-governmental organisations, charities, and higher institutions of learning. This emphasises the importance of learning to communicate with people of different backgrounds, building links with communities, private sector, schools, environmental bodies and religious forums (Gumbi & Rangongo, 2018). Mayisela (2020), claims that this would enable the development of multi-stakeholder platforms with local government to establish innovative mechanisms for improved service delivery. Considering the above, these studies suggest the need for effective stakeholder management, thus the importance of understanding the leadership characteristics which will ensure these collaborations are successful. These conclusions illustrate the business need for this study in the case of the eThekweni Water Sector.

The study undertaken by Dal Maso et al. (2018), emphasised the importance of context when attempting to understand stakeholder management. There are several differences between countries, communities, and industries, hence the need for more data which is context specific (Dal Maso et al., 2018). This strengthens the case study approach, which is looking at a specific context, being the eThekweni Water Sector in South Africa.

Whilst limited research has been carried out on the characteristics of leaders and effective stakeholder management in their individual domains, this author has not identified studies which combine and explore these concepts by reviewing the eThekweni Water Sector as a case study. Eyiah-Botwe, Aigbavboa, and Thwala (2016), also point out that there exists research related to success factors for improved stakeholder management in developed countries; however, much research is still required for developing countries such as South Africa. This further necessitated the theoretical need for this study.

Based on the above, this study adopted an exploratory outlook to understand characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the case of the eThekweni Water Sector. Whilst the study focuses on the eThekweni Water Sector which is part of local government, its findings may also have relevance to

other local government institutions which are facing a difficulties in service delivery (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

1.4 Purpose of the Research

The research problem at hand is the decline in service delivery of the eThekwini Water Sector. The aim of this study is to understand the characteristics of leaders which will enable effective stakeholder management as an important aspect to enhance service delivery. This study will also deepen the theoretical understanding of the characteristics of leaders and process required for effective stakeholder management; whilst enabling leaders within the eThekwini Water Sector to improve their stakeholder management skills.

The objectives of this research were to provide insight into the following:

- I. Identification of stakeholders that affect or are affected by the service delivery of the eThekwini Water Sector.
- II. Identifying and understanding the characteristics of leaders which are required for effective stakeholder management; and the development of a cohesive conceptual framework to improve service delivery in the eThekwini Water Sector.
- III. The development of a cohesive conceptual framework which outlines how effective stakeholder management can be adopted by leaders in the eThekwini Water Sector.

Following on from Chapter One, the second chapter seeks to explain and establish an argument based on existing literature. It will further support and validate the relevance and purpose of this research in relation to the objectives outlined above.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The relevance of this research was determined following a literature review, which indicated the paucity of studies pertaining to stakeholder management in the context of the EWS being part of local government. Jones, Harrison, and Felps (2018), as well as Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), concurred that future research was required to understand the aspects which could contribute to effective stakeholder management. A case study approach was adopted to gain deeper insights into the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management within the EWS.

In light of recent events such as community protests, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the aspect of stakeholder engagement (Alexander, et al., 2018). Jones et al. (2018), claimed that this may be because of the lack of awareness of the benefits of effective stakeholder management. Whilst both seminal and recent literature have given much context to stakeholder management and characteristics of leaders as separate topics, there was little theory which demonstrated a link between the two subjects.

The study by Nwanzu and Mbanefo (2017) explained that to show a link between the two subjects, the literature review played a central role throughout the entire research process. It was dependent upon the overarching research objectives outlined in Section 1.4. It was also pointed out that literature review aided the justification and rationale of all statements made (Nwanzu & Mbanefo, 2017). Major contributors to this area of research were identified to anchor all sections in a logical and coherent manner (Nwanzu & Mbanefo, 2017). In the same vein Samimi, Cortes, Anderson, and Herrmann, (2020) proposed that the literature review defined and limited the scope of this study. This validated the approach to limit the literature review to articles from the twenty first century with specific emphasis on the past six years (2016 – 2021). This approach ensured that the research was current and credible.

The Journal Quality List was used to search for relevant articles to focus on work published in top tier journals which are peer reviewed (Gordon Institute of Business Science, 2019). This provides credibility to the literature examined and arguments presented for this study. Since this study focused on the case of the EWS in South Africa, research from credible South African journals was also used.

This ensured that context specific perspectives were gained from the literature to add value to the case study approach adopted.

To build a coherent argument which informs the subjects being investigated, the literature review begins by exploring and analysing the context of the EWS within Local Government in South Africa. Following this, the review then explains the roles and responsibilities of the relevant institutions in the case study being researched, and their impact upon service delivery with regards to providing quality water to the people.

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the broad domain of leadership in different contexts. It was nevertheless apparent that there was a relatively small body of literature which was concerned with stakeholder management as a construct of leadership, and the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management in the EWS. Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) developed a conceptual framework which was adopted by the author and formed the basis of this research in the context of the EWS. The framework was used as the initial research model, ensuring that the study remained within its defined scope.

The theory of stakeholder management and its evolution over the years is expanded upon. This gave insight into the requirements for effective stakeholder management and the major factors which affect it. Specific focus was then given to the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management in a South African context, as limited theory and research was available for this case study.

Finally, this chapter concluded with a summary of the literature as outlined, as well as proposed themes from literature in the domain of characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management. By undertaking an analysis of the relevant literature, Chapter Two demonstrated the shortcomings of the subjects under review, leading to the formulation of the research questions. This led on to Chapter Three which outlined the primary research questions in relation to the purpose and objectives of the study.

Figure 1 illustrated the structure of the literature review in relation to the research objectives from Section 1.4. The graphical illustration provides an overview of the research path, linking it to the purpose of the study.

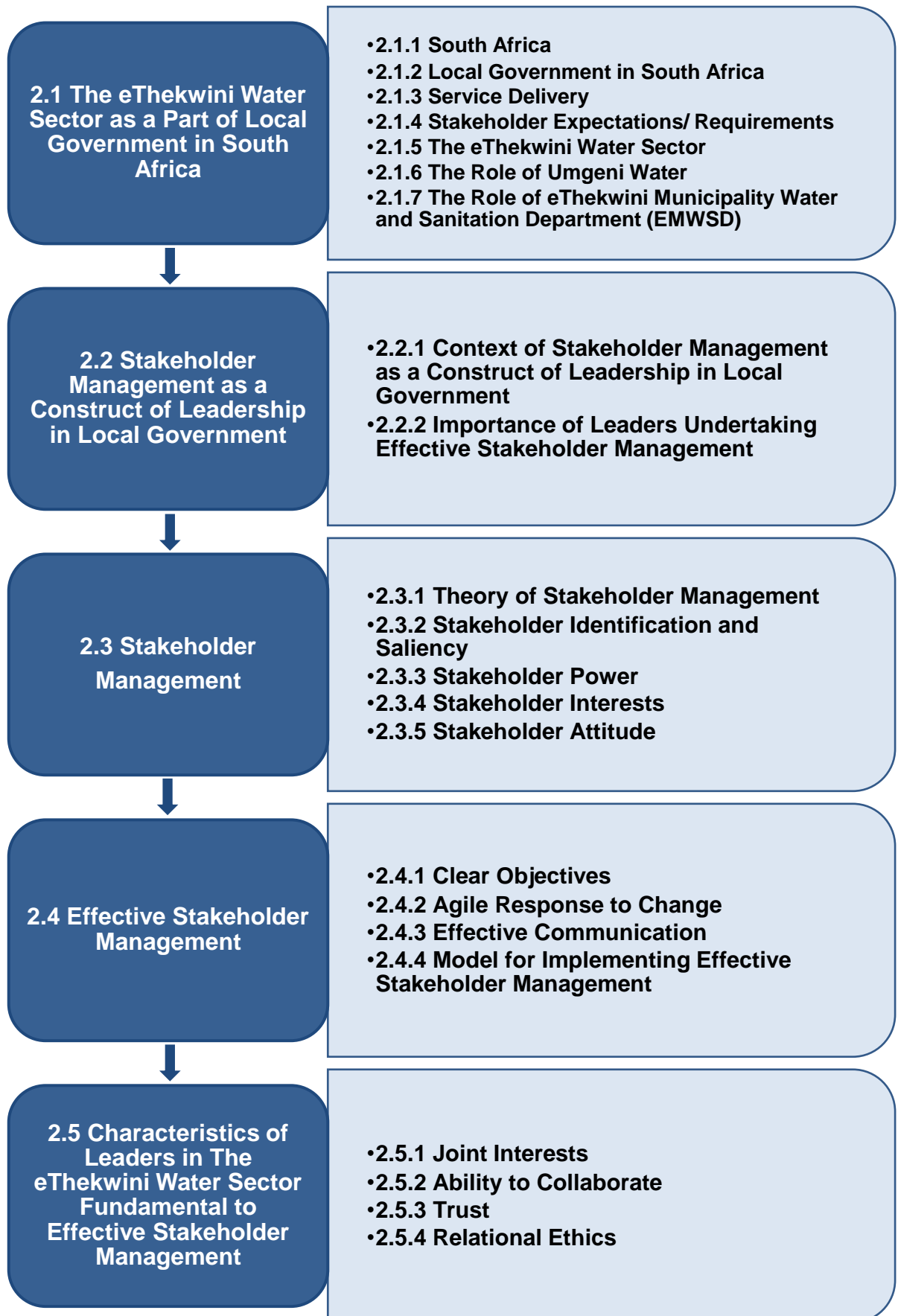


Figure 1: Structure of Literature Review

Source: Author's Own

2.1 The eThekweni Water Sector as part of Local Government in South Africa

Based on the embedded case study approach of this research, context played a pertinent role to understanding the list of characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the EWS (Gustafsson, 2017). This section provides the history and background to the selected case. Beginning with the historical changes in South Africa which led to the establishment of the three tiers of government, one of those tiers being local government. It also explained stakeholder expectations and the role of service delivery in relation to supplying all citizens with quality drinking water. Following this, the section moves onto explaining how the EWS positions itself within local government and the major role players responsible for service delivery. Those role players being eThekweni Municipality and Umgeni water.

2.1.1 South Africa

South Africa emerged from the Apartheid era in the early 1990's, following which a nationwide election lead to the first democratically elected government in the history of the country (Govender & Reddy, 2019). In view of the above, the changes which occurred in South Africa post 1990, impacted local government and service delivery.

Post the democratic elections of 1994, the South African national government established 12 overarching national goals related to the civil, economic and social development of the country (Government of South Africa, 2000). Examples of such goals include the development of an efficient local government sector, implementation of environmental initiatives aligned to the United Nations sustainable development goals, a skilled and developing workforce, an improved education system, improved rural communities which are self-sustaining, and most importantly equality for the people (Government of South Africa, 2000). These goals would indicate a general aspiration to higher standards of living for all citizens of the country, and improvement in the quality of life. Underpinning these goals, is the importance of improved service delivery.

The South African government is under increased pressure to reign in irregular expenditure, and to maximise the resources available for improved service delivery (Molale, 2019). Particularly given the pressures on the national economy for all

citizens of the country to have access to the most basic needs, amongst which are water and sanitation.

South Africa is considered a developing economy. Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), remind us that improved service delivery which aligned with and supported the growth objectives of South Africa, played an important role in meeting the socio-economic needs of the populace. This contributed to the macroeconomic development goals of the country itself. It is a commonly accepted notion that the natural aspiration of nations, particularly those classified as developing, is to move towards a developed state (Govender & Reddy, 2019).

Characteristics of a developing nation encompass, but are not limited to, stable governance, the establishment of civil infrastructure and the formation of public institutions for dependable service delivery (Govender & Reddy, 2019). With the final goal being catering to the socio-economic needs of the populace. Govender and Reddy (2019), pointed out that focus had to be given to service delivery and the institution of management. These were arguably two specific aspects that drove the growth objectives of the country, forming the backbone of stability and economic prosperity in South Africa (Govender & Reddy, 2019).

Helliwell, Huang, Grover, and Wang (2018) argue, that it is the citizens of a country who are in the best position to evaluate the level of service delivery provided by local government. This would be based upon their general living standards and quality of life. This supports the notion that stakeholders affected or involved in a decision taken by local government have a high level of importance. This further justified the need for effective stakeholder management. For the life of citizens to improve in a country, it was confirmed in the study by Helliwell et al. (2018), that the level of services rendered by local government dominates as the main contributing factor to improvement.

It is important to note that South Africa is in some respects still dealing with the effects of the apartheid regime, which ended in 1994 under pressure from increased protests by citizens, and international sanctions imposed on the country (Govender & Reddy, 2019). Twenty six years later, there still remains high levels of poor service delivery due to lack of infrastructure development as a result of the inequality, racial divides and socio-economic injustices created during the apartheid era (Dibie & Quadri, 2017).

Should local government be successful in advancing sustainable development to improve service delivery; Dibie and Quadri (2017) noted the need for citizens and other relevant stakeholders to be involved in all initiatives. It is therefore important to understand the role of local government in South Africa, noting the responsibilities of leaders within local government and their impact upon service delivery.

2.1.2 Local Government in South Africa

South Africa is deemed a constitutional democracy and is comprised of three spheres of government. In hierarchical order, these are National, Provincial and Local (Government of South Africa, 2000). All three tiers are in different ways responsible for overall infrastructure development and service delivery to the citizenry. It is therefore important for all levels to work together.

It must be noted that of the three levels of government, local government is ostensibly closest to the average citizen and remains at the heart of communities and people (Ndevu & Muller, 2017). This view is supported by Molale (2019), who highlighted that local government in South Africa makes a direct contribution to enabling national and provincial goals aligned to growth, development, and service delivery in all communities. It is comprised of 278 municipalities which can be divided into three categories known as metropolitan, district and local municipalities (Government of South Africa, 2000).

For the purposes of this study, local government referred to the collective of organisations that exist on a municipal level, that deliver a particular administrative service (Govender & Reddy, 2019). It could be concluded that given its proximity to the average citizen, local government institutions remained closest to the populace, and played an integral role of interacting with the people. Local government shouldered the large responsibility of ensuring that all citizens are provided with essential goods and services such as water and electricity (Ndevu & Muller, 2017). Their mandate and pursuing growth for the prosperity of the people.

Likewise, Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), held the view that efficient service delivery is fundamental to the growth of an emerging economy such as South Africa. On the contrary, Dibie and Quadri (2017), also argued the leadership challenges faced by many local governments in achieving sustainable development growth initiatives aligned to service delivery. Whilst stakeholder management is understood to play a

fundamental role in achieving the goals of local government, it is important that leadership understands the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management (Government of South Africa, 2000).

The Constitution of South Africa also defined and outlined the roles and responsibilities for local government (Govender & Reddy, 2019). One of the mandates from the Constitution of South Africa as explained by Khambule (2018), concerns the involvement of communities, business, and other relevant stakeholders in matters of importance to local government. This further indicated that one of the distinctive roles of local government included effective stakeholder management and the ongoing development of community level relationships. This could be achieved by the creation of collaborative platforms to enhance service delivery at local government level.

2.1.3 Service Delivery

The Government of South Africa (2000), outlined the core functions of local municipalities. It emphasised the relevance of stakeholder engagement in order to ensure access to essential services for all citizens. The core functions listed are ostensibly aligned with the notion that partnerships and community participation are fundamental to achieving service delivery goals in a region such as eThekweni.

The term “basic municipal services” refers to any service that is necessary to ensure an acceptable quality of life, without which, the health of citizens or the environment may be affected (Government of South Africa, 2000). This offers a definition for the term “service delivery”, which is the act of providing basic municipal services. Such services include water, sanitation, electricity and refuse removal (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

The United Nations (2019), explained that water is a key resource for the survival of humans and the environment. Thereby validating the focus of this study on the improvement of providing the basic municipal service of quality water delivery to all citizens of eThekweni. Megdal et al. (2017) also argued the urgency of addressing water challenges and the critical need for effective stakeholder management. This would ensure that majority of hurdles are overcome in the interests of a sustainable future with water for all citizens.

Based on the evidence identifying the problem for this research in Section 1.1, and the study by Molale (2019), an item of interest are the specific findings of the investigations into service delivery failure. It was further explained that inadequate and inexperienced leadership were contributors in these individual instances (Molale, 2019). As a result, ineffective stakeholder management was possibly a consequence of inexperienced leadership at local government level in municipalities (Molale, 2019).

The above makes a compelling case to illustrate that effective stakeholder management is an important aspect of local governance for improved service delivery. Particularly given the number of stakeholders that public servants regularly find themselves engaged with, the relative influence of these stakeholders, the interests of individual stakeholders as well as their attitude, and general regard for local governance.

2.1.4 Stakeholder Expectations/ Requirements

According to Bjorna (2015), one of the measures of success of municipalities was the satisfaction of stakeholders, and the way in which municipalities worked with them. Bjorna (2015) also acknowledged that stakeholder expectations and requirements differed depending upon whether the sector was public or private. The importance of understanding stakeholder expectations is emphasised, as the fulfilment of these expectations are inadvertently used as measures of success of local government. Local government is comprised of two groups of stakeholders, namely those that are within local government (internal stakeholders), and external stakeholders (Bjorna, 2015). Although both groups may differ with regards to their objectives and demands, it is the responsibility of local government to manage and satisfy their needs when within their mandate (Bjorna, 2015).

The dictionary definition of stakeholder referred to “a party that has an interest in a company and can either affect or be affected by the business” (Fernando, 2021, “What Is a Stakeholder?”, para. 1). This definition was also supported by Freeman (2010) in the introduction of Chapter One. Suggesting that employees, universities, councillors and citizens can be identified as the main internal stakeholders of local government (Bjorna, 2015). Whilst Bjorna (2015) also proposes that the main external stakeholders are deemed to be tourists and businesses. Unlike private sector that can afford to target a small, niche group of stakeholders; the public sector

often has to engage with a wide selection of both internal and external stakeholders (Bjorna, 2015). In order, for the EWS to effectively engage with all stakeholders, it is important that the expectations of internal and external stakeholders are understood.

As defined in the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), expectations are the belief of what “will happen in the future” (para. 3). The dominant expectation of the EWS from both internal and external stakeholders remains the delivery of safe drinking water to all businesses and citizens (Malakoana et al., 2020). This expectation prevails based on the vision of eThekweni Municipality which refers to making eThekweni “Africa’s most caring and liveable City” by 2030 (eThekweni Municipality, 2011, “slogan”).

In the study by Sershen et al. (2016), it was determined that understanding the expectations of the people is of primary importance, since water is considered a basic human right to all. After further examination of public expectations and municipal obligations, Table 1 highlighted the common challenges faced (Sershen et al., 2016). It was revealing to note that majority of the people in eThekweni believed that the numerous service delivery protests are attributed to a decline in service delivery (Sershen et al., 2016). Drawing on the findings from Table 1 and reviewing the frequency column, it could be noted that the most prominent challenge can be summarised as an overall skills deficit which led to inadequate stakeholder management (Sershen et al., 2016). The solution with the highest ranking as illustrated in Table 1, was public buy-in and awareness. Together these findings illustrated the need for leaders to understand the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management, to improve service delivery.

Table 1: Ranking of challenges, knowledge gaps and solutions/recommendations relating to public expectations and municipal obligations regarding water quality by colloquium participants; listed in decreasing order of importance

| Challenges | Frequency* |
|--|-------------------|
| Incapacity of decision-makers and skills deficit within water sector | 24 |
| Unrealistic political promises vs. expectations vs. reality (finance and infrastructure) | 15 |
| Dysfunctional infrastructure | 10 |
| Balance between public rights and obligations vs. responsibilities | 7 |
| Diffused roles and responsibilities of Local Government | 6 |
| Capacity of courts/legal system to adjudicate | 5 |
| Illegal connections | 5 |
| Inadequate prioritisation of water security | 5 |
| Non-payment for services | 3 |
| Research gaps | 3 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Using technical solutions to solve political issues | 3 |
| Political issues associated with service provision | 2 |
| Rapid urbanisation | 2 |
| Socio-economic implications of lack of service provision | 2 |
| Influence of climate change on water availability | 1 |
| Knowledge Gaps | |
| Blue Drop/Green Drop Certification Programme | 14 |
| Knowledge creation and management | 13 |
| What informs human choices | 11 |
| Communication of best practices | 8 |
| Legal implications of service provision | 8 |
| Water availability vs. accessibility | 8 |
| Challenges of uncertainty (demands, expectations, cultural stigmas) | 6 |
| Behavioural change with regards to water use | 6 |
| Groundwater quantity and quality | 4 |
| Industrial cost of compliance vs. infringement penalties | 3 |
| Hydrological cycle | 2 |
| Big users of water | 1 |
| Solutions/Recommendations | |
| Public buy-in and awareness | 23 |
| Government awareness | 16 |
| Human capacity building | 11 |
| Promote re-use of wastewater | 10 |
| Good governance | 9 |
| Ecological infrastructure approach | 9 |
| Investment in operations and maintenance | 8 |
| Use of ocean water to flush toilets | 5 |
| Knowledge sharing across local government | 4 |
| School education programmes | 3 |
| Creation of more wetlands | 3 |
| Holistic understanding of complexities of water security | 2 |
| A more people-centred approach to water management | 2 |
| Improved water technologies in agricultural production | 2 |
| Provide basic service with allowance for user upgrade | 2 |
| Improved monitoring and evaluation of water quality and use | 1 |

(Source: Sershen, et al., 2016)

Masiya, Davids, and Mangai (2019), also argued that the expectations of citizens in eThekweni remain unfulfilled due to inadequate service delivery. In recent times the dissatisfaction of citizens was evident through the numerous public protests that took place, which can further be linked to the low levels of public participation and engagement (Masiya et al., 2019).

Weaver, O'Keeffe, Hamer, and Palmer (2019), pointed out that it was the role of local municipalities to ensure that information related to water is disseminated to all stakeholders through various platforms. This would enable meaningful engagements

and solutions related to water issues. Considering the need to share information amongst all stakeholders, it becomes vital to understand the EWS and its major role players responsible for service delivery for the correct dissemination of information.

2.1.5 The eThekweni Water Sector (EWS)

Leaders within the EWS are local government personnel responsible for ensuring that the expectation of safe drinking water to all stakeholders was achieved. This is termed as water governance and fell within the mandate of service delivery for local government (Government of South Africa, 2000). Okumah and Yeboah (2020) claimed that including relevant people in the process of water governance assists to enhance the delivery of water to all people in an equitable and safe manner.

To deliver quality drinking water to every citizen of eThekweni, the water must first be produced and then delivered. Umgeni water was the para-statal responsible for producing the water, whilst eThekweni Municipality Water and Sanitation Department (EMWSD) was the organisation responsible for delivering the water to all citizens (Sutherland , Scott, & Hordijk, 2015). This suggests that collectively, these were the two main entities responsible for service delivery in the EWS. Supporting the EWS as the case study with focus on Umgeni Water and EMWSD as the chosen population.

Sutherland et al. (2015) claimed that the EWS plays a central role in the provision of water to the people. He further suggested that the sector is supported by relevant stakeholders such as the private sector, universities, and non-government organisation. This suggested the responsibility of the EWS to ensure participation of all relevant stakeholders. It was also pointed out that some of the attributes of inclusive governance include openness, deliberation, communication, accountability, and efficiency (Sutherland et al., 2015). This suggested that decisions should be taken by both the EMWSD and Umgeni water as the central role players, whilst creating a platform to engage with other relevant stakeholders (Sutherland et al., 2015).

2.1.6 The Role of Umgeni Water

Umgeni Water forms an integral part of this research and case study approach. They are deemed to be the parastatal responsible for producing the water. Cambridge

Dictionary (n.d.), defined parastatal as “a company or organisation which is owned by a country’s government and often has some political power” (“parastatal”, para. 1). Leading on to the assertion from Sershen, et al. (2016), that there was an expectation and need from all citizens to secure water supply and quality. Indicative of the role that Umgeni Water had in the value chain of the EWS for service delivery.

Umgeni Water (2019), pointed out that they are a public-orientated entity who were integrated into local government and the EWS. They were expected to cater to the water demand of 54 municipalities. Umgeni water claimed that they were responsible for producing 472 million cubic metres of potable water in the 2018/2019 financial year (Umgeni Water, 2019). The EMWSD was noted to be the largest paying direct retail customer to Umgeni Water, accounting for 71% of Umgeni Water’s Production (Umgeni Water, 2019, p. 129).

Umgeni Water (2019) accentuated that one of their key strategic objectives was to increase customer and stakeholder value. The leaders of Umgeni Water therefore engaged with stakeholders that were impacted, affected or may have had an interest in their core function and mandate of producing water. Umgeni Water identified four main groups of stakeholders which are illustrated in Figure 2 (Umgeni Water, 2019). They strived to engage and manage all stakeholder relationships through formal appraisals, forums, meetings, debates, task teams, media coverage, social media, reports, site visits, major event launches, informal brainstorming sessions, community functions as well as other learning platforms.

Four main groups of stakeholders are classified as statutory, strategic, contracted, and non-contracted stakeholders (Umgeni Water, 2019). This enabled Umgeni water to define and evaluate the needs of similar groups of stakeholders. These groups enabled them to develop a written basis for engagement, and to document similar goals which both parties desired and worked towards (Umgeni Water, 2019).

Umgeni water also realised that stakeholder engagement was an iterative process and reviewed their stakeholder management plan to include marginalised groups (Umgeni Water, 2019). These are groups who were previously disadvantage based on the history of South Africa and were restricted from opportunities involving new business ventures. It was pointed out that to support such stakeholder engagements, the “Enterprise Support Department” was established (Umgeni Water, 2019). These initiatives indicated the commitment of Umgeni Water towards effective stakeholder

management within the organisation and the larger EWS.

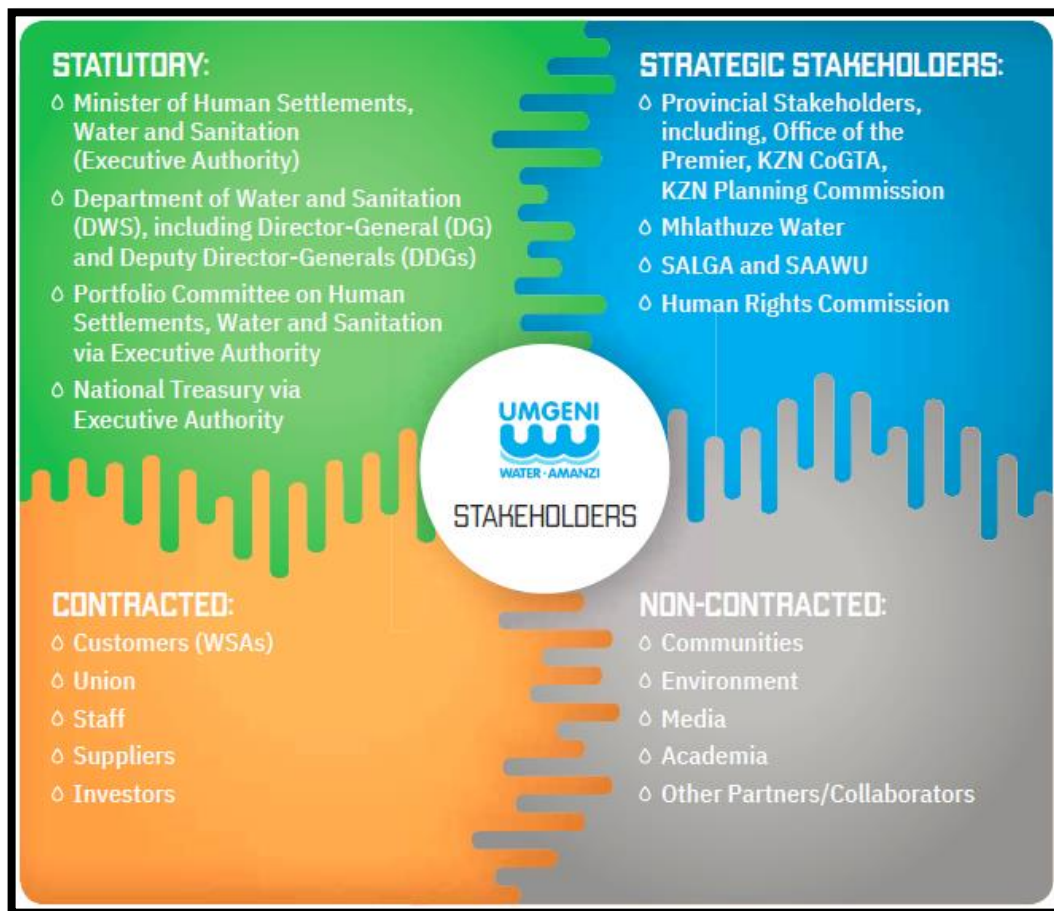


Figure 2: Four Main Groups of Umgeni Water's Stakeholders'
Source: Umgeni Water (2019)

2.1.7 The Role of eThekweni Municipality Water and Sanitation Department (EMWSD)

eThekweni Municipality is considered a Category A metropolitan municipality due to its high-density population, industrial and business growth (Govender & Reddy, 2019). Within the sphere of service delivery pertaining to water, one had to consider the importance of the role of the EMWSD. Based on the categorisation of the eThekweni Municipality, it was suggested that the EMWSD had multiple stakeholders to interface with due to its multifaceted interactions for both economic and socio-economic development.

Whilst it was noted that there was a great deal of previous research published on EMWSD, the author could not find evidence of a document outlining their relevant stakeholders in the past five years. This may indicate a decreased focus on stakeholder management from leaders within the EMWSD in recent years.

EMWSD is a Water Services Authority, as well as a contracted stakeholder to Umgeni Water. One of the key responsibilities of the department included the basic service of delivering safe drinking water to all citizens (Government of South Africa, 2000). In order to guarantee that this service could be provided, EMWSD and Umgeni Water were bound by the Bulk Water Purchases Agreement (Umgeni Water, 2019). It was the common goal of both entities to ensure sustainable, high-performing, and efficient delivery of water to all citizens of eThekweni, in an equitable and fair manner.

As explained in Chapter One, the problem of declining service delivery is leading to numerous protests, demonstrating that many citizens could potentially not be receiving safe drinking water (Malakoana et al., 2020). Previous research had established that ineffective stakeholder management could be a potential cause of this decline (Sershen, et al., 2016). Stakeholder management as a construct of leadership is briefly discussed to illustrate the relevance of stakeholder management under the leadership umbrella. Whilst noting that this research will focus on the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management to improve service delivery.

2.2 Stakeholder Management as a Construct of Leadership in Local Government

There have been many studies published that described the link between stakeholder management and leadership characteristics. This section aimed to support the idea that there is a link between leadership characteristics and stakeholder management. The literature reviewed drew broadly from the intersection of leadership and stakeholder management. Upon establishing the above link, the remainder of the research focused on offering propositions about the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the EWS.

2.2.1 Context of Stakeholder Management as a Construct of Leadership in Local Government

Leadership was defined by Yukl (2006), as “a process of influencing and teaching others to understand why and how certain activities and goals need to be accomplished. As such, it constitutes a process of facilitating individual and collective

efforts to learn and accomplish shared goals in organizations” (p. 579).

Based on the definition of leadership by Yukl (2006), the idea of creating common goals and shared values confirmed the importance of effective stakeholder management as a construct of leadership.

Megdal et al. (2017), had put forward the idea that leaders in the water sector had a difficult role in managing water governance. They argued that managing water resources had many dynamic elements, and in order for challenges pertaining to the delivery of water to be solved, leaders needed to understand the interconnections.

Akwaba, Bowa, and Keiyoro (2020), presented a case of how leadership skills and stakeholder management worked hand in hand in the successful execution of a fibre optic project. The findings from the study by Akwaba et al. (2020), convincingly argued that the ability of a leader to effectively undertake stakeholder management has a positive influence on a project. Lemoine, Eva, Meuser, and Falotico (2020), also emphasised the importance of leaders having a stakeholder approach to management. They also suggested that this stakeholder approach to management, may outperform other management styles (Lemoine et al., 2020). Collectively these studies established that stakeholder management was an important characteristic of successful leadership.

Freeman, Harrison, and Wicks (2017) proposed that one of the most valuable lessons learned from the Global financial crisis, and to be carried into the 21st century was that leaders need to be “Managing for stakeholders” (Preface Section, para. 2) This simple phrase encapsulated the importance of stakeholder management as an aspect of leadership.

Patzer, Voegtlin, and Scherer (2018), also argued convincingly that there are multiple calls from practitioners and scholars for a form of responsible leadership which incorporated stakeholder management. They further claimed that leaders had to now operate in an economically globalised society with rapidly changing social norms and lifestyles, driving the need for integrative leadership. The key principle of integrative leadership places stakeholder management as one of the primary responsibilities of leaders (Patzer et al., 2018). This aligns with the importance of leaders within the EWS being able to undertake effective stakeholder management for improved service delivery.

2.2.2 Importance of Leaders Undertaking Effective Stakeholder Management

Wehn, Collins, Anema, Basco-Carrera, and Lerebours (2018), argued convincingly that leaders are often faced with a number of burdens in their day to day roles. As a result, it was identified that stakeholder management often took lower priority considering other immediate challenges. The research presented thus far has made a strong case for supporting stakeholder engagement for a positive outcome; When et al. (2018), furthermore explained that the immediate benefits of stakeholder engagement are often not realised in the short term. For this reason, leaders hesitated to invest time and money into stakeholder management. This suggested that the benefits of stakeholder management could not be assessed or measured, since they were not realised in the short term. A resultant effect was that leaders did not prioritise stakeholder engagement (When et al., 2018).

Conversely, When et al. (2018), also reported that whilst leaders may carry a financial burden, stakeholder management remains crucial for making an informed decision which centres around a specific goal. The research further established that the sharing of a common goal is highly dependent upon the context. This confirmed just how important it was for leaders to understand the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management in order to improve service delivery goals.

In the case study of Tshwane Municipality, the authors Sebidi and Madue (2018) had conclusively shown that organisations delivering services to the citizens required strong leadership. As such, leaders within service orientated organisations such as the EWS, were required to be able to effectively communicate and engage with relevant stakeholders (Sebidi & Madue, 2018). It was further suggested that effective stakeholder management would lead to improved service delivery through the sharing of new service level agreements (SLA), values and beliefs.

Giacomini, Sancino, and Simonetto (2018) observed that service level agreements in the public sector can prompt improved stakeholder engagement. They explained that a service level agreement is a contract between selected stakeholders who have a common goal (Giacomini et al., 2018). The expectations of each stakeholder is documented in the service level agreement, and how the relevant stakeholders can jointly co-operate to achieve their goal or mandate related to service delivery.

As stated in Chapter One, service delivery falls under the mandate of public sector where leaders were typically responsible for projects related to improving service delivery. Amoatey and Hayibor (2017), explained in their study that leaders have the challenging task of satisfying the needs of a variety of stakeholders. This meant that poor stakeholder management, which encompassed incorrectly identifying the needs of stakeholders are one of the reasons attributed to the failure of projects related to service delivery. This further illustrated the importance of leaders undertaking effective stakeholder management for improved service delivery in the EWS.

2.3 Stakeholder Management

In response to a transforming modern society and water sector within a developing economy such as South Africa, stakeholder management was increasingly prevalent in steps taken to advance to a more developed state (Patzner et al., 2018). A developed state included ensuring that all citizens of a country have access to basic services such as water. The presentation of several policies and laws which promoted stakeholder management in South Africa (Government of South Africa, 2000). Sebidi and Madue (2018), contended that whilst regulatory and institutional frameworks inclusive of stakeholder management existed, actual service delivery remained a challenge.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of stakeholder management, it was necessary to also understand the historical perspectives in literature (Patzner et al., 2018). The review in Section 2.3 further assisted to put forward some of the main stakeholder characteristics which needed to be understood by a leader for effective stakeholder management.

2.3.1 Theory of Stakeholder Management

The theory behind stakeholder management is pioneered by authors such as Russell Ackoff, James R. Emshoff, Richard Mason, Ian Mitroff, Eric Rhenman, Eric Trist and other scholars who conceptualised the thinking of “stakeholders” (Freeman et al., 2017). Over the past 30 years, the concept of stakeholder management has become increasingly relevant in both the business and academic world. It challenged the principle that the core function of business was to serve the needs of shareholders only (Freeman et al., 2017).

Freeman (2010), undertook seminal work which built upon scholarly research from the above-mentioned pioneers. The seminal literature formed the theoretical basis upon which recent studies involving stakeholder management was built around, therefore some literature dating more than five years back was reviewed.

The Introduction of Chapter One had introduced a basic definition of a stakeholder as explained by Freeman and McVea (2001). Smith, Love, and Wyatt (2001) were also authors who explained that stakeholders were any person or organisation who had a vested interest or contribution towards a project.

A more comprehensive definition of a stakeholder was outlined “as being those who can influence the activities/final results of the project, whose lives or environment are positively or negatively affected by the project, and who receive direct and indirect benefit from it” (Takim, 2009, p. 168). Whilst several studies have postulated definitions of a stakeholder, Amoatey and Hayibor (2017), reported that there was no universally accepted definition of a stakeholder.

By combining the definition of a stakeholder with the concept of joint interests, Freeman (2010) explained that one should view stakeholder management as “bound together by the jointness of their interests” (p. 7) He further explained that the management of business involved relationships amongst various groups who have a vested interest or “stake” (p. 7), in specific activities or strategies (Freeman, 2010).

The definition of a stakeholder as explained by Takim (2009) and Freeman (2010), are best suited for the purpose of this research. By merging the above two definitions; in this research, the term stakeholder will be used to refer to any individual, group or organisation who was affected, influenced, benefitted, or had a vested interest in the service delivery of water from the EWS. This definition was inclusive of customers, suppliers, contractors, sponsors, local community members, government bodies, funding bodies and employees.

After reviewing the above definitions of stakeholders, Haruna (2009) offered an alternate view of stakeholder management in the form of community-based leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa. Haruna (2009), emphasised the relational aspect which explained that “the essence of leadership is constructed narrowly in terms of transactions and exchanges between individual leaders and their so-called followers” (p. 941) This suggested that community-based leadership focused on the

relationships which existed with communities. To ensure that all stakeholders obtained value, one needed to understand the strengths and weaknesses of all relevant stakeholders (Haruna, 2009).

Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), claimed that like South Africa, Ghana was also a developing country which required improved service delivery for socio-economic growth. They further asserted that developing countries had numerous failed projects related to improving service delivery. This suggested the need for a new approach which was inclusive of effective stakeholder management as undertaken in developed countries (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016). As a result, Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016) drew on an extensive range of sources to identify and consider the critical success factors for enhanced stakeholder management. Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016, citing Yang, Shen, Ho, Drew, and Xue, 2011) pointed out that critical success factors made reference to activities and management styles which needed to be inclusive of the interests of all stakeholders. This would ensure that all relevant perspectives were addressed, thereby improving service delivery in the EWS.

Based on the studies and review of several scholars Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), was able to propose 35 critical success factors for construction stakeholder management. Whilst the literature on characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management was scarce. One could draw on the proposed critical success factors illustrated in Table 2 to suggest some characteristics which could be applicable to leaders of the EWS.

Table 2: Proposed Critical Success factor and Categorisation for Construction Stakeholder Management (Ghana)

| Critical Success Factor Number | Critical Success Factor Group/Category | Critical Success Factor |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Pre-conditions (External factors) | Managing stakeholders by considering first pre-conditions of political and cultural environment (in addition to economic, legal, social, and ethical issues already identified) |
| 2 | Pre-stakeholder Identification | Good feasibility studies Selecting the right project/ Clear project brief and design development/ procurement approach. |
| 3 | | Detailed project planning. |
| 4 | | Strong commitment by both parties after education to embrace |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| | | Stakeholder management. |
| 5 | | Competitive/ Transparent/ Procurement approaches |
| 6 | | Good leadership and entrepreneurship skills |
| 7 | | Clear goals and objectives |
| 8 | | Top management support |
| 9 | | Public/community support |
| 10 | Stakeholder Identification | Early and proper identification of all stakeholders |
| 11 | | Formulating appropriate strategies for the management of stakeholders |
| 12 | | Predicting stakeholder reactions to implementation of the strategies |
| 13 | | Project manager's competence (experience, technical ability, leadership style) |
| 14 | | Project team related factors |
| 15 | Stakeholder Assessment (classification and prioritization) | Exploring stakeholder needs to projects |
| 16 | | Assessing attributes (power, urgency, and proximity) of stakeholders |
| 17 | | Understanding area of stakeholder interest |
| 18 | | Predicting stakeholder reactions to implementation of the strategies |
| 19 | | Accurately predicting the influence of stakeholders |
| 20 | | Assessing stakeholder behaviour |
| 21 | Stakeholder Engagement | Communication (with and engaging stakeholders properly and frequently; Open and constant communication) |
| 22 | | Keeping and promoting a good relationship and trust |
| 23 | | Information and communication approach/ dissemination |
| 24 | | Analysing conflicts and coalitions among stakeholders |
| 25 | | Engaging stakeholders by considering critical success and barrier factors |
| 26 | | Clarity of roles and responsibilities among members |
| 27 | Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation | Implementing fully stakeholder management process and strategies |
| 28 | | Identify and analyse changes in stakeholder influence |
| 29 | | Identify and analyse changes in |

| | | |
|----|---------------------------|--|
| | | stakeholder interest |
| 30 | | Consistent monitoring and feedback |
| 31 | | Evaluate attainment of objectives stakeholder needs and satisfaction |
| 32 | | Consider documentation and implementation of feedbacks |
| 33 | Continuous Support | Realize stakeholder changes, communicate and engage with frequently, adapt new strategy where necessary |
| 34 | | Continue top management support, increase project management and stakeholders' knowledge in Stakeholder management |
| 35 | | Formal Stakeholder management process (Establish an approach profile and stakeholder management process conducive for procurement approach and project type) |

(Source: Eyiah-Botwe, Aigbavboa, and Thwala, 2016)

Whilst Table 2 represented a critical review of the literature by Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), it was established that the domains of leadership and stakeholder management were quite extensive. This led to the development of a conceptual framework which was used as the initial research model to ensure that the study remained within its defined scope. This also offered credibility and relevance to the development of the research questions, results, and discussion sections of the research.

A similar method of utilising a framework, was also used in the study by Nguyen and Mohamed (2018). By adoption and modification of the initial research model from the study by Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), it was made applicable for this embedded case study research based on the EWS. The author also incorporated additional information from the findings of Eyiah-Botwe, Aigbavboa, and Thwala (2016) into the conceptual framework presented in Figure 3.

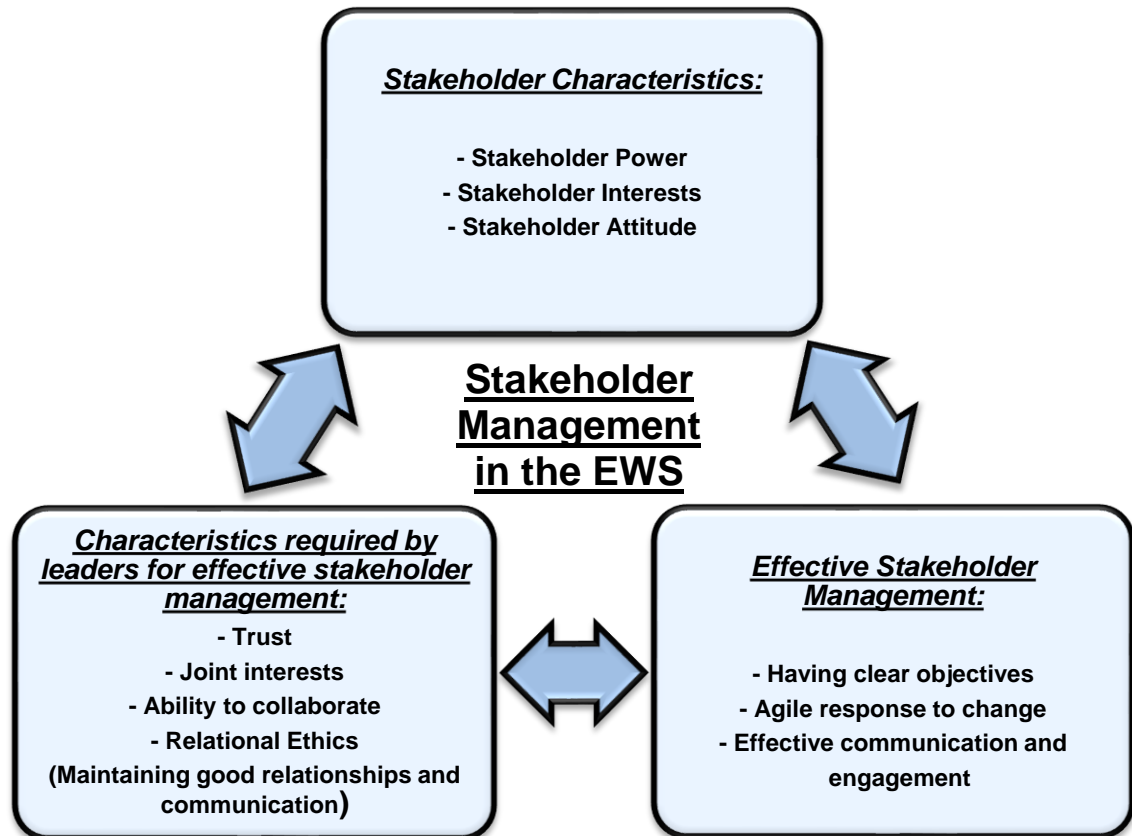


Figure 3: Initial Research Model

Source: Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) and Modified by Author

Based on the initial research model, it was suggested that leaders within the EWS were required to foster trust, create joint interests, communicate, collaborate with stakeholders, and develop and maintain relationships into the foreseeable future (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018).

To better equip a leader to understand how this can be done, Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), identified three main stakeholder characteristics which need to be understood by a leader as illustrated in Figure 2. These three characteristics of stakeholder power, interests and attitude can be best understood by leaders, through identifying who their stakeholders are at the outset (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016). The following concepts are further explained below.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Identification and Saliency

Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), claimed that an important aspect of stakeholder management was the utilisation of a systematic approach to identifying all stakeholders. This is followed by an understanding their needs and interests so that they could be prioritised according to importance or relevance. This was further supported by the results of research which concluded that stakeholder identification was equally ranked with stakeholder management as having the greatest role in the stakeholder management process (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016). This suggested that one of the characteristics of leaders within the EWS should be the ability to identify all relevant stakeholders, based on a common objective or goal. It should also be noted that this further corresponds to critical success factors numbers 10 – 12 in Table 2 (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016).

In the public sector environment in countries such as South Africa, local government played an integral role in undertaking infrastructure development projects aligned to the IDP goals (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016). These projects usually required buy-in and interaction with people of varying cultures, backgrounds, professions, levels of skill and knowledge and sometimes interactions in different geo-geographical locations (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016).

Stakeholder identities and behaviour impacted upon the role of a leader to effectively manage all stakeholders for a specific outcome or objective, and influenced the final decisions made (Best, Moffett, & McAdam, 2019). Best et al. (2019), further argued that there were challenges surrounding identifying all stakeholders and their priorities to ensure that interests were balanced so that every person can gain value.

The classification of stakeholders into groups could aid the stakeholder identification process. There were four main groups which were best described as follows (Buchholtz & Carroll, 2018):

1. Primary social stakeholders were directly involved with the organisation or process.
2. Secondary social stakeholders could also be influential but usually had an indirect or consequential impact.
3. Primary non-social stakeholders included the environment and other non-human groups.

- Secondary non-social stakeholders were generally considered to be the voice of the primary non-social stakeholders.

Best et al. (2019), pointed out that it could also be the case that vocal and demanding stakeholders who have greater power could take precedence over those who are more submissive and reserved. This in turn gave rise to the next element for a leader to understand, which was stakeholder power. This would further assist the leaders in the EWS in identifying their relevant stakeholders (Best et al., 2019)

2.3.3 Stakeholder Power

A recent study by Buchholtz and Carroll (2018), demonstrated that for a leader to correctly identify the stakeholders which required their attention, there were certain attributes which should be considered. These attributes were legitimacy, power and urgency, which when superimposed can be used to explain the eight types of stakeholders as depicted in Figure 4 (Buchholtz & Carroll, 2018).

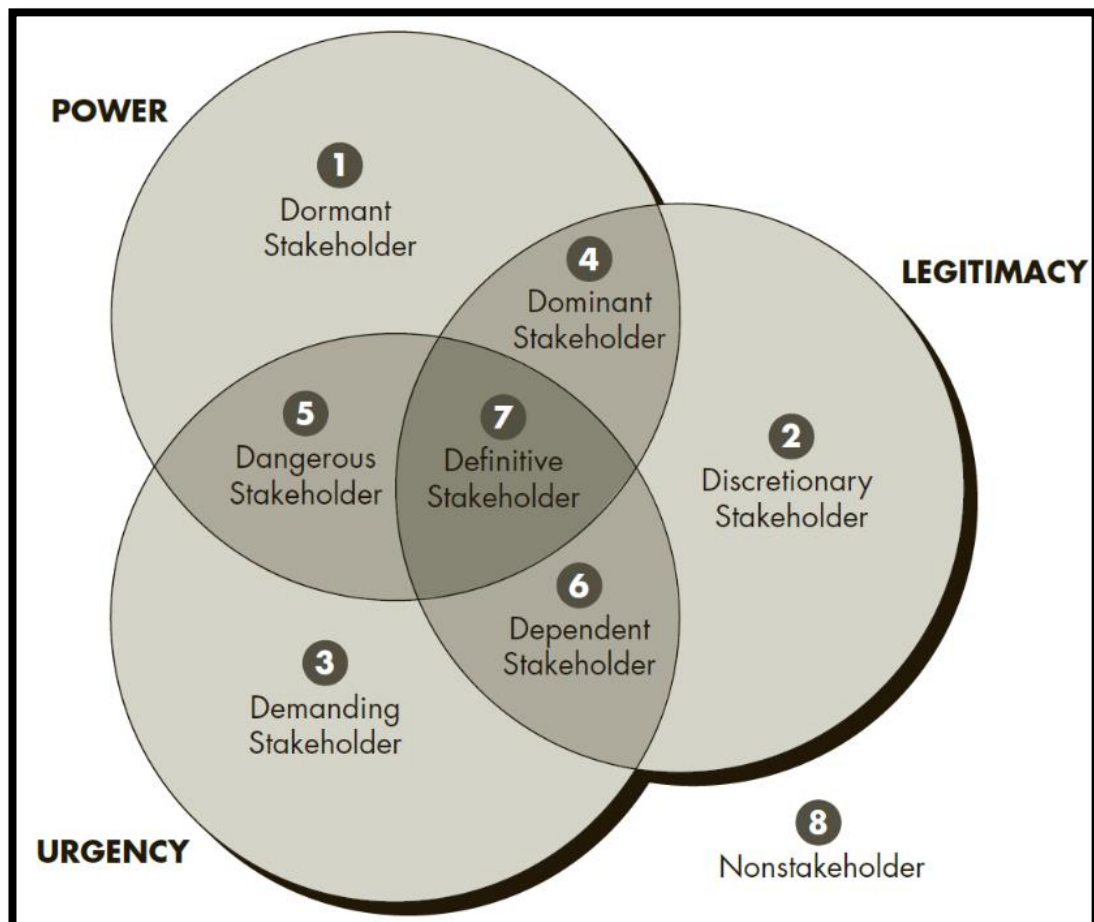


Figure 4: Stakeholder Saliency Model
Source: (Mitchell, Agle, and Wood, 1997)

It is proposed that the stakeholder salience model should be used in conjunction with the identification of stakeholders as discussed in Section 2.3.2. This model would provide leaders of the EWS with an indication about the levels of attention that the various individuals/groups of stakeholders required based on their influence (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

Legitimacy alluded to the validity or claim of a stakeholder in a certain role, project or decision (Buchholtz & Carroll, 2018). Urgency explained the importance of the need or claim of the stakeholder and gave an indication of how soon a response was required (Buchholtz & Carroll, 2018). Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) claimed that power was one of the main stakeholder characteristics which can be used to identify stakeholders. They proposed that power referred to the ability of the stakeholder to bring about or effect a change (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018).

In addition to the stakeholder salience model, Johnson and Scholes (1999) proposed the power/Interest matrix. This Matrix could enable leaders of the EWS to understand the development of relationships with stakeholders, and the frequency of communication required (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). The matrix also suggested the level of engagement required for the various stakeholders. Figure 5 depicted the Power/Interest Matrix which would be a useful tool to leaders upon identification of their stakeholders.

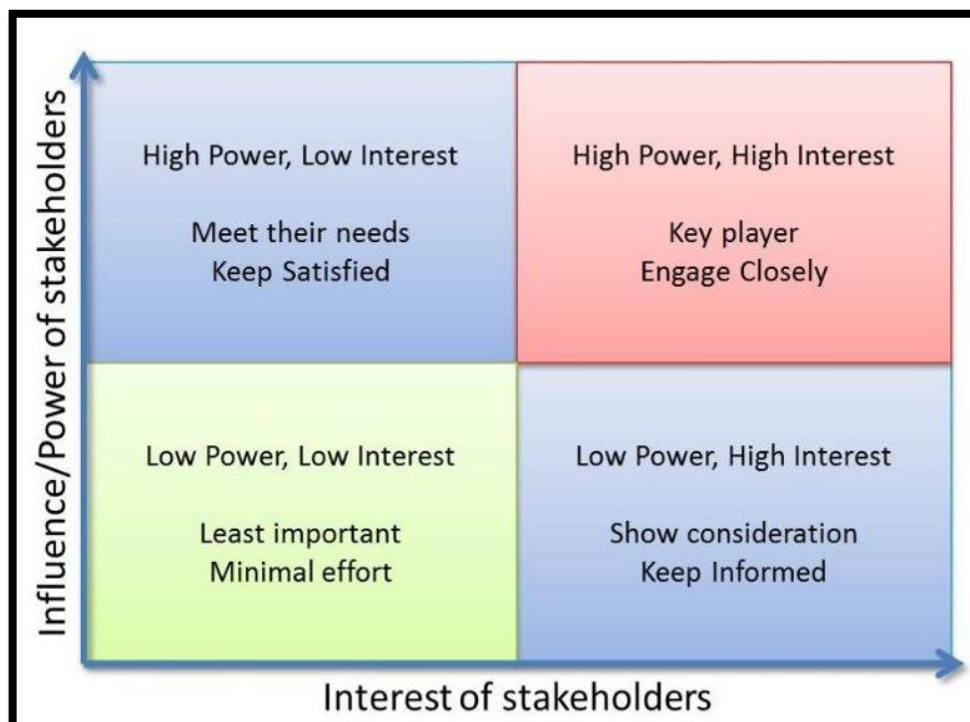


Figure 5: Power/ Interest Matrix
Source: (Johnson and Scholes, 1999)

Taken together, the stakeholder identification and stakeholder power sections, suggested that a leader within the EWS should be equipped to identify the types of stakeholders they are interfacing with. The leaders also have a responsibility to empower other stakeholders with this information in order for all stakeholders to understand the power dynamics at hand (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). In the same vein, the dissemination of information was also supported by Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016). They proposed the critical success factors numbers 21 - 23 in Table 2, which illustrated that communication and maintaining good relations was important after stakeholder identification.

2.3.4 Stakeholder Interests

Leaders undertaking effective stakeholder management were required to understand the interests and needs of every stakeholder. Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), pointed out that this would have resulted in the type of value every stakeholder sought to obtain in a specific scenario. It is further implied that a stakeholder's interests will also determine their level of involvement in the decisions made in the pursuit of a common goal.

After identification of the relevant stakeholders as outlined above, it was the responsibility of a leader to understand the needs and interests of every stakeholder. This concurred with critical success factors numbered 15-20, which was classified as stakeholder assessment in Table 2 (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016). Leading on to the claim that a leader who undertakes effective stakeholder management should be able to manage the joint interests of multiple stakeholders (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). It would also be advisable for leaders to take the next step and understand the attitudes of all stakeholders.

2.3.5 Stakeholder Attitude

An assessment of stakeholder attitude and general regard for a project or goal is important information which a leader is required to ascertain. Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), asserted that it was important for a leader to be able to recognise and manage the attitude of all stakeholders to ensure effective stakeholder management. This suggested that it would enable leaders within the EWS to develop a realistic and more informed approach to managing the multiple stakeholders they encountered. Stakeholder attitude could be classified into two broad categories addressed as

supportive and non-supportive (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). Once a leader understands the attitude of stakeholders, they can also determine the change in levels of interest or power in a given situation (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018).

As described in Chapter One, the EWS has a mandate to deliver safe drinking water to all the citizens of eThekweni. Megdal et al. (2017), suggested that leaders seek to understand whether their stakeholders are supportive or non-supportive, and furthermore focus efforts on working with supportive stakeholders to improve service delivery goals. This approach does not detract from leaders trying to understand the needs of the non-supportive stakeholders. Megdal et al. (2017) supported this notion, and further asserted that it is relevant to engage with the deliberations of all stakeholders to improve the service delivery of water.

2.4 Effective Stakeholder Management

Megdal et al. (2017), proposed that effective stakeholder management was an important tool for leaders to drive a common understanding amongst all stakeholders. This would have a positive impact on the decision-making process for sustainable water governance in the EWS. Whilst there may be numerous outcomes of effective stakeholder management, three specific outcomes identified through the literature review and illustrated in Figure 3 will be discussed

2.4.1 Clear Objectives

As a result of the correct level of engagement from leaders of the EWS, all stakeholders should have a single, clear vision of what the outcome of a specific initiative or decision could be (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). This enabled joint goals, in conjunction with stakeholders understanding their individual roles and responsibilities (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). As illustrated in Table 2 (Critical success factor number 7), Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016) also supported the establishment of clear goals and objectives for effective stakeholder management. By having a clear understanding of the goals, leaders were able to adapt to change with greater ease.

2.4.2 Agile Response to Change

As explained by Molale (2019), local government has had to operate in a state of

flux, often having to react to change at short notice. It therefore became the responsibility of leaders to be able to manage the change swiftly, without introducing tension or friction between stakeholders. Such changes may include political, economic, regulatory, and technological changes (Molale, 2019). As such, leaders who were able to identify and respond to the changes earlier, ensured that stakeholders remained invested.

2.4.3 Effective Communication

Several studies outlined effective communication as a key characteristic required by leaders for effective stakeholder management (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016). According to Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), communication worked both ways between a leader and their stakeholders. They also recognised that open channels of communication built trust, minimised dissatisfaction and conflict, resulting in the formation of stronger bonds and relationships (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). This suggested that for effective communication, leaders of the EWS were required to understand the needs of their stakeholders and communicate with vested entities in all circumstances.

Sershen et al. (2016), established that effective communication must be considered an integral part in the overall effort to improve water governance. Communication was essential to close the gap between the expectations of the citizens and the roles and responsibilities of the EWS. Citizens claimed that stakeholder management was ineffective due to the lack of dissemination of information from organisations such as the EWS (Sershen et al., 2016). This created the need for leaders to be able to effectively communicate and implement effective stakeholder management to improve the service delivery of water and strengthen stakeholder interactions.

2.4.4 Model for Implementing Effective Stakeholder Engagement

For leaders to undertake effective stakeholder management, Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), proposed a framework for adopting effective stakeholder engagement. This framework also took into consideration the aspects of the Initial Research Model (Figure 3). In the same vein, Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), acknowledged that issues pertaining to the service delivery of water required both an iterative and collaborative process. This process of stakeholder engagement also established and maintained trust, relational ethics and joint interests amongst all

stakeholders (Mott Lacroix & Megdal, 2016). Figure 6 illustrated the process regarded as the “Stakeholder engagement wheel”.

The “wheel” provided an anchor in the establishment of understanding how effective stakeholder management could be undertaken in the EWS. As outlined in Chapter One, objective number three of this research was to also establish how leaders could adopt effective stakeholder management to find solutions to the challenges of service delivery pertaining to water. Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), argued the need to frequently revise the stakeholder engagement process as water governance had a multitude of changing variables and stakeholders. Sershen et al. (2016), further acknowledged the importance of leaders being able to undertake effective stakeholder management. They claimed that water insecurity would challenge service delivery goals as there existed a nexus between water, energy, and food production, all of which are critical to the survival.

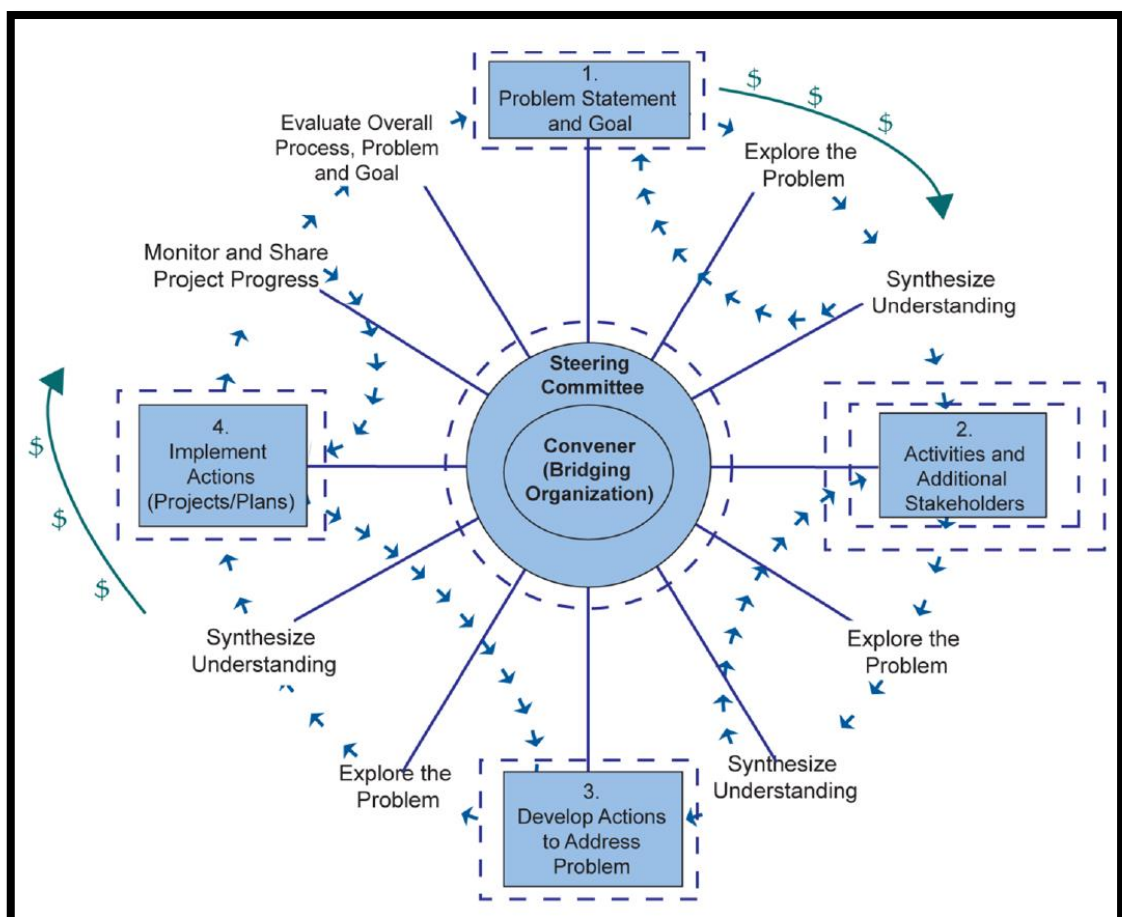


Figure 6: Stakeholder Engagement Wheel

Source: (Mott Lacroix and Megdal, 2016)

At the centre of the Stakeholder engagement wheel in Figure 6, the Convener

(Bridging organisation) in the context of this research was deemed to be the EWS. Whilst the task of the steering committee was proposed to be that of the leaders within the EWS, as they had a vested interest and mandate to improve service delivery. Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), argued that the role of the Convener was to create a safe platform to ensure the “wheels” of stakeholder engagement continued to turn. In the same vein, Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), explained that the role of the steering committee was to identify and understand the needs of all stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of a common goal were met. This committee further served to drive the relevant stakeholders towards engagement and review of all ideas put forward by any group or individual.

The Stakeholder Engagement Wheel was comprised of four focused steps, as briefly described below (Mott Lacroix & Megdal, 2016):

1. Formulation of a problem statement and Goal

As pointed out by Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) and Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), effective stakeholder management included the ability of leaders to determine clear objectives and goals. This offered all stakeholders the ability to understand their role and responsibilities towards the clearly defined goal. Conversely, Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), asserted that the failure to clearly define a goal or problem would result in ineffective stakeholder management, leading to goals left unmet.

2. Stakeholder engagement activities

This step involved ensuring that the relevant stakeholders were identified. As a result, the goal was also clarified based on the inputs from all stakeholders. In this step effective communication as described in Section 2.4.3 was essential to ensure the dissemination of information to all stakeholders. Effective communication was argued to be important based on the iterative nature of stakeholder engagement (Mott Lacroix & Megdal, 2016).

3. Developing action items

Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), emphasised the importance of also taking action based on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders outlined in steps 1 and 2. The action required had to be aligned with stakeholder expectations and goals as outlined in Step 1, leading to the development of action items. It was suggested that the items be communicated to all stakeholders for feedback and finalisation. At this step,

effective communication was once again emphasised (Mott Lacroix & Megdal, 2016).

4. Implement Actions

Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016) discussed the final step of implementing the action plan formulated in step 3. They also argued that the projects studied in their research indicated that more than 50% of the action items in the plan created were not effectively undertaken. This gave rise to the establishment of the steering committee to drive the stakeholder engagement process for achieving a particular goal which resulted in improved service delivery of the EWS.

Drawing on the research by Lacroix and Megdal (2016), it was concluded that water governance was complex, hence the importance of effective stakeholder management to improve service delivery. This justified the rationale for leaders of the EWS to understand the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management.

2.5 Characteristics of Leaders in The EWS Fundamental to Effective Stakeholder Management

The purpose of this research was to identify and understand the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management in the EWS. The literature reviewed identified four key characteristics which were required for effective stakeholder management. These four characteristics of leaders were illustrated in the Initial research model (Figure 3) and explained below.

2.5.1 Joint Interests

A core concept within stakeholder management is the creation of joint interests for all stakeholders and is supported by both Freeman (2010) and Kujala et al. (2019). As Kujala et al. (2019) observed, one of the key leadership skills required for effective stakeholder management was the ability of a leader to create joint interests.

The concept of creating joint interests involved communication, listening, understanding and being able to accept or disagree with alternate views expressed (Freeman et al., 2017). This approach would facilitate the development of a holistic solution which considered the interests of all stakeholders, thereby having created value for every entity (Freeman et al., 2017).

Molale (2019), pointed out that this in turn created value for communities, citizens, businesses, the environment, political parties and various other stakeholders (Molale, 2019). It was in the best interest of leaders in the EWS to understand how they could create joint interests, to drive effective stakeholder management and improved service delivery (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016).

2.5.2 Ability to Collaborate

The stakeholder value creation model developed by Kujala et al. (2019), explained that joint interests enable collaborative platforms for all stakeholders. This subsequently led to the development of fruitful relationships and engaging communication. Kujala et al. (2019), further argued that collaborative platforms led to the establishment of mutual understanding, trust, and active participation from all stakeholders; whilst each satisfied their own needs towards a common vision (Kujala et al., 2019).

2.5.3 Trust

Trust in the context of effective stakeholder management referred to mutual respect, commitment, fairness and information sharing amongst all shareholders (Kujala et al., 2019). According to Kujala et al. (2019), trust was an essential quality for leaders, as well as an outcome of effective stakeholder management. Best et al. (2019), also observed that trustworthy leaders portrayed effective stakeholder management. Kujala et al. (2019) also argued that trust enabled agility and resilience, whilst reducing stress and disagreements. Through focused group discussions, an outcome of the research undertaken by Sershen et al. (2016) claimed that restoring citizen trust would enhance water governance and the supply of water to all citizens of eThekweni. In the same vein, When et al., (2018), pointed out that for trust to be restored, commitment from all stakeholders was essential.

Table 3 highlights the findings from (Sershen, et al., 2016). The knowledge gaps from the Table indicated the need for undertaking effective stakeholder management, whilst the challenges clearly indicated that restoring the trust of citizens was a key problem of water governance. The solutions were focused on communication, leadership, and participation from all stakeholders (Sershen, et al., 2016).

Table 3: Water Security and Governance – Challenges and Solutions

| Challenges | Frequency* |
|---|------------|
| Restoring citizen trust | 7 |
| Lack of transparency | 6 |
| Skills gap/lack of technical capacity within the water sector | 6 |
| Finding the balance between land and water reform | 5 |
| Knowledge loss (experts leaving country/sector) | 4 |
| Silo thinking and planning | 4 |
| Translating research to policy | 4 |
| Stakeholder engagement | 3 |
| Business model for consultancy services | 2 |
| Knowledge Gaps | |
| How to ensure an active role of educators | 10 |
| Consequences of water insecurity | 10 |
| Methods and avenues for knowledge dissemination | 4 |
| Participatory agency-based social simulation | 2 |
| Impact of systemic risk | 2 |
| Enabling governance systems | 2 |
| Conflict management | 2 |
| Truncated terms of reference | 1 |
| Solutions/Recommendations | |
| Empowering educators | 6 |
| Informed decision-making | 6 |
| Citizen empowerment | 6 |
| Academia should focus on applied research | 5 |
| Educate local government councillors | 4 |
| Integration of strategic mandates | 4 |
| Environmental education | 3 |
| Ensure stakeholder analysis and participation | 3 |
| Develop mechanisms to manage conflicts | 2 |
| Connect knowledge champions | 1 |
| Understand social implications of water insecurity | 1 |
| Promote inter-sectoral planning | 1 |
| Improve leadership | 1 |

Source: (Seršen, et al., 2016)

It can be concluded that trust between stakeholders played a key role in water governance efforts towards improved service delivery, as illustrated by the findings of Table 3. These findings also suggested that trust followed on to relational ethics which is described below.

2.5.3 Relational Ethics

de Wet and Odume (2019), contended that humans form part of complex social system with varying beliefs and values, and that leaders need to understand these

beliefs to cultivate sustainable relationships. Freeman (2010) postulated that effective stakeholder management was largely the management of relationships between individuals and groups. Ethics remained an important aspect of managing relationships in the process of effective stakeholder management (Freeman, 2010).

Freeman (2010), asserted that some of the basic pillars of ethics were adhering to rules, being accountable for actions and consequences, and being able to reason with all stakeholders to reach consensus. It was therefore suggested that relational ethics encompassed all the above traits. Leaders in the EWS should have developed a set of agreed ethical principles amongst all stakeholders so that service delivery could improve (de Wet & Odume, 2019).

Sershen et al. (2016), also argued that people had a need to experience and interact with each other to be part of the solution to improve water governance. This suggested that to improve service delivery, leaders should have been able to develop ethical relationships with all stakeholders based on a common goal.

A recent study by de Wet and Odume (2019), explained that the prioritisation of ethical values gave a systemic approach to differentiate between right and wrong based on a set of principles. Linking this to the basic pillars as postulated by Freeman (2010), it is implied that these basic pillars represent a set of principles for leaders to use. Based on the cultural diversity in South Africa, there was the possibility that the distribution of water may not be managed in an equitable manner (de Wet & Odume, 2019). This established the need for relational ethics which enables an agreed set of principles to guide the decision making process, whilst also enabling creative and diverse solutions to service delivery challenges (de Wet & Odume, 2019).

An interesting finding from the research by Sershen et al. (2016), established that technology could play an integral role in managing relationships. The use of the internet to disseminate information, connect relevant stakeholders and maintain relationships through virtual platforms could easily be achieved in the current era of technology (Sershen, et al., 2016). By understanding what Freeman (2010) and de Wet and Odume (2019) described as relational ethics, and combining this with the use of technology as explained by Sershen et al. (2016); leaders of the EWS could improve their ability to interact and sustain relationships with the integrated use of a set of guiding principles.

2.6 Conclusion of Literature Review

The EWS was adopted as a case study to understand, explore, and obtain in-depth data linked to the research objectives outlined in Chapter One. The literature pertinent to the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management; as well as how it could be implemented to improve service delivery within the EWS was reviewed.

Participants who had taken part in the research by Sershen et al. (2016), recognised the need for studies which focused on applying the research through incorporation into the strategic mandate of the EWS. Section 2.1 explained that one of the mandates of local government was to undertake effective stakeholder management to ensure that citizens received the highest quality drinking water as a basic service. This clearly indicated the need for such research so that leaders could effectively execute stakeholder management in a real-life scenario.

Section 2.1 further contextualised the research from a South African perspective by explaining the position of the EWS within the hierarchy of local government. Gustafsson, (2017), extolled the relevance of context for a single case study approach. It was further explained that the EWS was comprised of Umgeni Water and eThekweni Municipality who were the two organisations responsible for the service delivery in eThekweni. This suggested that leaders of the above-mentioned entities were responsible for stakeholder management in relation to ensuring that the service delivery of water improved.

The literature on stakeholder management and leadership was vast in their individual domain, however, there were only few studies which suggested the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management. It was therefore important to understand that stakeholder management was an aspect of leadership, especially in the public sector.

The literature on stakeholder management and leadership was broad within their individual domains, however, there were few studies which investigated the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management. Much of the available literature focused on effective stakeholder management for the construction sector. The aim of this study was to identify the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management to improve service delivery. This led

to the adoption of the model proposed by Eyiah-Botwe et al., which enabled the formulation of the Initial Research model in Figure 3.

Sershen et al. (2016), emphasised the call for research which focused on enabling leaders to ensure that stakeholder management was effective in the water sector. He argued that science and technology alone could not solve the decline in service delivery. There was the need for effective stakeholder management which could bring about innovative mechanisms to improve service delivery, whilst also taking into consideration the needs of various groups and individuals.

The initial research model highlighted the importance of stakeholder identification and key stakeholder characteristics which would affect the engagement process. The model also considered the outcomes of effective stakeholder management and the characteristics of leaders required to enable the process. The Stakeholder engagement wheel in Figure 6, further outlined how a leader could successfully undertake the engagement process, noting that context was important to enabling the stakeholder engagement process. Further validating the purpose of this research to also address the gap of context specific findings.

Based on the gaps identified from both recent and seminal literature, the development of the Initial Research Model in relation to the objectives of the research outlined in Section 1.4 led to the formulation of the research questions proposed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In view of all that has been discussed in previous chapters, one may surmise that that the domain of stakeholder management as a construct of leadership is extensive in its scope. Validating the use of a case study approach to focus the study on the EWS, resulting in the collection of accurate and concise data which answered the research objectives presented in Section 1.4. It is important to point out that context played an important role in the formulation of the research objectives. Context specific studies were scarce for countries with emerging economies such as South Africa, hence the need for this research (Gustafsson, 2017).

Based on the existing literature presented in Chapter Two and the purpose of this study, which is to identify and understand the characteristics required by leaders of the EWS for effective stakeholder management, there were three overarching research objectives underpinning this study. Each objective had its own set of specific interviews questions which addressed a gap in literature. The research questions were kept broad to so that the subject matter could be explored. The proposed questions were formulated around each aspect of the Initial research model which included Stakeholder characteristics, Leadership skills for effective stakeholder management and Effective stakeholder management (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018).

The Initial research model illustrated in Figure 3 and explained in Section 2.3.1 forms the basis of the first two research objectives and questions shown in Table 4. In a similar manner, the Stakeholder engagement wheel shown in Figure 6 supports the third research objective and question. These models are anchored in the literature of scholars and used for the purpose of this study to explore new insights and add to the existing body of literature. As such, the research questions aligned to the research objectives and literature review are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Research Questions Linked to Literature and the Research Objectives

| No. | RESEARCH OBJECTIVE | RESEARCH QUESTION | AIM OF RESEARCH QUESTION | KEY LINKS TO LITERATURE |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Identification of stakeholders that affect or are affected by the service delivery of the EWS. | Who are the stakeholders of the EWS? | Understand who the stakeholders of the EWS are in relation to the service delivery of water to all | Section 2.1.4 Section 2.1.5 Section 2.1.6 Section 2.3.2 Section 2.3.3 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | | citizens of the eThekweni region. This question also sought to gain new insights into the stakeholders which leaders in the EWS thought were most relevant to their goals. | Figure 4: Stakeholder Saliency Model Figure 5: Power/Interest Matric |
| 2 | Identifying and understanding the characteristics of leaders which are required for effective stakeholder management, and the development of a cohesive conceptual framework, to improve service delivery in the EWS. | What are the key characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the EWS? | By understanding how stakeholder management is impacted by stakeholder characteristics and the outcome of effective stakeholder management. The aim is to use this information towards the development of a framework. | Section 2.3 Section 2.5 Figure 3: Initial Research Model |
| 3 | The development of a cohesive conceptual framework which outlines how effective stakeholder management can be adopted by leaders in the EWS. | How can the identified stakeholders be included in all initiatives of the EWS for effective stakeholder management? | Upon identifying the stakeholders and characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management, the aim is to propose a framework which leaders can adopt to undertake this process. | Section 2.1 to Section 2.5 Figure 3: Initial Research Model Focus on Section 2.4.4 Figure 6: Stakeholder Engagement Wheel |

Source: Author's Own

Chapter Four will explain the method for achieving the research objectives as outlined above.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section begins with an explanation of the embedded interpretivist philosophy of this research and then proceeds to illustrate how the research was designed to meet the objectives of the study. The intent of this approach was to construct answers to the overarching research questions through the methodological choices. The choice of methodology informed the data gathering tool used, subsequently explaining the approach to analysing the results which aligned to achieving the purpose of this research.

Context formed an integral part of this research as the study focused on the EWS, as part of local government in South Africa. For an emerging economy such as South Africa, the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management in the EWS was a relatively unexplored field of study. This established the rationale to undertake an **exploratory, qualitative, embedded case study**. Similarly, Kumalo and Scheepers (2018), had also undertaken a qualitative study in the South African public sector environment where the context was identified as being similar to this study. Upon conclusion of this chapter, the limitations of this study were identified and explained.

4.1 Ontology and Epistemology of The Research (Philosophy)

Jensen and Wu (2016) had pointed out the importance of understanding the difference between ontological and epistemological uncertainty. These uncertainties informed the methodological choices which were made, thereby ensuring the credibility of the research. Ontological uncertainty referred to the unpredictability of the reality of stakeholder engagement in the EWS (Jensen & Wu, 2016). This contrasted with epistemological uncertainty which referred to the imperfect knowledge of understanding the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management (Jensen & Wu, 2016). Confirming, the applicability of an explorative study which was dependent on the results obtained, due to the ontological and epistemology uncertainties.

As asserted by Amoatey and Hayibor (2017), who undertook a study to investigate “The critical success factors for local government project stakeholder management”, context played an important role in such studies. This informed the approach to undertake an **interpretivist** study since the research focused on understanding the perspectives of leaders who were impacted by their social context in relation to

stakeholder engagement.

The interpretivist approach was primarily applicable to the study of social circumstances as they occurred in the natural environment (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Furthermore, interpretivists did not believe that insights into humanity and social circumstances could be reduced to a specific set of laws or generalisations. In the same vein, Amoatey and Hayibor (2017), also concurred with the assertion that an interpretivist approach was required, as the research topic did not have a single reality. Jensen and Wu (2016), had also argued that it was not possible to have a single reality since each individual or group of stakeholders came with their own belief systems, opinions, preferences, and interests.

Based on the above, a positivist approach was not considered, as the aim of this research was to gain insights and understand the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management. The researcher had to closely interact with the participants in order to ensure that the insights obtained were valid. This was contrasted against a positivist approach where the opinions of people could be quantified, with the researcher remaining detached from the participants (Mvulirwenande, Wehn, & Alaerts, 2017). A positivist approach was further criticised for attempting to oversimplify water governance, which was deemed a complex subject requiring exploration and understanding of social connotations (Mvulirwenande et al., 2017). It was also argued that a positivist approach was a good fit for research which aimed to propose short-term solutions; hence this approach was not fit for the research at hand (Mvulirwenande et al., 2017).

Of primary importance to this study was the understanding of the EWS, its complexity, social dynamic, and stakeholder engagement requirements, all of which was ascertained through an interpretivist approach. Borchardt, Bogardi, and Ibisch (2016), also supported combining a pragmatic approach to understand all the above aspects, whilst also proposing solutions which could be used by the EWS to improve service delivery. This addressed the needs of the citizens and leaders. The slightly **pragmatic stance** adopted by this research enabled understanding the real-world problem of declining service delivery, whilst proposing practical solutions based on research findings (Borchardt et al., 2016). The recommendations offered could be used by the EWS to improve stakeholder management and consequentially service delivery.

The researcher adopted an empathetic stance to enter the world of the participants and understand their perspectives, by suspending one's own judgement (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Having entered the world of the research participants, the researcher uncovered the ways in which leaders of the EWS undertook stakeholder management in the context of their social reality. This suggested an interpretivist philosophy known as **Social Constructionism**. Jepson et al. (2017), noted that access to clean water was fundamental to the well-being of all citizens, therefore the ability to manage their expectations was positioned in Social Constructionism.

This suggested that stakeholder management was essential to understanding the everyday circumstance of the average citizen, in order for the EWS to more effectively serve. Furthermore, the social relations which existed between stakeholders needed to be understood by the leaders in the EWS to improve service delivery for the well-being of all people (Jepson et al., 2017). The researcher engaged with senior managers from the EWS to understand their perspectives pertaining to stakeholder management in the EWS.

The philosophy of Social Constructionism led to an **inductive** approach to the research. Based on the study by Kumalo and Scheepers (2018), who used an inductive approach to expand their knowledge base, find new insights, and explore emerging trends from the in-depth interviews and data analysis process which they undertook. A similar rationale was applied to this study to gain new insights. This meant that an inductive approach was used, as it enabled the development of a conceptual framework indicating the leadership skills required for effective stakeholder management within the EWS.

A **partially deductive** approach was used at the front end of the study to review existing literature and formulate the purpose and objectives of the research (Saunders et al., 2016). With the absence of sufficient theory related to stakeholder management in a South African, local government context, the researcher also employed an inductive approach which required data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2016).

To better focus the study and develop the research questions for undertaking semi-structured interviews, the Initial Research Model illustrated in Figure 3 was formulated (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2018). By inductively analysing the data, codes were then developed to formulate emergent themes in relation to the research

questions from Chapter Three.

The philosophy of this research provided direction to the approach of the study for answering the research questions. It also aligned to the objectives and purpose of the research. For ease of reference, Figure 7 below represented an overview of the research process, with the contents of Chapter Four highlighted within the red brackets.

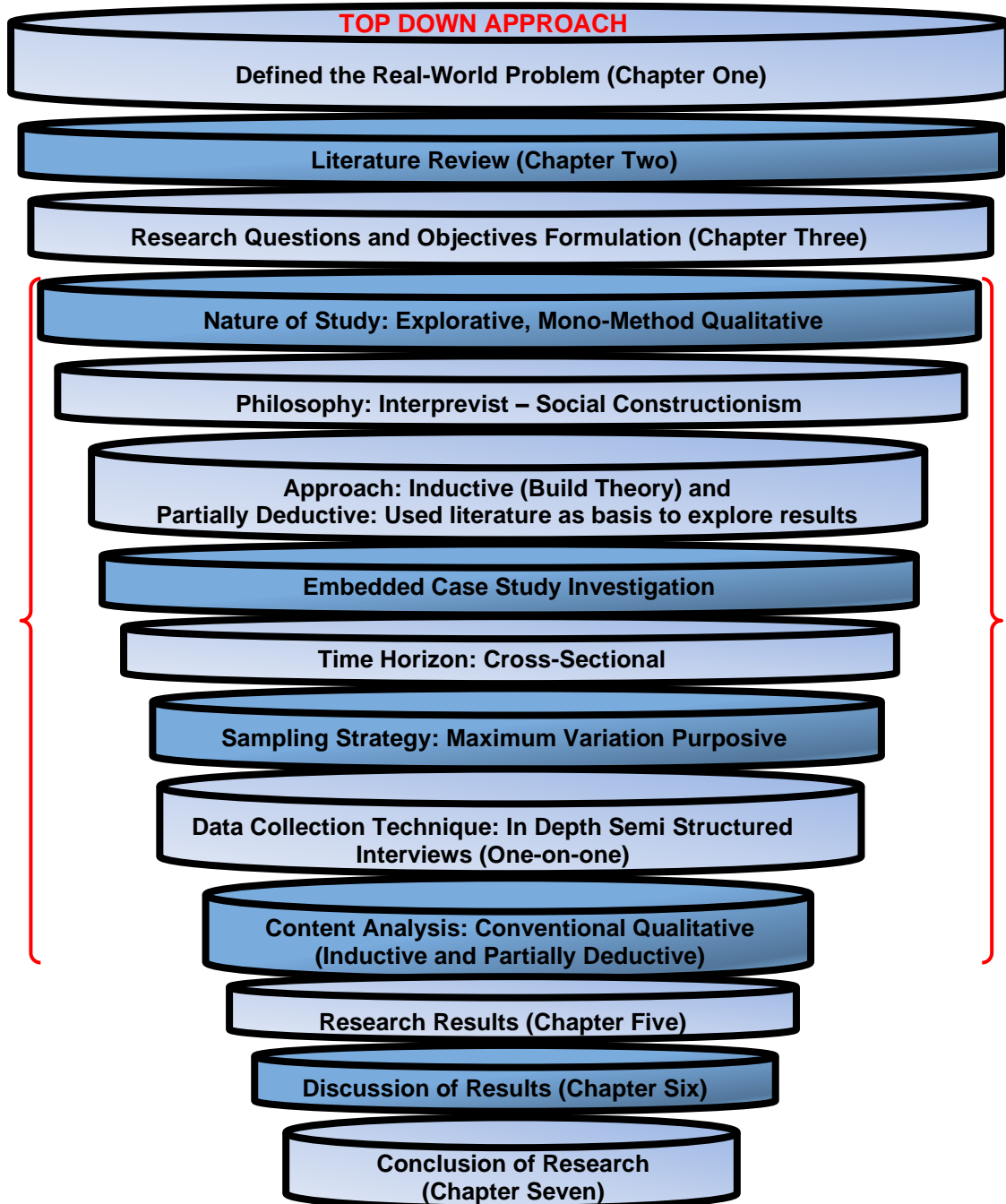


Figure 7: Overview of Research and Methods Employed

Source: Author's Own

4.2 Methodological Choices

From the perspective of Social Constructionism philosophy, it would have been difficult to adopt a quantitative approach, as the adoption of a single universal reality to the domain of stakeholder management may have concealed certain findings (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2017). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017) had reported that the researcher would have had to quantify the findings in accordance with pre-determined theories, which may have hampered the development of a conceptual framework with new themes.

Since Objectives two and three of this research involved the development of a conceptual framework, a quantitative approach did not adequately suit the outcomes of this study. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017), had also argued that any study involving human beings was characterised by exploring, understanding, and reflecting upon the findings to understand the subjects in relation to their context.

It was also explained in Chapter Two that the EWS underwent frequent changes in relation to decisions made regarding how to go about fulfilling their mandate of service delivery. Based on the changes of this social world within which the EWS functioned, the research utilised a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to identify patterns, observe the body language of the participants, establish their environment and beliefs, and infer meaning to that observed (Lune & Berg, 2017).

Likewise, Le Grange (2018) held the view that for studies in South Africa pertaining to water, a qualitative approach was preferred over a quantitative approach to address the decline in service delivery. The qualitative approach meant that new and innovative themes emerged in response to the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the EWS.

The use of a **mono-method qualitative study** was best explained by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delpot (2017), who pointed out that using a single data collection technique such as the one-on-one approach was best suited for this study. It enabled the researcher to collect information by utilising semi-structured, in-depth interviews, and enabled participants to elaborate on the information they wanted to convey in a flexible manner. This approach further encouraged the freedom of participants to engage with the researcher by providing answers to questions posed,

whilst also introducing new themes.

Based on the exploratory nature of the study, an **embedded case study investigation** through **semi-structured interviews** was used for this research. This approach relied on the contributions of the participants; hence study credibility was cemented by ensuring that the correct participants were selected. Saunders et al. (2016) also explained that the advantage of such an approach remained in its adaptability, and ability to change direction as information was gathered and new insights revealed.

The essence of an exploratory research design was captured well by the guiding principle of “strong opinions, loosely held”. The core purpose and objectives of the study remained, whilst the researcher also adapted to new research directions as information was gathered and analysed. Molale (2019) had also used similar methods and confirmed its validity, he undertook a journey of exploration through the diverse opinions he obtained and analysed in order to make sense of the research questions.

According to Saunders et al. (2016), a case study investigation was differentiated from other strategies such as narrative, experiment, action research or grounded theory. Case studies involved an investigation of circumstances in a real-life setting (Saunders et al., 2016). The circumstance under investigation for this study was stakeholder engagement in the EWS. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was better served by the explorative, analytical process the researcher followed when undertaking the case study strategy (Lune & Berg, 2017).

This study defined one main case group as the EWS described in Section 2.1.5. The rationale for adopting the single case study approach was aligned to the objectives of this study which was to understand and identify the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the EWS. This was aligned to the notion that effective stakeholder management would improve service delivery. The research did not aim to illustrate the differences or similarities between various organisations in the water sector, hence the decision to not undertake the use of a multiple case study investigation (Gustafsson, 2017).

The Initial Research Model illustrated in Figure 3 served as the basis for this study. By using the EWS as a case study, the researcher studied the organisations

responsible for service delivery described in Section 2.1.6 and 2.1.7, which led to the use of an embedded case study. The embedded case study approach investigated the EMWSD and Umgeni Water as embedded units within a larger case which was the EWS (Gustafsson, 2017). Data was received and analysed from participants within the EMWSD and Umgeni Water. This method of analysing the data within the embedded cases was supported by Gustafsson (2017) and linked to the purpose of the study.

The researcher repeatedly posed the same semi-structured questions to all participants from both Umgeni Water and EMWSD. Bass, Beechan, and Noll (2018), pointed out that the frequency of leadership characteristics required for effective stakeholder management could be assessed based on the information provided from participants. It also enabled the researcher to make observations under varying environments by incorporating two units in the embedded case study investigation (Bass et al., 2018).

Due to time constraints of the research, the **time horizon** over which the study was conducted was **cross-sectional**. This implied that the study was of a circumstance at a particular time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). For this research, the semi-structured interviews were undertaken over one month from mid-November to mid- December. Bass et al. (2018), had pointed out that a case study investigation was time consuming, however, an embedded case study will allow for confirmability of the results obtained by interviewing participants from the two embedded case units in a single study. Saunders et al. (2016), also acknowledged that the cross-sectional time horizon applied to this study was justified by using a case study investigation, because one-on-one semi-structured interviews was undertaken over a short period of time for collecting data.

4.3 Population and Sampling Strategy

The sample selected for this study was derived from the population considered to be the **EWS**, illustrated in Figure 8 (Saunders et al., 2016). The population referred to organisations who were part of the EWS, whilst the subset of the population, known as the target population, were the embedded case units. **Purposive sampling** was aligned to an embedded case study as it assisted in the selection of research participants. The specific selection of senior managers as research participants decreased the variation in results, making the results confirmable (Bass et al., 2018)

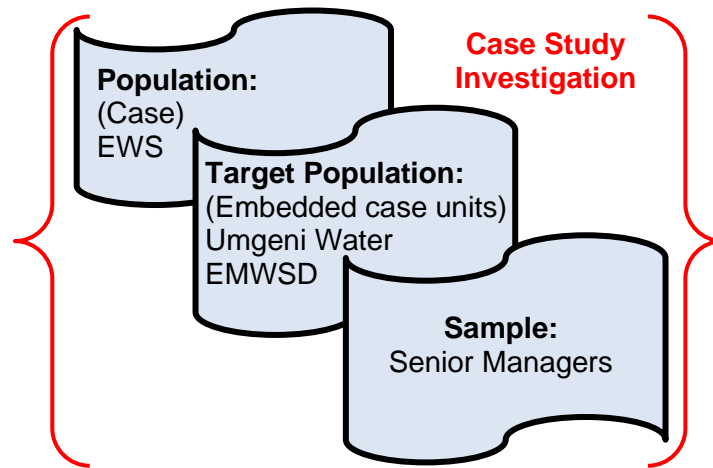


Figure 8: Population and Sample
Source: Author's Own

The criteria for selecting the Umgeni Water and EMWSD was supported by the rationale that these organisations are a part of the EWS and directly responsible for respectively producing and delivering water to the people. The sample comprised of the participants who were senior managers in both organisations. To identify the senior managers in each organisation, the Human Resources Departments from both organisations were consulted. The researcher was then provided with a list of senior managers who would be willing to participate in the research.

Orr and Bennett (2017), had confirmed that senior managers were at the heart of public sector organisations such as Umgeni Water and EMWSD. They further concurred that senior managers were leaders in the public sector, hence the selection of **senior managers as units of the sample**. The researcher was able to investigate and explore the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management.

Based on the size and diversity of the sample selected, it was acknowledged that there was the possibility for divergence and inconsistency in the results obtained. The researcher endeavoured to select senior managers from varying departments in Umgeni Water and EMWSD to gain insights from multiple perspectives (Orr & Bennett, 2017). This followed on to explaining the unit of analysis for this research in more detail.

4.4 Unit of Analysis

The sample for the case study was drawn from the target population indicated in Figure 8 and was known as the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis from each

embedded case had a set of defining criteria, dictating that senior managers from both Umgeni Water and EMWSD be selected. Data collection and analysis were focused on the findings from the unit of analysis, also known as participants.

In the EMWSD, the first three tiers of management were comprised of the head of the unit, seven deputy heads and 14 managers. For this study, the head of the unit, deputy heads and their managers were collectively termed as senior managers.

The structure of Umgeni Water was comprised of three management tiers. Similar to the EMWSD, the organisation at the time was led by a Chief Executive officer as the head, five executives who were likened to the deputy heads at EMWSD and general managers as the third tier of management. For this study, the chief executive officer, five executives and general managers were collectively termed as senior managers.

Based on the varied senior managers in each case unit, a wide variety of data related to the leadership characteristics required for effective stakeholder management was collected. As explained in Section 4.1, fundamental to an interpretivist study are the findings obtained from the participants. This established that the unit of analyses was both the **senior managers** and **findings** obtained through the process of one-one interviews with the participants.

4.5 Sampling Method and Size

The rationale behind selecting senior managers was that stakeholder management is more prevalent and thus particularly essential at higher levels in any organisation. The tendency is for the outcomes from high levels to cascade downwards to other levels. By narrowing the selection of participants for the study as detailed in Section 4.4, the researcher was able to obtain a reliable and broad base of results from participants with a vested interest in the subject matter. This was due to its relevance in their job functions.

Patton (2002), put forward the idea that “there are no rules for sample size in a qualitative enquiry” (p. 244). This implied that in the absence of rules, the sample size depended upon the research objectives and questions as outlined in Chapter Three. Based on the cross-section time horizon of the study explained in Section 4.2, the researcher considered the practicalities of time when selecting the sample size of **16 participants**. Saunders and Lewis (2018) and Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey

(2020), had also argued convincingly that 12 to 30 participants were sufficient for non-probability sampling in a varied population such as the EWS.

The type of non-probability sampling employed was **maximum variation purposive sampling**. Saunders et al. (2016), explained that purposive sampling was used to select participants from each embedded case unit that were best suited to addressing the research problem and objectives. Although the interview participants were known to the researcher, they were kept anonymous for the purpose of this research, in a similar manner to that employed by Okumah and Yeboah (2020).

The senior managers selected for the research were drawn from 13 different departments, this aligned to the purposive sampling strategy of maximum variation. The departments are listed as Strategic Services, Strategic Projects, Planning, Mechanical and Engineering, Human Resources, Engineering Services, Supply Chain Management, Planning Services Department, Laboratory Services, Process Engineering Services, Bulk Water, Scientific Services, and Operations. Due to the broad range of departments, the data collected was inclusive of understanding the stakeholders which different departments interfaced with. This enabled a broader understanding of the research findings in conjunction with the research measurement instrument used.

4.6 Measurement Instrument

The technique and process used to collect data for this research was **in depth semi-structured, one-on-one interviews** with participants from the embedded case units. For the purposes of this research one-on-one interviews were conducted in person, as well as through the virtual platform, Microsoft Teams.

Based on the embedded case study investigation, the questions posed were focused on understanding the leadership characteristics required for effective stakeholder management in the EWS using the two units of analysis. This could be contrasted with a multiple case study where the questions rendered to participants would be more focused on exploring the differences and similarities between cases (Bass et al., 2018). This effectively resulted in the development of a single open-ended questionnaire for both the embedded case units.

An embedded case study investigation obtained data which built theory through the

one-on-one interviews undertaken to collect data. Lune and Berg (2017), argued that the data collected was relevant to the research due to maintaining the focus of the study through the proposed Initial Research Model in Figure 3. The literature review from Chapter Two combined with the Initial Research Model (Figure 3), provided a basis for the formulation of the interview questions.

The use of semi-structured interviews was an advantage as it enabled the researcher to adapt the interview questions to the real time interview, body language of participant, tone of interviewee and organisation or person being interviewed. It should also be pointed out that due to COVID-19 (Global pandemic), some interviews had to be undertaken virtually using Microsoft Teams. Although the researcher was able to observe the participant on video, there were instances where this hampered the researcher's ability to accurately assess the interview environment.

An **interview guide** which covered the main topics of the interview questions was developed. This formed part of the measurement instrument along with the interview questions. Since the researcher conducted the interviews with the participants, the researcher was also considered to be part of the measurement instrument, as the way in which the interview was done directly impacted upon the results obtained (Lune & Berg, 2017; Okumah & Yeboah, 2020). The interview guide aimed to mitigate researcher bias by highlighting key points in relation to the interview questions posed. This enabled the researcher to probe the interviewee based on the overarching research questions of the study and maintain the interviews within the scope of the study.

Based on the claim by Saunders and Lewis (2018) that the semi-structured questionnaires should be tested for content validity, **pilot interviews** were undertaken with senior managers from both Umgeni water and EMWSD. The senior managers selected for the two pilot interviews met the criteria of the unit of analyses for the study but were not included as part of the sample used for data collection. This ensured that the interview questions were aligned to the research objectives, enabled participants to be honest and frank about their experiences pertaining to stakeholder management, and did not lead the participants towards a particular answer. Furthermore, it resulted in the collection of a robust set of data which met the objectives of the study.

During the pilot interview it was highlighted that certain words were ambiguous, and

care was also required to ensure that the participant remained focused on the interview topic so that all questions could be explored. The feedback received from the pilot interviews was taken into consideration and incorporated into subsequent interviews. The pilot interview improved the quality of data gathered but was not included in the analysis of the results, this added credibility to the study.

The research questions were also approved by the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) Research Ethics Committee through the process of **ethics approval**. As pointed out by Lune and Berg (2017), the ethics approval process ensured that the questions were suitable for the participants and were verified by established academics.

Expanding on Table 4, the semi structured interview guide with open-ended questions, linked to the overarching research questions of the study are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5: Interview Guide (Research Questions Linked to Interview Questions)

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| INTERVIEWER INTRODUCTION | <p>Introduction about myself, name, MBA, job, student of GIBS</p> <p>This research will focus on identifying the characteristics of leaders required to effectively manage various stakeholders within the EWS.</p> <p>By understating your perspective on this subject matter, I would also like to understand how stakeholder management is influenced by stakeholder characteristics and your current leadership style.</p> <p>I would also like to gain more insight into what can work to ensure that the relevant stakeholders are always included in all initiatives pertaining to the EWS, in order to manage stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am undertaking interviews to collect data which will then be analysed to draw conclusions and recommendations. - This interview will take approximately 1 hour. - A kind request to please switch your cell phone to silent if possible. - All your responses will be regarded with the highest level of confidentiality and anonymity, hence the signing of the informed consent letter by both of |
|---------------------------------|---|

| | | <p>us.</p> <p>- You will also benefit from this interview by sharing your perspectives on stakeholder management and becoming aware of its importance, with the aim being for us to collaborate, engage and learn from each other.</p> |
|-----|--|---|
| No. | RESEARCH QUESTION | INTERVIEW QUESTIONS |
| 1 | <p>Who are the stakeholders of the EWS?</p> | <p>Introduction of respondent and opening questions (Linked to identification of stakeholders)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please tell me about your role and responsibilities in the organization. 2. What leadership aspects are important in your role? 3. What do you understand by the word stakeholders? - joint interests, people who have a vested interest in what you do. 4. How do you feel about engaging with different stakeholders? 5. How often do you have to engage with different stakeholders? 6. Based on your current role, who do you think are your most important stakeholders? 7. What is your thought process when identifying the above stakeholders, you have mentioned? – identification could be based on power, legitimacy or urgency or a combination of power and interest of the stakeholders. 8. Why do you believe these stakeholders are important? 9. From your experience, do you think it is helpful to identify your stakeholders and why? 10. Do you think stakeholders have power and how do they show this power? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | <p>What are the key characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the EWS?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What type of characteristics do you believe are required by leaders in order to achieve effective stakeholder management? 2. How would you define and demonstrate trust in the context of your leadership with others? 3. How would you build trust in the relationships with your stakeholders? 4. What do you understand by the term an ethical leader? – adhering to rules, being accountable reasoning with stakeholders, achieving consensus in a fair manner 5. How do you incorporate ethics when managing your stakeholders? 6. What characteristics of stakeholders usually stand out for you; please can you give some examples. 7. Do you adjust your management style in accordance to the different stakeholders, please can you give an example of such an interaction? 8. Are there any points of similar interests amongst stakeholders? 9. How do the different stakeholders' impact upon you and your role? 10. What is the attitude of most stakeholders that you encounter? – helpful, rude, engaging, willing to share information. 11. Do you feel that you have the relevant characteristics to deal with the different stakeholders? 12. How do you respond to change? – sudden change as well. 13. How do you communicate with your stakeholders? |
| 3 | <p>How can the identified stakeholders be included in all initiatives of the EWS for effective stakeholder management?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does effective stakeholder management mean to you? – keeping all stakeholders happy, project completion, achieving targets, common interests, supportive, non-supportive. 2. How do you try to achieve effective stakeholder management? 3. How do you feel about creating joint interests with your stakeholder? 4. How would you go about creating the joint interests with your stakeholder? 5. What skills are important when creating joint interests with stakeholders? – communication, listening, understanding, acceptance or disagreement with a certain viewpoint. 6. What is your opinion with regards to collaborating with stakeholders? – difficult, should not collaborate, |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| | | <p>it is not required, it leads to value add.</p> <p>7. What will assist you with regards to dealing with stakeholders? Training, understanding the business, clear vision and expectations.</p> <p>8. What advice would you give to a new manager joining the organization in relation to managing stakeholders?</p> <p>9. What leadership skills would best assist you to effectively manage stakeholders?</p> <p>10. What is your preferred mode of communication with stakeholders and why? – email, one on one meeting, WhatsApp.</p> <p>11. Can you tell me about any interesting experiences you have had with any stakeholders that stands out for you?</p> |
| CONCLUSION | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there anything you feel that you would like to add, that I did not ask you about? 2. Do you have any other insights related to this topic? 3. Do you find this topic of importance to your job? 4. What are other areas of future research related to this topic that would interest you? 5. Thank you for your time and please feel free to contact me should you have any further contributions. |

Source: Author's Own

4.7 Data Gathering Process

Semi- structured, in-depth interviews were used to gather data from an equal number of participants in each embedded case unit, since the literature and theory pertaining to this study was well established. A Total of 16 participants were interviewed, of which eight were from Umgeni Water and eight from EMWSD. The parity in the number of participants from each embedded case unit within the EWS population was largely in the interest of a uniform data set. It should also be pointed out that three of the 16 interviews were undertaken via **Microsoft Teams** due to limitations pertaining to COVID-19. Saunders and Lewis (2018) conceded that platforms such as Skype, Zoom and Microsoft Teams were acceptable modes of data gathering.

The duration of each interview ranged from 26 minutes to 104 minutes. A comprehensive duration summary of all the interviews are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Interview Duration for each participant

| Participant No. | Interview Duration | Participant No. | Interview Duration |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 104 minutes | 9 | 53 minutes |
| 2 | 82 minutes | 10 | 41 minutes |
| 3 | 65 minutes | 11 | 57 minutes |
| 4 | 82 minutes | 12 | 54 minutes |
| 5 | 90 minutes | 13 | 27 minutes |
| 6 | 52 minutes | 14 | 55 minutes |
| 7 | 51 minutes | 15 | 26 minutes |
| 8 | 58 minutes | 16 | 81 minutes |

Source: Author's Own

The variation in the lengths of the interviews was expected due to the open-ended nature of the interview format. It was noted during the interviews that some participants were eager to share their knowledge of stakeholder management, whilst others were not as forthcoming. The researcher also noticed that the duration of the interviews was generally proportional to the amount of information a participant was willing to share.

The contact details of **senior managers** provided by Human Resources were used to communicate with the senior managers in each embedded case unit. The participants were initially contacted via an email which outlined the nature of the study, purpose, and objectives. The research questions, ethical clearance and participant consent form were also attached to the email, giving the participants an idea of what the interview and conversation would entail. The ethical clearance and consent form can be seen in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively. These forms clearly communicated that that the study was authorised and that participants had provided their consent prior to the interview.

As explained by Okumah and Yeboah (2020), the interviews relied on the **Interview Guide** shown in Table 5 to guide the conversation with the participants. All interviews were undertaken between mid-November and mid-December 2020. This provided a set time frame for the case study investigation, as well as consistency with regards to the manner in which the interview questions were posed, and feedback obtained. Lune and Berg (2017), claimed that the researcher played a social role during the interview, which included guiding the conversation, actively listening, and developing

a rapport with the interviewees. Since the researcher had previously worked with several of the participants, a rapport had already been developed at the point when the interview was requested. The email sent to participants to initiate the interview process nevertheless established a professional tone for the interview itself, ensuring a greater degree of consistency in feedback. A concerted effort was made to ensure that responses were not elicited from the participants or based on the feelings and views of the researcher.

There was no specific order in which the participants were interviewed. Upon making initial contact via **email**, a mutually suitable time and place for both the participant and the researcher was agreed upon. The actual interview process is detailed in Section 4.7.1.

4.7.1 Data Gathering Tool (Interview Process)

The **consent forms** sent to the participants in the initial contact email was inclusive of a non-disclosure agreement. The form was intended to re-assure participants that their feedback would be held in confidence, encouraging them to speak freely during the interview. Before formally starting the interview, the researcher requested that the interview be audio **recorded** for transcription and analysis. Upon obtaining permission from the participant in each case, recording was started.

By sending the interview questions to participants two days prior to the interview, participants were able to familiarise themselves with the questions and prepare preliminary responses. Enabling them to provide well-constructed and more complete responses, enabling the gathering of a more complete data set. The opening questions of the interview were relatively easier to answer, simply requiring participants to introduce themselves, share their experience and responsibilities of their current role (Lune & Berg, 2017). The researcher and participant became comfortable in each other's presence when the opening questions were asked and conversed freely.

As the interview with each participant progressed, the researcher at times made careful adjustments to the way the questions were posed. For clarity, the adjustments made did not alter the essence and meaning of the questions. The researcher also **probed** the participants or requested clarity in relation to certain questions. The interviews concluded by asking the participants if they had any further input

pertaining to the research, they were able to share other thoughts in response to the research questions. This approach aligned with the process of semi-structured interviews, with the objective being to obtain a rich data set from the knowledge, understanding and insights of participants. (Lune & Berg, 2017).

By conducting all interviews as far as reasonably possible under **similar conditions**, consistency of the data collection process was ensured. The researcher also made notes of the setting and ambience of the interview, which could possibly affect the results obtained during the interview (Kumalo & Scheepers, 2018). The **COVID-19** pandemic did have a direct impact on one interview in particular. In this case the respondent suffered the death of a family relation who had contracted the virus. Although the respondent agreed to participate in the interview, it was noted that the respondent was not fully focused and mentally present for the entire interview. The interview data was still considered in the data set as some valuable insights were shared. These were explored in the analysis of the results.

The interviewing process undertaken for this research was best summarised by Lune and Berg (2017), who proposed the “Ten Commandments of Interviewing” which are illustrated in Table 7. The Ten Commandments are reflected on the left, whilst the column on the right illustrated how this research fulfilled the commandment.

Table 7: Ten Commandments of Interviewing

| No. | COMMANDMENT | IMPLEMENTATION IN RESEARCH |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Never begin an interview cold</i> | The participants were known to the researcher and all interviews started by finding out how the participant was and if they were directly impacted by COVID-19. |
| 2 | <i>Remember your purpose</i> | The interview guide from Table 5 assisted to maintain the purpose of the interviews. |
| 3 | <i>Present a natural front</i> | The researcher remained calm and relaxed throughout the interview process. |
| 4 | <i>Demonstrate aware hearing</i> | The research reacted to comments by the participant when required, whilst also taking care to avoid interrupting the participant. |
| 5 | <i>Think about appearance</i> | The researcher wore casual business attire for all interviews. |
| 6 | <i>Interview in a comfortable place</i> | The researcher allowed the respondent to suggest the location of the interview place. |
| 7 | <i>Don't be satisfied with syllabic answers</i> | The research probed for more information when required. |
| 8 | <i>Be respectful</i> | Adhering to the scheduled interview time and thanking the participants for their time maintained the respect |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| | | between researcher and participants |
| 9 | <i>Practice, practice and practice some more</i> | As the interviews progressed, interview skills were tweaked and improved. |
| 10 | <i>Be cordial and appreciate</i> | The researcher thanked every participant and sent them a thank you note after all interviews were completed. |

Source: Lune and Berg (2017)

4.8 Analysis Approach

As explained in Section 4.1 this research employed an inductive approach, as well as a partially deductive approach at the front end of the research, to anchor the study in scholarly literature. Similarly, Okumah and Yeboah (2020) also used this approach for their research and claimed that it was termed as a **retroductive** approach. This meant that the research results were analysed in relation to the theory outlined in Chapter Two, as it was an inclusive approach to make sense of the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management. This approach ensured that two conceptual frameworks could be proposed (Okumah & Yeboah, 2020). The researcher ensured that the literature did not force the results into pre-determined themes, but rather allowed the results to be explored. The literature reviewed assisted in making sense of the data during analysis.

The process of analysing the data from the interviews is explained in Figure 9 and was similar to the approach adopted by (Okumah & Yeboah, 2020). In the same vein, the data analysis technique undertaken by Kumalo and Scheepers (2018), did also lend credibility to the analysis approach for this study.

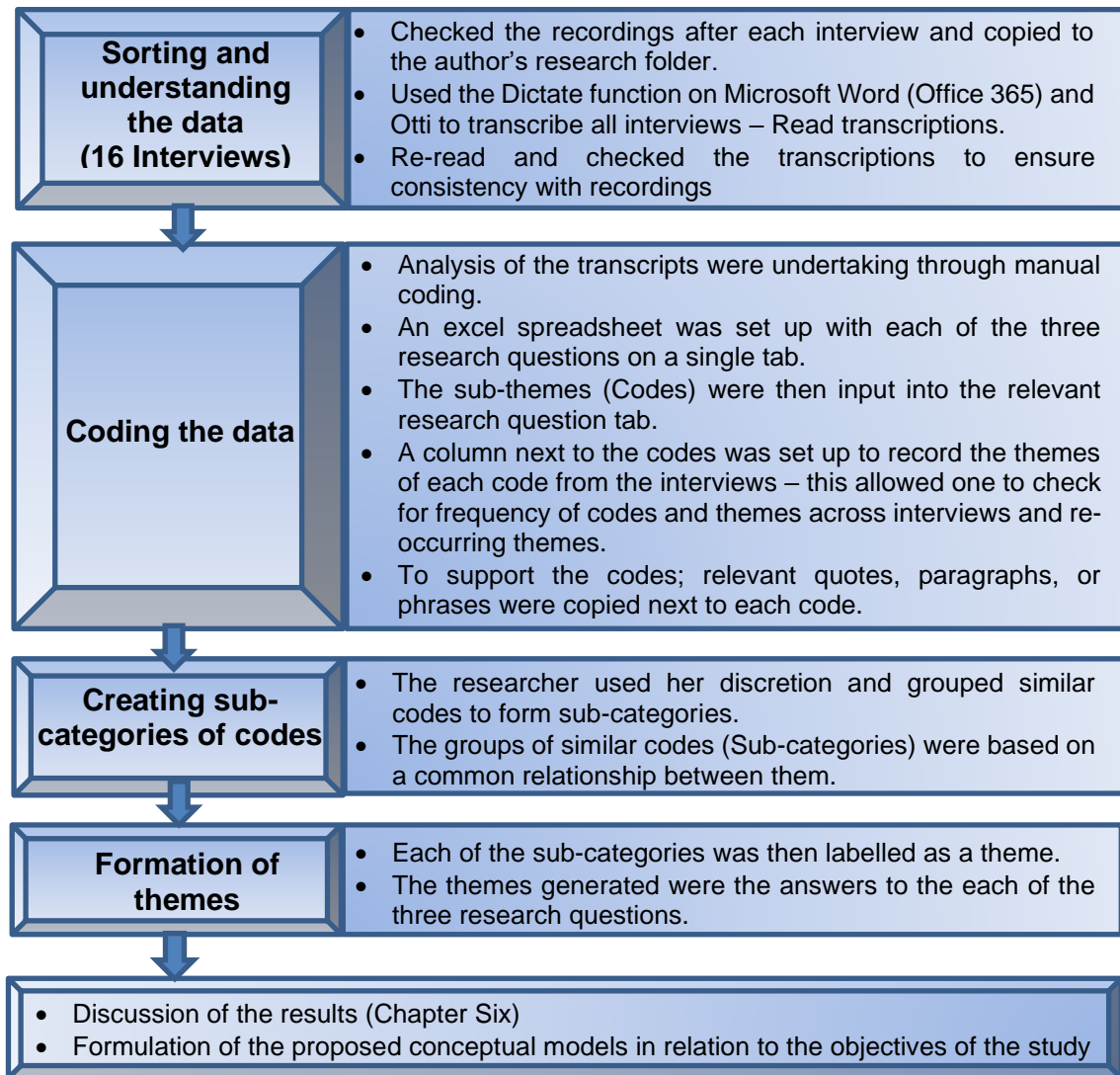


Figure 9: Data Analysis Process

Source: Author's Own

After sorting and understanding the data, **coding** was the next step in the analysis process. Coding is the process of identifying sub-themes in relation to the overarching research questions. To explore the data, all transcripts were initially skim read to gauge the content of the interviews (Okumah & Yeboah, 2020). From the perspective of the researcher, the most informative interviews were then closely read and coded to ensure that a wide range of sub-themes were captured. In support of the codes, relevant phrases or paragraphs were captured using Microsoft excel.

The emergence of a single code was only counted once per interview. If the code appeared more than once in the same interview and similar context, it was not counted again. This prevented participants who spoke more than others from skewing the data set. The approach taken was to compare the **frequency** of a single unique code across 16 interviews and not within an interview. The codes were then

grouped into **sub-categories**, which were groups of codes that were directly related concepts (Okumah & Yeboah, 2020). The sub-categories were then titled and classified as themes. The **themes** were in essence the answers to the three overarching research questions from Chapter Three. The sub-categories were not further grouped into categories as the purpose of this research was to identify all the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management. The themes derived from this study are articulated in Chapter Five and discussed in Chapter Six. Creswell (2014), acknowledged that that for an exploratory, qualitative study, one would have expected between five to seven themes to emerge per research question.

The purpose of the case study investigation was to explore the general approach being adopted within the EWS, in relation to stakeholder management. Data analysis was undertaken in the context of the Initial Research Model (Figure 3), enabling new themes and insights to emerge from the study. Okumah and Yeboah (2020), acknowledged the **iterative** manner of analysing results to ensure consistency and validity. It was important for the researcher to ensure that the results obtained were aligned with the objectives of the study. The researcher was also careful to remain as close as possible to the exact wording used by participants, in the interest of data validity.

As the analysis of interviews progressed, the number of new codes obtained from each interview decreased. **Saturation** of data is defined at the point where zero new codes are revealed from successive interviews. (Hennink et al., 2020). This study reached saturation at interview number 16. Chapter Six indicates the number of codes derived from each interview. Hennink et al. (2020), claimed that saturation was a guiding principle to assess the appropriateness of purposive sampling as employed in this study. From the analysis of the results, it could be pointed out that saturation was reached, therefore confirming that purposive sampling was appropriately used for this study. The researcher also noted that from the 8th interview onwards, there was less than ten new codes generated from each subsequent participant. The duration of each interview indicated in Table 6 may have resulted in this study reaching saturation, as on average, each interview lasted for 61 minutes.

4.9 Quality Control

Quality Control dealt with the aspect of the **validity** of this research. Lune and Berg

(2017) claimed that for a qualitative case study investigation, the validity of the study was dependent on the research questions. For this study the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management was being explored, in response to the declining service delivery in the EWS. The researcher therefore decided to explore the two main entities responsible for water delivery, to understand what the leaders from these organisations regarded as the favourable characteristics for managing stakeholders.

The Social Constructionism philosophy by nature, indicated that responses from the participants may not have always been **objective**, as their external environment may have influenced their responses. To mitigate this, the Interview Guide served as a tool to focus the study, enabling an objective consideration of the interview questions. According to Best et al. (2019), validity was also ensured by selecting senior managers from ten different departments as explained in Section 4.5. Hennink et al. (2020) also acknowledged that by purposively selecting participants from different departments, there was diversity in the results obtained.

Another approach employed to improve validity of this research was explained by Lune and Berg (2017). This approach involved a continuous quality check of the answers to interview questions, during the interview itself. This method was adopted by the researcher, and the data received from participants was repeated for verification to ensure **consistency**. This was not necessarily undertaken for all interview questions, but rather for certain questions when the flow of the interview had permitted such an approach. The researcher was careful not to refute or critique the information provided by the respondent or give the participant reason to feel uncomfortable in any way.

Yet Another technique employed by the researcher to ensure quality control, was **self-reflection**. Hennink et al. (2020), argued that the interpretivist philosophy accepted that the researcher's background, frame of mind, emotions and understanding of the research impacted the data analysis process. Through self-reflection following each interview, the researcher continually sought to be more self-aware, so as to validate the research process. This reflection process involved the asking of reflective questions such as "What improvements or changes can be made to the interview techniques adopted?". Hennink et al. (2020), had defined the technique of the researcher employing self-awareness during a qualitative study as reflexivity. They also contended that the wearing of casual business attire by the

researcher during interviews, as opposed to religious attire, ensured that the researcher maintained a neutral stance towards the participant. The choice of neutral attire contributed to the environment of respect and trust with the researcher sought to maintain.

To validate the data set obtained, the **triangulation** of data was employed. Triangulation is best described as establishing the relationship between different types of data and sources in relation to this research. In so doing, the researcher mitigated concerns related to data quality and validity (Lune & Berg, 2017). Lune and Berg, (2017), also claimed that different studies and methodologies employed had differing lines of sight towards a common objective. The literature review of Chapter Two supported this notion, as the literature of various scholars, using various studies was used to build the theory for this research. Figure 10 illustrated the triangulation of data for this study.

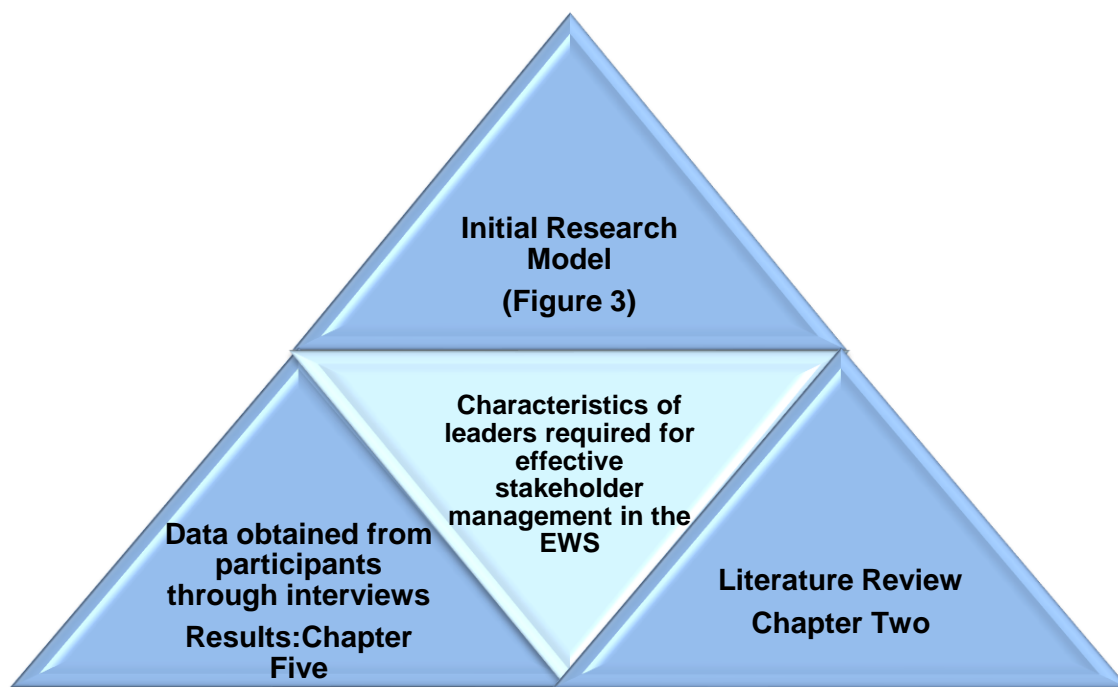


Figure 10: Sources of Data Triangulation
Source: Author's Own

As explained, mechanisms were used to mitigate against the recording of poor-quality data. These were employed throughout the research process, nevertheless there remained limitations to the qualitative study.

4.10 Limitations

It is a particular intent of a qualitative study to obtain fully formed answers through understanding the social circumstances of the chosen target population of the study.

As pointed out by Lune and Berg (2017), the limitations of the study had to be acknowledged to avoid misunderstandings, and to provide clarity to the constraints present.

1. Given the **broad subject area** pertaining to effective stakeholder management in the EWS, which was considered a local government entity, the literature review may have not covered all scholarly research pertinent to this field. In an effort to mitigate this, the literature review section focused on journal articles from peer reviewed journals.
2. The study adopted an embedded case study investigation. The study remained focused on the EWS, within which, the two central role players were identified as Umgeni Water and EMWSD, both responsible for the service delivery of water. Bass et al. (2018), claimed that the embedded case study investigation limited the **transferability** of the results in comparison to a multi-case study. Based on the **specific context** of this study as explained in Section 2.1, care must be taken when transferring, generalising, or applying the results to other sectors or organisations. To overcome this, data triangulation was employed when analysing the results.
3. Transferring, generalising, or applying the results to other sectors may not always be appropriate. Whilst been a limitation, this research can nevertheless serve as the basis for a future **quantitative study**. Such a study could go on to test the conceptual models developed from the research findings, and to objectively verify the data of this study (Molale, 2019). The quantitative approach would enable additional data gathering in the form of survey questionnaires. The increased sample size of a quantitative study suggested that the findings could be generalised (Best et al., 2019).
4. Since the researcher worked within the EWS, there may have been elements of **bias** introduced when undertaking purposive sampling for the selection of participants, as well as during the analysis of results. To overcome this bias, the researcher ensured that self-reflection was undertaken following each interview, to maintain a constant vigilance for biases which may have existed.
5. There may possibly have been elements of bias introduced during the interview process. Furthermore, it is possible for incorrect **inferences** to be made during the data analysis phase. This was overcome by employing data triangulation to validate the results.
6. Due to **time constraints**, this qualitative study could only have a specified number of participants drawn from the target population. A total number of 16

participants were selected for this research. Given the small sample size generalisation of the results across the entire EWS has to be done with caution. According to Saunders et al. (2016), this is often the case with semi-structured and in-depth interviews. This was mitigated by ensuring that the sample group was diverse, with participants from various departments.

7. An additional limitation of the study was the time horizon being cross-sectional. A cross-sectional time horizon meant that the data was obtained at a specific point in time. **Extending the results** to other time periods may not always be beneficial or applicable. This was partially mitigated by employing data triangulation.
8. By employing an interpretivist philosophy of Social Constructionism, this study was highly **dependent** upon the interview results from the **participants**. To ensure that the interviews remained aligned to the research objectives, the researcher used the Interview Guide from Table 5, combined with the Ten Commandments of Interviewing in Table 7.

The limitations described above enabled the results of this research to be used in the correct context, as well providing a basis for future research to improve upon the results obtained.

4.11 Conclusion

The qualitative, mono-method, exploratory nature of the research was based on the interpretivist philosophy of Social Constructionism. This gave rise to the adoption of a retroductive approach, to build theory in alignment with the objectives of the study in Chapter three. Lune and Berg (2017), also maintained that a case study approach gave a deeper understanding of the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management to improve service delivery. An embedded case study was undertaken so that the two main units responsible for the service delivery of water could be investigated. These were Umgeni Water and EMWSD. This contributed to the confirmability of the results obtained.

Based on the cross-sectional time horizon of the research, the combination of a case study investigation and maximum variation purposive sampling was undertaken so that the data obtained was reliable and within a certain period. The EWS was regarded as the population of the research, whilst the embedded case units known as Umgeni Water and EMWS were classified as the target population. Senior managers from the target population were purposively selected to undertake semi-

structured one-on-one interviews with the researcher.

The interviews were undertaken in accordance to the “Ten Commandments” of best practice. The results of the interviews were then analysed and explored in accordance to the process outlined in Figure 9. The analysis of the results gave rise to the main themes which answered each of the three research questions from Chapter three. These themes were the basis of discussion for Chapter six.

To ensure the quality and validity of the results, the choices made and justified at each juncture of the research process lent credibility of the study. Furthermore, the researcher played an important role during the process of the study, hence, the level of self-awareness employed by the researcher was important. An acknowledgement to the limitations of this qualitative study was done, so that the results could be used in the correct context by future scholars, organisations, or individuals.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

The primary aim of this chapter is to present the results obtained from the study based on the research objectives and questions outlined in Chapters One and Three. The exploratory, qualitative, embedded case study approach explained in Chapter Four was the methodology adopted for obtaining these results. The 16 semi-structured interviews undertaken with participants from Umgeni Water and EMWSD, both forming part of the EWS population, provided the source data. Based on the methodology of this research and the data received, an inductive approach was utilised to make sense of the findings. The data was analysed by the researcher, resulting in the generation of codes. Codes were perceived to be a short expression or word which was related to one of the three research questions. Grouping of the various codes led to the construction of themes which are discussed in Chapter Six.

To augment the understanding of this chapter, one must be aware of the definitions of a stakeholder as proposed by the seminal author Freeman (2010), in Chapter One, and the context of this study explained in Chapter Two. These must be considered simultaneously to ensure that the data set is understood within its correct context.

By considering the limitations explained in Section 4.10, and inductively analysing the results of 16 interviews, a total of 298 unique codes pertaining to the study were generated. This total number of codes did not include the count of codes which appeared more than once in a single interview, in the same context. This was done to avoid a skewing of results. New concepts to emerged through the coding process when similar codes were grouped to form themes. The themes identified in response to each of the three research questions are discussed further in the remaining sections of Chapter Five.

5.1 Description of the Sample

A basic description of the sample for this study is illustrated in Table 8. Purposive sampling was used to select senior managers from Umgeni Water and EMWSD. The literature review had pointed out that senior managers from both these organisations interfaced with many stakeholders in the course of service delivery (Midin et al., 2016), hence the choice of the sample.

Senior managers were selected from various departments to ensure diversity of the sample and results obtained. All the senior managers interviewed formed part of the

EWS population, and were based in eThekweni, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. To maintain the anonymity of all senior managers interviewed, they were referred to simply as Participants.

Participants were able to introduce themselves and explain their role and responsibilities in the EWS when asked the introductory questions from the interview guide in Table 5. To maintain the anonymity of all participants, only a brief description of their roles is provided in Table 8, this contextualises the results obtained.

Table 8: Description of the Research Sample

| PARTICIPANT NUMBER | ORGANISATION | DEPARTMENT | ADDITIONAL INFORMATION |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--|
| Participant 1 | Umgeni Water | Strategic Services | Formerly worked in water operations. Currently undertakes a strategic role. Provides strategic support to the chief executive officer (CEO) in terms of the strategic drivers for infrastructure, economics, how water resources should be secured into the future. Focuses on understanding the unserved areas and strategies for supplying water to those areas. |
| Participant 2 | EMWSD | Strategic Projects | Strategic executive who is responsible for all research agreements with various research partners and tertiary institutions. Manages international relations in terms of partnership agreements. More recently, the role grew to include innovation. |
| Participant 3 | EMWSD | Planning | Originally managed the logistics branch for 15 years and then moved into a senior role within the commercial business. Responsible for the establishment of this division ten years ago. |
| Participant 4 | EMWSD | Mechanical and | Senior mechanical engineer with 42 years of experience. |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------------|---|
| | | Engineering | Responsible for 5 water treatment works and 58 water pump stations in the Western Region of eThekweni. |
| Participant 5 | EMWSD | Human Resources | Provides professional services in the human resources field for the Water and Sanitation Unit, focuses on assisting with the management of staff. |
| Participant 6 | EMWSD | Engineering Services | Manages the implementation of capital projects for water and sanitation. Undertakes detailed design work combined with project management. Also provides strategic direction to the department pertaining to non-revenue water. |
| Participant 7 | Umgeni Water | Supply Chain Management | Supply chain manager, responsible for procurement contracts, logistics, acquisition management, demand management, stores management, issuing of stock, and related risks. |
| Participant 8 | Umgeni Water | Planning Services Department | Responsible for understanding the needs of the organisation and people, to design future water infrastructure. Compares the current resources to the future demand. |
| Participant 9 | Umgeni Water | Laboratory Services | Scientist responsible for water quality management. Starting at the water dams, all the way to final production of the water. Also undertakes systems development and provides guidance on water quality management. |
| Participant 10 | EMWSD | Process Engineering Services | Previously managed water and wastewater treatment works, staff, machinery, manpower and budgets. Currently provides process |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------------|--|
| | | | engineering support to the water and sanitation unit, develops business process maps, outlines environmental best practices for the water sector and undertakes troubleshooting to ensure business continuity. |
| Participant 11 | EMWSD | Bulk Water | Manages the water network for the Western area in eThekweni. This includes the reticulation and pump stations. |
| Participant 12 | EMWSD | Planning | Responsible for strategic water planning in the eThekweni area, as well as asset management. This entails ensuring that all infrastructure is in good working condition, and that the asset replacement process is maintained when planning for current, new, and future water demand. |
| Participant 13 | Umgeni Water | Planning Services Department | Responsible for long-term planning in terms of infrastructure development (30 – 50 years plan). Identifies capex for projects and evaluates operating costs. Based on the demands, develops an infrastructure master plan to ensure water security into the future. |
| Participant 14 | Umgeni Water | Scientific Services | Responsible for operational support to the water works and water quality for the Coastal area of eThekweni. Manages chemical procurement and contracts to ensure business continuity. |
| Participant 15 | Umgeni Water | Operations | Key account manager and liaison person. Responsible for ensuring that all customers receive the agreed upon quantity of water. |

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------|--|
| Participant 16 | Umgeni Water | Operations | Responsible for all water operations in the Northern area, providing water to municipalities in accordance to a contractual agreement. |
|----------------|--------------|------------|--|

Source: Author's Own

5.2 Data Saturation

Data Saturation is considered to be the point at which no new codes are obtained from a single interview. After analysing the results, from the perspective of the researcher, the 16th interview was noted to be the point of saturation. It was also noted that the interview from Participant 1 was 104 minutes and generated 108 codes. The number of codes generated per interview from Participants 8 to 16 were consistently below ten. The exact number of codes generated per interview are illustrated in Figure 11 below.

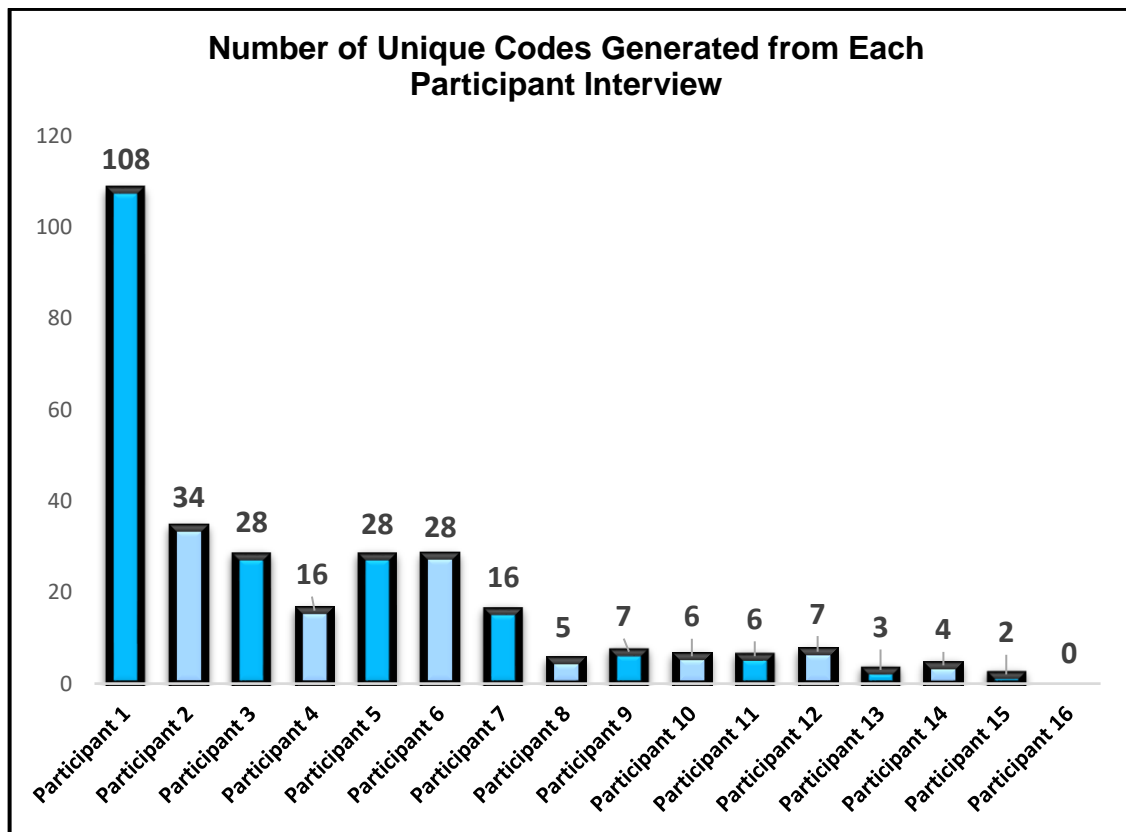


Figure 11: Number of Unique Codes Generated
Source: Author's Own

5.3 Research Question One

Who are the stakeholders of the EWS?

The aim of this question was to understand who leaders in the EWS considered to be their stakeholders and the rationale behind how they identified them as such. Participants were asked about their understanding of what a stakeholder is relative to their role. They were also asked about their feelings when interfacing with stakeholders and how they were able to identify people as their stakeholders. The purpose of the first ten questions pertaining to research question one from The Interview Guide in Table 5 aimed at exploring and identifying the stakeholders in the EWS.

A number of participants reacted with confusion when asked who they considered as their stakeholders. Certain participants seemed to have taken stakeholder management for granted and went about their daily duties without much consideration for who their stakeholders were. Apart from Participant 1, none of the other participants were able to provide a list of stakeholders from any documented processes.

The questions pertaining to stakeholder identification often resulted in participants reflecting on who their stakeholders might have been, during the interview itself. Participants also seemed to largely recall the stakeholders which they interacted with on a daily basis, and who were most prominent. Of significance is that none of the participants highlighted the environment, water dams, or other natural resources as a stakeholder. Considering the fundamental role that water as a natural resource has in the EWS, it was interesting to note that it was not identified as a stakeholder. This will be detailed further as the themes for this research question is discussed in Chapter Six.

In response to research question one, three themes emerged and captured the stakeholders identified as per the participants of the study. The themes are explained in Figure 13 below and for the remainder of Section 5.3.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Theme One Primary Social</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary social stakeholders are those who are directly involved with the EWS or have a direct impact on the sector. |
| <p>Theme Two Secondary Social</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary social stakeholders also influence the EWS and the process of service delivery, however, their impact is indirect or consequential. |
| <p>Theme Three Secondary Non-Social</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary non-social social stakeholders are the voice of primary non-social stakeholders. Primary non-social stakeholders are considered to be the environment, dams, rivers or other human groups. |

Figure 12 Identification of Themes Related to Research Question One

Source: Author's Own

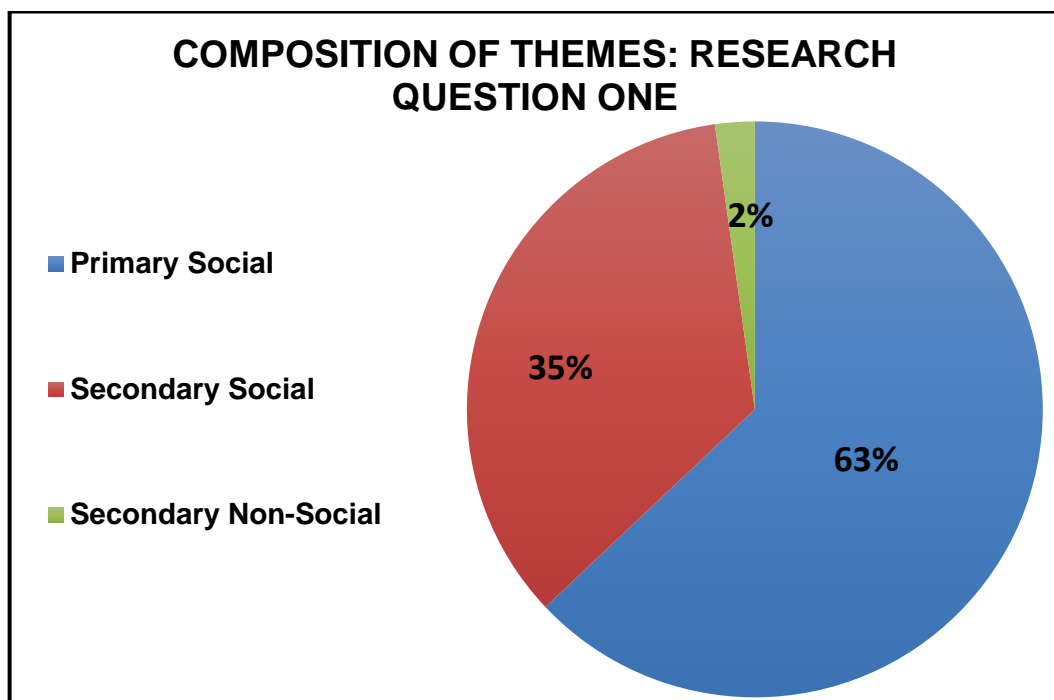


Figure 13: Composition of Themes: Research Question One

Source: Author's Own

Looking at Figure 14, it is clearly apparent that the highest number of stakeholders identified were Primary Social Stakeholders. These stakeholders all have a direct impact on the EWS and its mandate to deliver quality drinking water to the people of eThekweni.

5.3.1 Theme One: Primary Social Stakeholders

As can be seen from Figure 15, there was a total of 47 unique primary stakeholders identified from 16 Participants. **Staff** appeared to be the most frequently identified

primary stakeholder, accounting for 6 out of 84 primary social stakeholder codes identified. The **Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)** came a close second, with a frequency of five. **Finance Department, National Treasury, Politicians,** and **Unions** were identified as third most frequent primary stakeholders, each with a frequency of four.

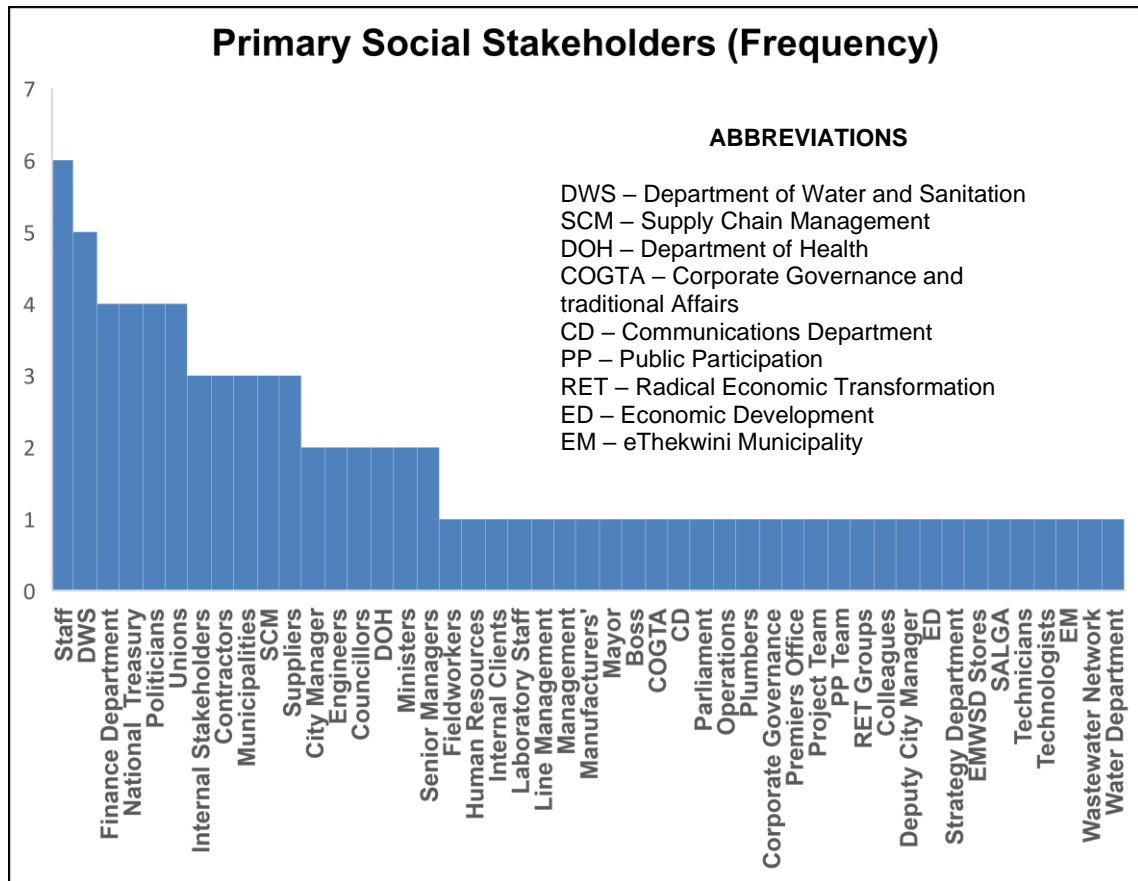


Figure 14: Primary Social Stakeholders Identified and Their Frequency
Source: Author's Own

Evidence to support the primary stakeholders with frequencies of six, five and four is detailed below.

Staff (Frequency 6 in Theme One)

Table 9: Quotes from Interviews to Support Staff as a Primary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 2 | <i>“But not forgetting that stakeholders are your staff, your management. How do you also ensure that they are following and enjoying the work, to deliver on the objectives, how do you incentivise to them, so that they are in the whole chain of command”.</i> |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 4 | <i>"I don't view my subordinates who fall directly under me as stakeholders. I'm too autocratic, I know exactly what to do, I don't want to waste my time, or my staff's time and start bringing them into a process".</i> <i>"I don't view them as stakeholders, however, if it's a problem with which they are intimately involved right, then they are stakeholders".</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>"To get my end results, my staff directly are the ones who are going to give me the end result, they are also very critical".</i> |
| Participant 5 | <i>"I understand that line has a role to play, and my initial role is to focus on assisting them in managing their staff, so the human resource element which are the people in this unit, that is my priority".</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>"If you're looking at the staff component, stakeholders' characteristics is depending on their human characteristics".</i> |
| Participant 14 | <i>"But even the staff that reports to me are my stakeholders".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participant 4 expressed his view that he did not consider staff to be a stakeholder, this contrasted with the views of the rest of the participants, who endorsed staff as an important stakeholder to achieving the end goal. The discussion in Section 6.1.1 will elaborate on this further.

Department of Water and Sanitation - DWS (Frequency 5 in Theme One)

Table 10: Quotes from Interviews to Support DWS as a Primary Stakeholder

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <i>"I was working with the Department of water and sanitation".</i> |
| Participant 2 | <i>"And at the national level, it's the regulator's like Department of Water and Sanitation".</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>"And then it goes to a resolution by the Minister of the Department of Water and Sanitation, and human settlements to make that final decision".</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>"Outside of that, would be your more government space, so going through Department of water and sanitation, SALGA, and COGTA, and National Treasury".</i> |
| Participant 14 | <i>"Also, the Department of Water and Sanitation are a stakeholder".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The results from the participants in Table 10 agree that the DWS are an important primary stakeholder in the EWS.

Finance Department (Frequency 4 in Theme One)

Table 11: Quotes from Interviews to Support Finance Department as a Primary Stakeholder

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 4 | <i>"Internally our Finance Department is very critical".</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>"So, your internal stakeholders are the departments who need your service, like operations, support services, finance".</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>"Finance Department should be a Department that provides a service to you to enable you to do your job".</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>"We engage Finance department".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

A common view amongst the participants from Table 11 is that the Finance Department has an integral role to play in the EWS. During the interviews, the expressions from the participants indicated that the interactions were not always successful, however, they were nevertheless critical.

National Treasury - (Frequency 4 in Theme One)

Table 12: Quotes from Interviews to Support National Treasury as a Primary Stakeholder

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <i>"Overarching goal to other municipalities and more government departments such as the National Department of Treasury and Finance".</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>"For me, the main most important stakeholders, National Treasury, my boss and senior management these are the three I constantly deal with".</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>"Another key stakeholder is our regulator, which is in this instance now National Treasury".</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>"Outside of that would be your more government space so going through Department of water and sanitation, SALGA, and COGTA, and National Treasury".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Taking together, the results from Table 10,11 and 12, affirmed consensus amongst the participants that government departments and finance played an important role in the initiatives and objectives of the EWS.

Politicians - (Frequency 4 in Theme One)

Table 13: Quotes from Interviews to Support Politicians as a Primary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>"Talking to various groups of technical people, engage in the city's Treasury Department and with the leadership and on a political level to understand the future impact of water".</i></p> <p><i>"I think, you know, leadership and engagement in the municipal spaces tend to be difficult because of the influence of politics in that space. So, walking that journey is not the same as walking that same journey anywhere else".</i></p> |
| Participant 2 | <i>"They are key stakeholders, the politicians".</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>"So, politicians do get involved, our senior management do get involved, each one is pushing the project".</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>"And, I personally had an interaction in the past with a politician".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The participants from Table 13 emphasised the role that politicians have in the EWS. Participant 1 highlighted that engagement within municipal entities can be made difficult due to the influence of politicians. According to Participant 2, they cannot be excluded as they are indeed key stakeholders Politicians need to get involved in the EWS.

Unions - (Frequency 4 in Theme One)

Table 14: Quotes from Interviews to Support Unions as a Primary Stakeholder

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>"We actually listen, you pick up things and mistakes and then sometimes unions comes in, it's frustrating process, you hate it, but you know yourself you have to unpack all the issues, deal with every single issue, whether you like it you don't like it, you can't choose what you want to do".</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>"So that you have your regular engagement with the unions".</i> |
| Participant 5 | <i>"Trade unions, organised Labour, should I say you know they're talking. Organised Labour Including their members who are the employees of the organisation who I provide the service to".</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>"I think you've got too much political interference; you've got labour that is too much".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

All of the views expressed by the participants, pertaining to Unions as a Primary Stakeholder were distinctly negative. Participant 1 expressed frustration in dealing with Unions, however, admitted that they too cannot be ignored as this would be

counterproductive. Participant 3 offered that regular engagements with Trade Unions alleviated some of the pressures experienced in carrying out daily duties, whilst Participant 11 believed that there was too much of political interference from the Unions.

Taken together, these results identified a total of 47 Primary social stakeholders. This suggested that leaders in the EWS had a high number of stakeholders to interface with, each with varying needs and objectives.

5.3.2 Theme Two: Secondary Social Stakeholders

As can be seen from Figure 15, there was a total of 29 unique secondary stakeholders identified from the 16 Participants. **Citizens, Communities, and People** were collectively regarded as Citizens and seemed to be the most frequently occurring secondary stakeholder accounting for 11 out of 47 secondary social stakeholder codes. The **Customers, External Stakeholders** and **International Stakeholders** were second, with a frequency of three. **Traditional Leadership** and the **Water Research Commission (WRC)** were identified as the third most frequent secondary stakeholders, each with a frequency of two.

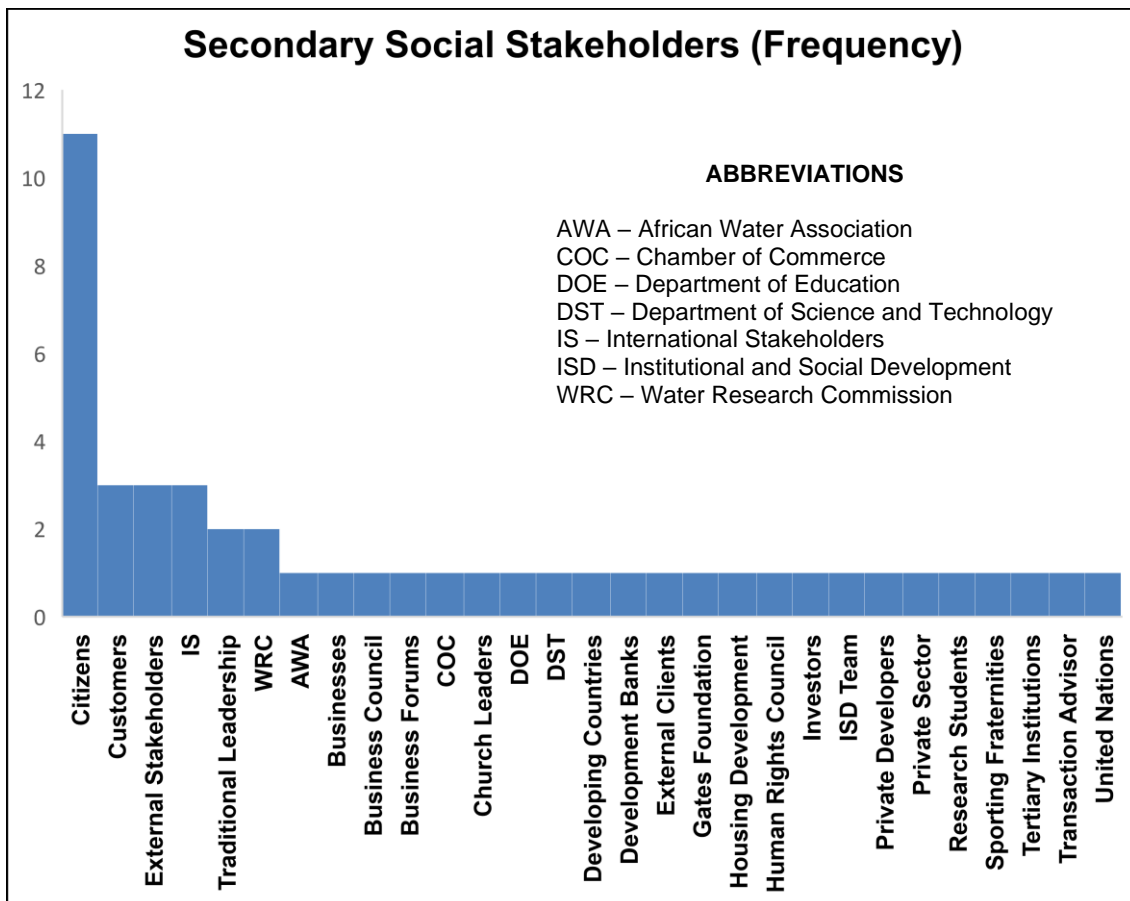


Figure 15 Secondary Social Stakeholders Identified and Their Frequency
 Source: Author's Own

Evidence from the 16 participants interviewed is provided below to support the secondary stakeholders which were identified with frequencies of eleven, three and two.

Citizens - (Frequency 11 in Theme Two)

Table 15: Quotes from Interviews to Support Citizens as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>“How do we invest in underprivileged communities to make a business case for providing water, so that all communities can benefit from water resources”.</i></p> <p><i>“We started canoeing in some of the rural areas, swimming lessons for kids. Things that you never get involved in, but that only comes about because we're having a stakeholder discussion with the community and they tell you some of the things that are happening. All the kids that are drowning when you cross the stream”</i></p> <p><i>“We go live in communities. In Ugu district, built classrooms to a school, added on, painted it, did everything in it, so that comes out of stakeholder engagement”.</i></p> |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|----------------|---|
| | <p><i>"We're actually doing it for citizens".</i></p> <p><i>"Of all the citizens, we serve one country, we may have different institutions trying to do different things, but in the public sector, we impact all citizens".</i></p> <p><i>"The more people you serve, and the more users of it, and the more risks that are coming. So, the worse it has made these engagements very complex and very hard discussions".</i></p> |
| Participant 2 | <i>"Our communities are our stakeholders, but we're providing them with the service. So, it is bringing in the expertise, the social capital, and bringing the experts to start talking to communities".</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>"The person forgets about the broad ratepayer community, what about the person who lives next door to that pump station".</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>"Within the community, there are different stakeholders as well, some are directly interested in the project. Some are due to other reasons to say, some are waiting to get the service, some want to be part and parcel of the service, and some indirectly affected by the service. So, there are different aspects in the community as well. So, we do look at our community stakeholder engagement".</i> |
| Participant 5 | <i>"Stakeholders could be the rate payers out there you know because they have to get revenue and taxes from them".</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>"Look you've got a responsibility to your employer who ultimately is the public, and they are your employer, so I believe that they are your most important stakeholders".</i> |
| Participant 12 | <p><i>"I think it's the community themselves, they are reason for our existence".</i></p> <p><i>"If we talk about the consumers, I think the characteristic is really that they would like a trouble-free service 24/7".</i></p> |
| Participant 14 | <i>"Again, the public are our major stakeholder".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The views of participants shown in Table 15 undoubtedly concur that citizens are the reason for the existence of the EWS. As expressed by Participant 11, citizens always expect water as they are *"ultimately"* the employer of leaders within the EWS. Participant 1 also explained that the EWS could only improve their service delivery by going out to the communities and understanding their needs, helping people, and making an impact.

Customer - (Frequency 3 in Theme Two)

Table 16: Quotes from Interviews to Support Customers as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“So, over the years we've started to engage beyond just the customer, we engage with communities”.</i> |
| Participant 13 | <i>“So, your users of our service, customers, so we provide bulk water”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“First and foremost, to understand that the customer is king and at the end of the day, you would make sure that your staff understands. You lead your staff to understand that, above everything else, the priority is to make sure that your customers are satisfied”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Perhaps an interesting finding is that organisations within the EWS, also considered the citizens and end users of water to be customers. These organisations attempt to understand the needs of the customer to manage the demand of water, therefore, trying to improve service delivery, as explained by the Participant 1 in Table 16.

External Stakeholders - (Frequency 3 in Theme Two)

Table 17: Quotes from Interviews to Support External Stakeholders as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 7 | <i>“Your councillors could be internal or external. So, you also deal with counsellors, suppliers, because they obviously will come to you complaining. NGOs, that also try and play a part in what you're doing”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“Can have external stakeholders, and those would be our people. So that would include customers, regulators, universities, civil society”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“External stakeholders including your academics, private sector, and public. so as I said we go through some quiet months where we will not engage with external stakeholders at all”.</i> <i>“External stakeholders that I've identified that we work with in my current line of work is academic research institutions such as universities, and university of technology, Water research Commission, WISA, volunteer organizations as well as private sector companies, suppliers, manufacturers to the municipality, and occasionally we also interact with the public and non-governmental organizations and community representatives”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

It is apparent from Table 17 that some of the participants collectively refer to various secondary stakeholders as external stakeholders.

International Stakeholders - (Frequency 3 in Theme Two)

Table 18: Quotes from Interviews to Support International Stakeholders as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>“So, we have international stakeholders being here for the International Water Week”.</i></p> <p><i>“Evolving space, think we've gone from the investors to the international community”.</i></p> |
| Participant 2 | <p><i>“On the international relations side of things, we have a lot of partnerships and agreements. And that is really to support more countries in Africa, developing countries, in terms of looking at capacity building, and also looking at how we could learn from them. It's more peer to peer review kind of thing, and that is from the United Nations, and the African Water Association”.</i></p> |
| Participant 3 | <p><i>“I've got a lot of collaborations with strategic international partners and researching students”.</i></p> |

Source: Author's Own

It can be seen from the data in Table 18 that the EWS is making strides in collaborating with international stakeholders to form partnerships.

Traditional Leadership - (Frequency 2 in Theme Two)

Table 19: Quotes from Interviews to Support Traditional Leadership as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>“Corporate governance, traditional leadership, wherever we put our infrastructure, people live there. So, if we build a dam or something, you will displace thousands of people to build it. So now we've started to take a bit more of a different view on this and really expanded stakeholder engagement”.</i></p> |
| Participant 2 | <p><i>“The tribal chief in those lands that we are providing a service”.</i></p> |

Source: Author's Own

What is apparent from Table 19 is the importance of consulting with traditional leadership to gain buy in for certain infrastructure projects.

Water Research Committee (WRC) - (Frequency 2 in Theme Two)

Table 20: Quotes from Interviews to Support Water Research Committee as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 2 | <i>“So, in terms of the research component, I manage all the research agreements that we have with various research partners, and that’s the tertiary institutions, the water research commission, and also, we’re starting to do a lot of work with the Department of science and technology in supporting some of the innovation as well”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“The WRC, in some respects is a stakeholder as well”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

The views of the Participants from Table 20 highlight the role of the WRC in advancing research initiative in the EWS.

5.3.3 Theme Three: Secondary Non-Social Stakeholders

As can be seen from Figure 16, there were only two unique secondary non-social stakeholders identified from 16 Participants. **The Department of Environmental Affairs** appeared to be the most frequently occurring primary stakeholder accounting for 2 out of 3 secondary non-social stakeholders codes. The **Durban Water Recycling** came as a close second, with a frequency of 1.

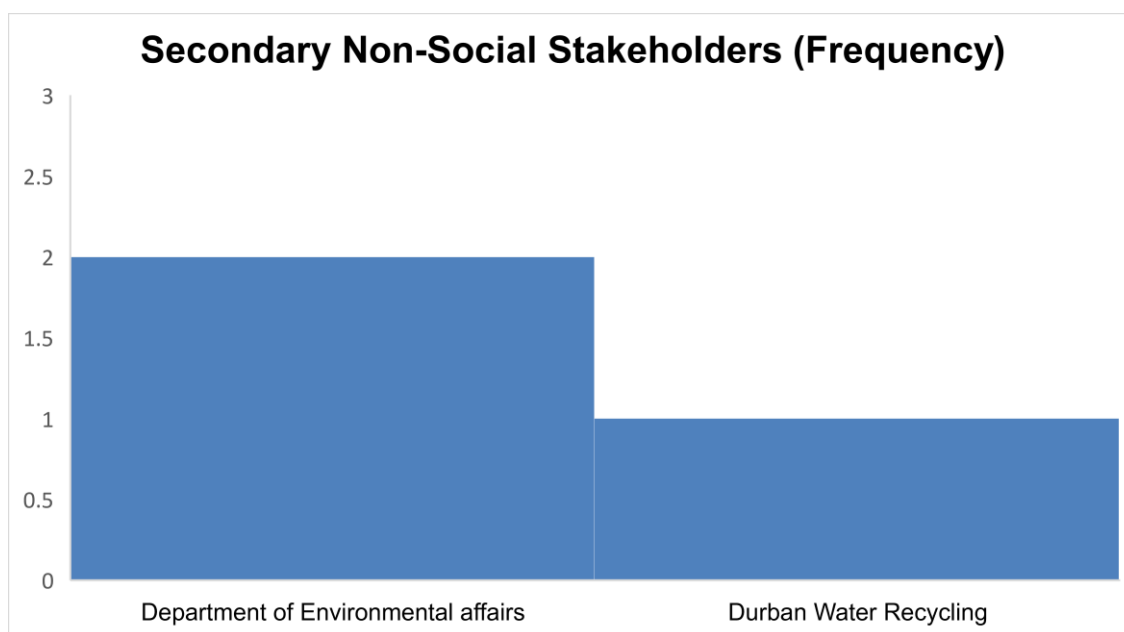


Figure 16: Secondary Non-Social Stakeholders Identified and Their Frequency
Source: Author’s Own

Evidence from the 16 participants interviewed is detailed below to support the secondary non-social stakeholders which were identified with frequencies of two and one.

Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) - (Frequency 2 in Theme Three)

Table 21: Quotes from Interviews to Support Water Research Committee as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 2 | <i>“Environmental Affairs; began talking to them as well, on various aspects of innovation that we are doing”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“The Department of Environmental Affairs is a direct stakeholder, we discharge wastewater into rivers, and we have to make sure that it’s a certain quality”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

Participant 2 and 8 highlighted the role of the DEA pertaining to innovation and ensuring that the environment remains protected.

Durban Water Re-cycling - (Frequency 1 in Theme Three)

Table 22: Quote from Interviews to Support Durban Water Re-cycling as a Secondary Stakeholder

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 3 | <i>“I think you're familiar with the Durban water recycling project, and the reason why it was such a success model in South Africa”.</i> |
|---------------|---|

Source: Author’s Own

Participant 3 shared their view that the Durban Water Re-cycling initiative was successful in voicing the opinions of businesses which used re-cycled water.

5.3.4 Conclusion of Research Question One



Figure 17: Summary of Stakeholders Identified in the EWS

Source: Author’s Own

In conclusion, three broad themes emerged from the analysis of research question one and are summarised in Figure 17 above. Overall, the participants demonstrated that they understood what a stakeholder meant to the business. They also explained

that the impacts of the different types of stakeholders varied, mainly based on their needs or ability to vocalise their opinions. Participants also acknowledged that stakeholders could have both a positive and negative effect on service delivery in the EWS.

They further asserted that fundamental to the impact which stakeholders have on the EWS, is the way in which they are managed. The Participants pointed out that due to the varying needs, personalities, and backgrounds of stakeholders, it was often a challenge to manage them successfully. In the next section we turn to the characteristics required by leaders in the EWS for effective stakeholder management.

5.4 Research Question Two

What are the key characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the EWS?

The aim of research question two is to explore and understand the characteristics of leaders required for effective stakeholder management in the EWS. The results for this research question were obtained by formulating the interview questions around the Initial Research Model (Figure 3). The model focused on the attributes related to stakeholder characteristics, the outcomes of effective stakeholder management, and the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management identified from literature.

The Initial Research Model explained in Section 2.3.1 was used to formulate the interview questions for research question two, shown in The Interview Guide in Table 5. Participants were able to explain how they undertake effective stakeholder management and what were some of the characteristics which led to successful or unsuccessful engagements. The questions also sought to understand from the participants, the impact of the various stakeholders upon their roles. Together, the interview questions had provided rich data for analysing and building two proposed frameworks.

During the process of inductively analysing the results, 202 unique codes were identified and distributed across five themes. It must be pointed out that whilst analysing the results, the context in which a participant had expressed their view was taken into consideration. As a result, similar or identical codes appeared in different

themes based on their relevance to the theme and overarching research question. A limitation to the analysis process was the level of subjectivity involved. The researcher interpreted the findings within the limits of their own understanding and biases. To overcome this bias, the triangulation of the results with the literature and the Initial research model was carried out, as discussed in Chapter six.

Figure 18 provides an overview of the five themes which aim to answer research question two. The total number of codes identified over 16 interviews, captured under each of the five themes, is also expressed as a percentage on the graph. The greatest number of codes obtained were related to the theme of managing stakeholder relationships. The results for each of the five themes are detailed in the sections to follow.

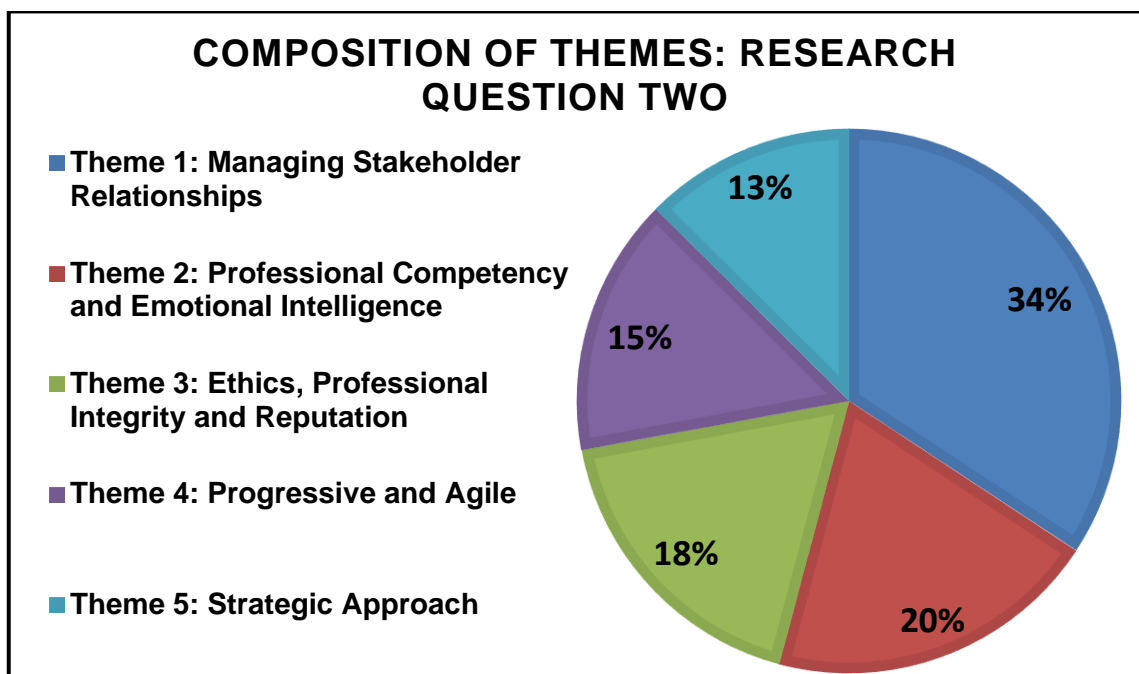


Figure 18: Percentage of Codes Obtained per Theme: Research Question Two
Source: Author's Own

Table 23: Participant Wise Theme Distribution

| Theme | Participant | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Theme One: Managing Stakeholder Relationships | 20 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 17 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Theme Two: Professional Competency and Emotional Intelligence | 11 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Theme Three: Ethics, Professional Integrity and Reputation | 11 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Theme Four: Progressive and Agile | 9 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | | 3 |
| Theme Five: Strategic Approach | 8 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 7 | 4 | | 2 | 5 |

Source: Author's Own

Table 23 indicates the participant wise theme distribution which provides information about the number of times a theme was identified during each participant interview. The theme of managing stakeholders is the most prevalent characteristic identified by all participants.

5.4.1 Theme One: Managing Stakeholder Relationships

The results in Table 24 indicate the characteristics required by leaders to manage stakeholder relationships in the EWS. Participants spoke about the characteristics which assisted them in managing relationships between various stakeholders. They also described some of the more significant or memorable interactions with certain stakeholders. It was interesting to note that 80% of the participants were unable to clearly recall a significant engagement, however, they were able to better describe the emotions felt during such engagements.

Table 24: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Managing Stakeholder Relationships

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Manage power dynamics | 16 | Accept where you are | 1 |
| Communication | 11 | Accommodative | 1 |
| Have face to face meetings | 11 | Adaptive management style | 1 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| Negotiate | 7 | Assertive | 1 |
| Understanding behaviours | 7 | Avoid Criticism | 1 |
| Commitment to engagement | 5 | Batho Pele (People First) | 1 |
| Collaboration | 4 | Citizen engagement | 1 |
| Conflict resolution | 4 | Confidence | 1 |
| Consistent | 3 | Dispute resolution mechanism | 1 |
| Diplomatic | 3 | Dressing | 1 |
| Influencer | 3 | Engaging | 1 |
| Interpersonal Relationships | 3 | Honesty | 1 |
| Listen | 3 | Humility | 1 |
| Managing relationships | 3 | Joint Approach | 1 |
| Regular Updates | 3 | Language | 1 |
| Respect | 3 | Leverage Support | 1 |
| Supportive | 3 | Maintain a balance | 1 |
| Consult | 2 | Manage challenges | 1 |
| Email communication | 2 | Manging disagreements | 1 |
| Emotional Intelligence | 2 | Organisational culture | 1 |
| Managing politics | 2 | Participative | 1 |
| Responsive | 2 | Reasonable behaviour | 1 |
| Soft Skills | 2 | Remain positive | 1 |
| Take Advice | 2 | Risk management | 1 |
| Transparency | 2 | Social conscience | 1 |
| Trust | 2 | State of mind | 1 |
| Varied management style | 2 | Telephone communication | 1 |
| Win People over | 2 | Tolerance | 1 |
| Understand Backgrounds | 1 | United Front | 1 |
| Written communication | 1 | | |

Source: Author's Own

The three most frequently mentioned characteristics required by leaders to manage relationships with stakeholders were identified as:

- 1. The ability to manage power dynamics**
- 2. Effective communication**
- 3. Having face to face meetings with stakeholders**

The Ability to Manage Power Dynamics

Table 25: Participant Views – Managing Power Dynamics

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>“Even the most smallest community is powerful, because those citizens have rights”.</i></p> <p><i>“You still do things because people have power over you. So yes, that power plays a role, but what I've seen over time is that even small communities have power to stop work”.</i></p> |
| Participant 6 | <p><i>“Some are like power hungry, some not skilled, lack of knowledge. And that's where the balance is, we don't make them feel any low. That's the most important, you must not make the other person feel that they are not important”.</i></p> |
| Participant 3 | <p><i>“You got to know how to manage their power because basically the municipality has the power, I mean that's what the hazard of the job is. If you are given a position of a head you got the power, you are being tasked to lead the organization. As a hazard of your job, you're going to making difficult decisions, you're going to be making changes that are not nice too but that's the hazard of job”.</i></p> <p><i>“Understanding what is your mandate what is the power you have, understand what the power does”.</i></p> |
| Participant 10 | <p><i>“So, the power that stakeholders have are direct and indirect. Directly they can affect the business of the municipality, they can affect your triple bottom line by withholding revenue and. In our case they can withhold revenue, and this will directly impact our business continuity in the municipality, the result will be less operating and capital resources to effect service delivery and the vicious cycle of non-delivery and protesting. Indirect power in terms of negative image and associated indirect expenses such as media costs, mediators, tools. They protest and damaged property resulting in unnecessary unbudgeted expenditure”.</i></p> |
| Participant 11 | <p><i>“The public also have shown that they have power to make themselves heard and force things to happen by going to the extreme, by barricading roads and burning tires. I mean that's an extreme, but it just shows you”.</i></p> |
| Participant 12 | <p><i>“I had a project that actually collapsed because of demands from the community”.</i></p> |
| Participant 14 | <p><i>“Power is a problem, because it can be shown in a negative or in a positive way. A client is always powerful, but some will actually use that power in a negative way, but I haven't had an experience where the power was exercised in a negative way”.</i></p> |

Source: Author's Own

The views expressed by participants in Table 25 suggested that stakeholders had both positive and negative power. Participant 12 pointed out that the negative use of power resulted in the collapse of a single project, whilst, participant 14 explained that

stakeholders expressing their power in a negative way was rarely experienced. These results suggest that every participant had experienced the power of stakeholders in different ways, which indicated that stakeholder management requires a more nuanced approach.

Effective Communication

Table 26: Participant Views – Effective Communication

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 6 | <i>“For me, communication is the most important part to get the team to work together and assist each other to grow together. That's why when I have a meeting, I don't just stop at my managers. I work with every staff. So, it means I'll go to every level, that is showing them that I keep every channel open. So, it can be the lowest level in my team or the highest level in our team. So, I communicate with every level. That brings us together to say I'm open to make sure each one is getting the information that we need to get”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“Okay, so I think for my setup, I need to be able to communicate effectively. So, both written and verbal communication is really, really important. Communicate in the right way to the audience, because sometimes we have technical audiences. Other times, it's not very technical, you know, that that's the way it goes, and I have to be able to communicate effectively and influence so that we can actually get things done and implemented”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“To be transparent it is important to communicate failures and challenges, and the reasons for this, and associated action plans to your stakeholders. I think that's key for effective stakeholder management”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“So, an expression that I've heard that said there's more wars caused through poor communication than anything else”.</i> <i>“I really think there's no substitute for utilizing the communication tools at your disposal and trying to make sure the right people are informed”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“So, I find that the most effective way of dealing with that is communicating, and I find that WhatsApp is a most effective tool. You send an email; people don't read emails. What you think is high priority might not be high priority for them, but WhatsApp, everybody responds. I have a 95% response rate towards that. If the communication does not occur, lots of misunderstandings”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participant 12 captured the importance of communication with the phrase *“there's more wars caused through poor communication than anything else”*. All the participants from Table 26 held the view that communication played an essential role in ensuring that stakeholders received the correct information. Participant 16 further

emphasised that the communication Tool “WhatsApp” has been an effective medium for conveying information to stakeholders. Another participant alluded to the notion that one had to be able to communicate to various audiences, adjusting the communication style and language accordingly.

Face to Face Meetings with Stakeholders

Table 27: Participant Views – Face to Face Meetings with Stakeholders

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Face to face is the best. In a virtual meeting you cannot pick up everybody’s body language, you can’t pick up the nuances, you can’t pick up people who are happy or sad, all those things allow you to change your engagement. It’s organic because if you can see that you’re giving eye contact, looking at people, sharing a side chat on something, having a cup of tea together, all of these things help good engagements”.</i> |
| Participant 2 | <i>“Face to face, you quickly analyse the emotions of the individual you could be talking to, and the facial expressions change, they agree, they disagree, you need to see this”.</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>“Face to face, but always followed up with an email. If you don’t follow that up, that conversation is forgotten, it’s disappeared”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“I prefer one on one or a conversation where you actually can engage with the person on a personal level, but then often will follow it up with an email to say we discussed this, and this is the decision that we’ve come to, or this is what’s happening”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“I believe in one on one face to face meetings and workshops. I prefer them because it leads to an immediate understanding and acceptance, as opposed to the risk of misinterpretation through written medium. Clarification can be obtained immediately, so even if you don’t have answers, you can reassure the stakeholder that you will come back to them and the stakeholders can read that in your body language”.</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>“Verbal is effective, brings human element into communications. The personal touch I think is important because your nonverbal communication is important”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

The views from participants in Table 27 suggest that face to face communication is preferred. One could assess the mood of their stakeholders more accurately in face-to-face meetings, enabling an adjustment of their communication style. Participants also agreed that face to face meetings were more personal and added a human touch. Participants 2 and 4 also emphasised the importance of following up face to face meetings with emails so that matters discussed are not forgotten.

Overall, these results indicate that the process of managing stakeholder relationships

has several dynamic components. Communication plays an integral role in managing stakeholder power and determining a way in which to work with each stakeholder at the appropriate level. Face to face meetings were identified to be the most appropriate choice of communication. Leaders were able to gauge the body language of stakeholders and adjust their communication accordingly.

5.4.2 Theme Two: Professional Competency and Emotional Intelligence

Participants had emphasised the importance of having a technical knowledge base related to their role. They also explained that at times they would have to step back from a situation to reflect on how they felt or were handling the situation. The results in Table 28 indicate the characteristics required by leaders relating to professional competency and emotional intelligence.

Table 28: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Professional Competency and Emotional Intelligence

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Technical skills | 8 | Delegate | 1 |
| Understanding role | 8 | Flexible | 1 |
| Understanding the environment | 4 | Intervening at the correct point | 1 |
| Understanding finance | 4 | Manage Compliance | 1 |
| Recognising the value of people | 4 | Managing change | 1 |
| Emotional Intelligence | 4 | Managing inefficiencies | 1 |
| Experience | 4 | Managing water demand | 1 |
| Decision making | 4 | Manage power dynamics | 1 |
| Varied management style | 3 | Marketing Skills | 1 |
| Deal with facts | 3 | Maturity | 1 |
| Strong leadership | 2 | Motivator | 1 |
| Planning | 2 | Open door policy | 1 |
| Manage frustrations | 2 | Effective Presentation | 1 |
| Knowledge base | 2 | Implement Procedures | 1 |
| Identify Gaps | 2 | Reflective | 1 |
| Do not make assumptions | 2 | Remain focused | 1 |
| Adapt to environment | 1 | Self-Aware | 1 |
| Commitment to engagement | 1 | Supportive | 1 |
| Communication | 1 | Compassion | 1 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| Competent | 1 | Contract management | 1 |
| Creative/ Innovative | 1 | | |

Source: Author's Own

As shown in Table 28, the three most frequently mentioned characteristics required by leaders to embody professional competency and emotional intelligence are:

1. **Technical skills**
2. **Understanding role**
3. **Understanding the environment**

Understanding Finance

Recognising the value of people

Emotional Intelligence

Experience

Decision Making

Technical Skills

Table 29: Participant Views – Technical Skills

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Knowledge bases have been reduced dramatically, so what it does though, is that it creates a bit of a gap for us, so we're not getting as much as we used to get from the city”.</i> |
| | <i>“We have tried to manage different and carefully all staff retention skillsets, but we're finding that it is increasingly becoming a problem”.</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>“People not recognising the limitation of the knowledge and skills. That's the problem, the message that is propagated by this organisation is if you in this position, you automatically have these skills”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“But most of the guys that we deal with are very technical. But every now and again, we do deal with social people, and I suppose it's the social science aspect of business, which is quite different”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“We have some seasoned technical and governance expertise in the municipality”.</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>“I think the level of expertise was a problem. you've got people in positions that are way underqualified with regards to their skills”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“There is an expectation, that we get trained very much on your technical skills, and then there's an assumption that without much training and input, you will fulfil that leadership role that sort of happens”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participants 1,4,11 and 12 have expressed their concern about filling work positions with personnel who do not possess the required technical skills. They furthermore perceive an expectation by the wider organisation that these personnel will excel in

their roles without the relevant training. This is creating a gap with regards to the level of interaction amongst stakeholders as some people are unable to adequately provide technical feedback. Conversely, Participants 8 and 10 have acknowledged that the people they interface with are equipped with the correct level of technical skill.

Understanding Role

Table 30: Participant Views – Understanding Role

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Politics are starting to really disrupt technical people from understanding their role”</i> |
| Participant 2 | <i>“And then look at, what is our role in that kind of space itself?” “It is about getting the right person for the job. Because that for me is important, is if you've got a person that's passionate about the job, and really wants to learn and progress, then you introduce that person to say, listen, this is what the vision is, this is what our function is, this is the people we serve, and that person that's coming in, will make a big difference”.</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>“The big issue here for stakeholders, is that they do not really know their role in the greater scheme of things”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“And so, if you don't know what your core business is, and what the role of your function is, and what the consequences of your function and risks are if you don't perform. To understand then what the ramifications of your role are is difficult”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“I'd say probably, the one thing is to understand your role in the stakeholder engagement”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“Stakeholders don't understand that there are different roles and responsibilities in the unit”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Overall, the views expressed in Table 30 indicate that people often do not fully understand their role in the organisation. This leads to stakeholders not understanding the roles of relevant personnel, and further confusion in the resolution of problems. As asserted by Participant 1, politics within the EWS also affect the daily duties of technical staff, making it increasingly difficult for them to execute their work.

Understanding the Environment

Table 31: Participant Views – Understanding the Environment

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 7 | <i>“I think they just need to know the dynamics of the business that we run. As long as the new manager knows that we are an emergency service unit. People have the right to water. Know the core business, know what the stakeholder’s needs are, know what the market is lacking in terms of the products that you supply, who the market role players are or what your potential risks are”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“I would say to the guy, firstly you need to understand the business and organization, so you need to know who's who in the zoo. I mean you need to keep abreast of the roles and responsibilities of all branches in the organisation so that you are better able to deal with their needs”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

Participants 7 and 10 have explained that the best advice they could provide to a new manager joining the organisation was to understand the environment he/she was joining. They need to take the time to explore every aspect and build a understanding of what already exists.

Understanding Finance

Table 32: Participant Views – Understanding Finance

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <i>“So, investment decisions are getting made with little information from the clients”.</i> <i>“And, you know, inefficiency costs. So there are a lot of investments that we are making now that I would call efficiency projects, as opposed to actual, you know, growth projects where we should be improving the level of service”.</i> <i>“So whenever you make a mistake we are not realising benefit to the country. and more important to our citizens lives”.</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“And it is about using the public money in the correct way. That's my sole purpose to make sure we deliver projects that are required and delivered in a correct way”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“You lead the organization or lead your team in such a manner that they understand what financial viability means. It's such an important aspect of our business”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

The views of participants expressed in Table 32 confirm that one must understand finances in order to ensure that public money is wisely spent, for service delivery. It

is the duty of managers to ensure that their staff understand financial viability, and its importance.

Recognising the Value of People

Table 33: Participant Views – Recognising the Value of People

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 2 | <i>“They see people as people, they know and reporting lines, they don't see it as what contribution each one makes in this value chain itself”.</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>“You got to recognize the staff, you got to recognise the people that actually do the work in the business”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“Employees are taken for granted, and, and it's almost that they don't have any drive in them. They're happy to just sit and do what they can do today and leave what they can't do today for tomorrow”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

People have a need to be understood and appreciated for the work they perform within an organisation. Participants explained that managers must recognise the importance of employees and affirm the work which they do. Employee morale is directly influenced by such recognition.

Emotional Intelligence

Table 34: Participant Views – Emotional Intelligence

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 3 | <i>“You got to be more sensitive, for me it's that kindness especially in the public sector. Has to be there”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“In dealing with people of different cultural and educational backgrounds, they also require a great deal of emotional intelligence to achieve successful engagement and to reach consensus”.</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>“Emotions that you might have from home or your personal situation that also influences the way you respond”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“But I think you know, we always used to focus on IQ, and the more we look at EQ and relationships, there's a lot more there that we should develop”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participant views expressed in Table 34 indicate that whilst the EWS is a technically oriented environment, emotional intelligence is becoming increasingly important in the organisation. Leaders must often interface with stakeholders of varying cultures, backgrounds, and levels of education. For these engagements to be successful one must be able to suspend their own judgement and make rational decisions.

Experience

Table 35: Participant Views – Experience

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 2 | <i>“But in majority of these public institutions, is that you come into the system, and you learn through experience and your own experience”.</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>“I think that comes from experience, comes from strategic know how, you know having that kind of organisation wide perspective. Those are the key things that you actually need to take projects forward”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“So, it's a mixture of experience and training and development. So, I've learned a lot from mistakes in the past as well what goes down to experience, and then the training that I do and capacity development”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The views expressed in Table 35 highlight that in the public sector, most learnings are gained through experience. Participant 10 explained that one learns through making mistakes, combined with training and personnel development.

Decision Making

Table 36: Participant Views – Decision Making

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 3 | <i>“That you going to be making tough decisions, be uncomfortable”.</i> <i>“Poor decision making aggravates staff and the unions get involved. Management make silly decisions that take you away from the issue, this created the biggest problem ever because now you took your power and you gave it to the other party, bad decision, inconsistency”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“Decision making is key because you find that a lot of these things happen but there's no decision being made, so there has to be decision making, conflict resolution and fairness when it comes to these situations”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“In smaller companies you can make rapid decisions, but the bigger you get, the more sort of controls and processes that you do have in place. It's just the utilization of those rules does become difficult, I think”.</i> |
| Participant 13 | <i>“I think people, especially leaders, or managers in government environment are too scared to make a decision, because of the wrong decision”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The participant views expressed in Table 36 indicate their views of ensuring consistency when making decisions. Lack of consistency may lead to poor decision

making. Participant 12 pointed out that due to the size of the EWS, there are many rules and procedures that affect decision making. Participant 13 suggested that due to the local government environment, managers are also afraid to take decisions in certain instances. Overall, the participants indicated a strong need for leaders who are able to make decisions.

Overall, these results suggest that there is an association between effective stakeholder management, professional competency, and emotional intelligence. Participants did perceive that leaders take this for granted and do not acknowledge any skill gaps. This leads on to the next theme which suggests that leaders have a responsibility towards been ethical, ensuring professional integrity, and reputation.

5.4.3 Theme Three: Ethics, Professional Integrity, and Reputation

Ethics, professional integrity, and reputation are characteristics which all public sector leaders should always embody since they are responsible for public service delivery. Participants concurred with this and further explained the importance of these characteristics when interfacing with various stakeholders. The feedback received from the interviews generally indicates the view that these characteristics are self-taught, and that one should always ensure that their actions are aligned with their words. The results in Table 37 indicate the some of the most important characteristics required by leaders include ethics, professional integrity, and reputation.

Table 37: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Ethics, Professional Integrity and Reputation

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Ethical | 13 | Take advice | 1 |
| Trust | 13 | Refrain from arrogance | 1 |
| Honesty | 7 | Commitment | 1 |
| Openness and Transparency | 6 | Dependability | 1 |
| Accountability | 4 | Good Character | 1 |
| Integrity | 4 | Good corporate citizen | 1 |
| Responsibility | 3 | Good governance | 1 |
| Fairness | 3 | Loyalty | 1 |
| Lead by example | 3 | Maintain principles | 1 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Transparency | 2 | Professional approach | 1 |
| Follow the rules and regulations | 2 | Remain true to your word | 1 |
| Honourable reputation | 2 | Respect | 1 |
| Remain Objective | 2 | | |

Source: Author's Own

The top three characteristics required by leaders in relation to ethics, professional integrity, and reputation were selected based on the number of times it occurred in the theme. They are listed and detailed below:

1. **Ethical Trust**
2. **Honesty**
3. **Openness and Transparency**

Ethical

Table 38: Participant Views – Ethical

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <i>“So, if we focused on ethics, then whatever we doing, is in the best interest of the public we serve, and we do it to that level of dignity, to that level of commitment that means you're on the right ethical journey in the public sector, because those are your people”.</i> |
| Participant 2 | <i>“I think an ethical leader is one that is, you know, is very open. And again, he doesn't blame failure on other people, because I'm a leader, the buck stops with me, failure can happen further down the line. But if I'm leading by example, and there's a failure in the process and I must be able to take full responsibility for that, that's ethical leadership for me”.</i> <i>“So, ethics is not only within an institution, but to look at ethics outside, in terms of the community and the people we serve”.</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>“For me ethical leadership is someone who understands what it is, but he also understands that blurred line. You have to act just beyond the ethical border for very good reasons, could be people in danger, they could be about to lose their lives”.</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“Your ethics is critical to how you deliver a product. So, I think that's basically it. I always motivate staff about how to get that, because if your intentions are good, you will get to your destination”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“After always being a very ethical person, there's a right way of doing things and the wrong way of doing things, I just never overstepped that boundary”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“Ethical leader is one that sticks by the word and completely transparent in what they are saying, and the ethical leader will</i> |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| | <i>ensure that it was implemented, whether it be your finances, whether it be your infrastructure whatever it is that is done for the right reason and not for a political one”</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“As engineers we have an ethics code too to comply with that unfortunately does get tested, and I think it's through that you will be judged at the end of the day, I think you've only got yourself to be accountable too”.</i> |
| Participant 13 | <i>“Never underestimate the importance of ethics. But it's your morals, I guess, and, you know you are participating in it or you're not participating. So, it's a dilemma, and as I say, you can choose either way. Following orders won't absolve you from your own morals”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The participants felt strongly about maintaining an ethical approach in their daily duties, and that ethical behaviour was a fundamental part of effective stakeholder management. The responsibility of decision making also comes with understanding that there is always a right and a wrong choice as explained by Participants 4,6,7,12 and 13. Participant 1 further emphasised that a public service worker had a greater sense of duty to the citizens in terms of commitment and doing what is in the best interest of the people.

Trust

Table 39: Participant Views – Trust

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“We did some amazing work just because two individuals trusted each other. This type of trust is built upon my professional network by walking a different journey”.</i> <i>“And unless you prove to be non-trusted, we tend to trust people”.</i> <i>“So, this is where some of the mistrust is, where you're not having the right people engaging, and then that creates a whole lot of knock on effects of mistrust”.</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>“People want to trust people, no one wants to go through life being suspicious of everything, so as a leader you create a platform to allow people to trust you”.</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“You build trust a relationship with them, once they have a trust relationship, then things go faster”.</i> <i>“It comes to trust, to show that trust is. You cannot be perfect and that trust within, honesty and integrity are critical. Openness is critical for me to build that trust. Once you achieved that trust, everything else becomes easier”.</i> |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 7 | <i>"Trust is the type of person that you are and how you interact with people and how they perceive you to be, but again because I'm just grey, there's no black and white. You decide on your own whether you going to trust me or not".</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>"My opinion is that the trust must be earned by setting an example in the way of practicing what you preach".</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>"Trust is being a man of your word, if you make a commitment, stand to it and don't make promises that you don't intend keeping because that's the worst thing you can do".</i> <i>"I think when you first meet the stakeholder for example, the members of public or a developer that you've never met before I think it's important how you sit down and engage with each other and hopefully you plant the seeds of trust with the person in that first engagement, being open and honest with them".</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>"It can take you 20 years to develop a reputation, you can take 5 minutes to break it. I think trust just isn't something that that comes immediately, demonstrated overtime and I think it's through behaviour".</i> <i>"More processes are being put in place that even if there isn't the trust then the systems are in place to make sure that the right thing happens".</i> <i>"By being right on the small things you can gain trust on the on the bigger things".</i> |
| Participant 15 | <i>"We build trust by making sure that the promise that you gave is kept at the end of the day. You cannot give promises and then all of a sudden, you don't deliver. So, if you can't deliver, you need to specify to say, I cannot deliver, this is so that the customer can look at alternatives. So, trust is very important to say, if you promise something, you need to deliver it at that point in time".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

All participants felt that trust and ethics worked hand in hand. Participants identified trust as a key characteristic to ensure effective stakeholder management. The comment from Participant 6 recognised the importance of trust between stakeholders, which serves to ease working in collaboration. Participant 11 also shared a similar view. Participant 12 expressed that trust could not be built easy, it develops over time but can be broken within a moment, hence the importance of being consistent and true to one's word.

Honesty

Table 40: Participant Views – Honesty

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“So, when you have one interaction that creates this negative impact, it creates a relationship that's not very honest and open. Professional relationships start to suffer”</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“I will tell them straight forward, say, this can be done, this cannot be done. And I was being honest about it. So, I think they did appreciate the honesty, but I was open and clear to say that this is on the table. That's all I can do. There's nothing more I can go on”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“People respond better to the honesty, but don't give people the run-around and say, okay, I'm going to try and see if I can do this and whatever, just be honest, and candid, and say it as it is”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>Be transparent and honest about challenges, especially about challenges which are not easy to talk, talk about failures but also be proud of success in the organization”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“What I do, I can't force people to be telling the truth, I reinforce, by me telling the truth”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participants felt that honesty was part of ethics and trust. For stakeholders to trust Participants, an honest approach was required. Participant 10 mentioned that honesty meant sharing both the good and bad news, similarly Participant 7 stated that one should be clear on their limitations and boundaries with stakeholders so that false expectations were not created. Overall, the views shared in Table 40 indicate that honesty is fundamental to any stakeholder relationship.

Openness and Transparency

Table 41: Participant Views – Openness and Transparency

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 2 | <i>“And I think it's also on the emotional side, we got to be very open and honest about what we're trying to achieve in the in this relationship”.</i> <i>“And, and for me, again, it is being open and transparent and bringing them on board, winning their trust and support, because without them, we fail”.</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“I think that openness and transparency is very critical in these things. And if you open about that, I see an improved the relationship going forward”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“I'm very open and I'm a talker. So, I've talked a lot too and I think somehow that kind of makes people just feel a bit more comfortable”.</i> |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 9 | <i>"We are quite open, I think you're doing a risk assessment process, we are open, and in this interview with you I'm being pretty open about the challenges, and you guys are also open with us about the challenges".</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>"To be transparent it is important to communicate failures and challenges and the reasons for this, and associated action plans to your stakeholders. I think that's key for effective stakeholder management".</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The views of Participants expressed in Table 41 highlighted the importance of openness and transparency in any stakeholder relationship. Participant 7 noted light-heartedly that a talkative approach often conveyed an impression of transparency. Participants 9 and 10 felt that one had to be open about positives and negatives, and that one should never tell a one-sided story.

Together these results provide important insights into the value of ethics, trust, honesty, openness, and transparency. Participants firmly held the views that these were fundamental characteristics to improve or strengthen stakeholder relationships. They explained that these characteristics took time to develop, but once in place, interfacing with stakeholders became simpler.

5.4.4 Theme Four: Progressive and Agile

Participants described the ability to be progressive and agile as being able to embrace and adapt to change, whilst remaining positive and helping others to adopt the same approach. They emphasised the notion of being creative and innovative to manage change, and always having a passion for what they do. The results in Table 42 indicate the characteristics required by leaders associated with being progressive and agile.

Table 42: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Progressive and Agile

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Embrace Change | 14 | Accept where you are | 1 |
| Passion | 5 | Acknowledge achievements | 1 |
| Creative/ Innovative | 4 | Adapt to environment | 1 |
| Remain positive | 2 | Adjust management style | 1 |
| Resiliency | 2 | Admit Faults | 1 |

| | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|
| Lead by example | 2 | Avoid micromanagement | 1 |
| Listen | 2 | Be Human | 1 |
| Manage stress | 2 | Be Vulnerable | 1 |
| Mentoring | 2 | Conflict resolution | 1 |
| Benchmark | 2 | Consistent | 1 |
| Be outward focused | 2 | consult | 1 |
| Employee development | 2 | Courageous | 1 |
| Supportive | 1 | Delegate | 1 |
| Table Ideas | 1 | Driven and Dynamic | 1 |
| Varied management style | 1 | Inspire | 1 |
| View things in a different perspective | 1 | Manage challenges | 1 |
| Managing complexity | 1 | Progressive (Link to vision) | 1 |
| Managing crisis | 1 | Remain focused | 1 |

Source: Author's Own

The top three characteristics required by leaders to be progressive and agile in the EWS, were selected based on the number of times the characteristics occurred in the theme. They are listed and detailed below:

1. **Embrace Change**
2. **Passion**
3. **Creative/ Innovative**

Embrace Change

Table 43: Participant Views – Embrace Change

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 2 | <i>“Bill Gates, you know, he's a guy that was referred to as an optimist, and impatient optimist, if he doesn't make inroads into whatever you want to achieve, he cans it and then goes off on a different route to find the solution”.</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>“Change is inevitable, I've done a lot of change here, it's about how you approach it. The change has to be aligned to the vision that I have set up for the branch, and if the change is aligned, it's more or less accepted, but if the change is not aligned to it, then it is disconnected”.</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“And for me, as I said, change doesn't matter to me. As long as I know that change is for the better. If it is for the betterment, I'm always in support of any change. You have the world change on a daily basis. If you don't accept change, you can't move forward. I had a simple saying given by my parents to say, you cannot</i> |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| | <i>change the world, you can change for the world. So, to adjust to everybody, best thing to do is change yourself”.</i> |
| Participant 14 | <i>“I’ve learned from life; change is here to stay. The best thing is to learn to navigate around change and make change part of it. So even when it happened in the organization, I have taught myself that the best way is to adopt it, and to cope with it. There are people who quickly embrace the change. There are some who will lag behind”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“We have to adapt to the changing environment, even if it costs us financially, for the benefit of everybody in this business. If we don’t embrace change then we’ve got problems”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

The views of the participants expressed in Table 43 agreed with the notion that a leader should embrace change. Participant 6 shared an axiom passed on to her by parents which suggested that one is unable to change the world, but one should rather change for the world. Similarly, Participant 14 acknowledged that change must be expected, and that one must be able to navigate through the change whilst also maintaining stakeholder relationships.

Passion

Table 44: Participant Views – Passion

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 6 | <i>“Passion and delivering. I feel that’s a better way than using a stick approach to say, if you don’t do this, these are the consequences. So, I believe more in motivation and creating the passion amongst the team”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“What drives me is that passion for making things happen. And then, at the end of the day, you know, thumbs up, thanks very much, we got the job done, and I think, that is what drives me”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“I have a general passion for the work that I do”.</i> |
| Participant 13 | <i>“There’s a saying that says if there’s no passion in the leader, there’s no passion in the people, and you know that if the leader doesn’t really care, then the people won’t either”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

When leaders engage with their stakeholders, people are driven by the passion of the leader. Participant 13 used the saying shown in Table 44 to emphasise the point that a leader must have passion for stakeholders to have passion.

Creative/ Innovative

Table 45: Participant Views – Creative/Innovative

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 3 | <i>“We are open to innovation; we are open to have the conversation”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“I think sometimes, it's also nice for you to try and give them innovative ideas. So, to try and find maybe alternative items or products that they can maybe use to make their life easier. So, you try and find other innovative ways to help them, to make their jobs a little bit more seamless”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“And so, there is not enough innovative thinking. I see the same things each year, and I just don't see enough of the new thinking and the new changes”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Innovation is a characteristic required by leaders when proposing creative and new ideas to their stakeholders. Participant 7 is aligned to this thinking as can be seen from their view shared in Table 45. Participant 9 felt that there is currently only a small amount of innovation taking place in the EWS, and that this needs to improve.

Through the views of the participants, it is suggested that leaders of the EWS must embrace change, demonstrate a passion for their work and always attempt to propose innovative solutions to the challenges faced.

5.4.5 Theme Five: Strategic Approach

Having a long-term view, being solutions driven, and most importantly collaborating with the relevant stakeholders are characteristics required by leaders of the EWS. These characteristics enable a strategic approach to achieve a pre-determined vision or goal as explained by the participants interviewed. The results in Table 46 indicate that the characteristics required by leaders which are associated with a strategic approach, as identified from the interviews with the participants.

Table 46: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Strategic Approach

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Collaboration | 11 | Leverage Support | 1 |
| Long term View | 5 | Managing relationships | 1 |
| Solution Driven | 4 | Managing resources | 1 |
| Broad View | 3 | Meeting organisations mandate | 1 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Strategic Thinking | 3 | Mentoring | 1 |
| Understand the environment | 3 | Planning | 1 |
| Methodical | 2 | Retrospective evaluation | 1 |
| Prioritising | 2 | Risk management | 1 |
| Strategic dialogue | 2 | Set timeframe | 1 |
| Focus on the end Goal | 1 | Avoid short-sightedness | 1 |
| Identifying stakeholders | 1 | Technical skill | 1 |
| Implement systems | 1 | Social conscience | 1 |
| Understand Product | 1 | Top down approach | 1 |
| Understand Purpose | 1 | | |

Source: Author's Own

For a strategic approach, the top three characteristics required by leaders in the EWS, were identified and selected based on the number of times the characteristics occurred in the theme as a unique code. The characteristics are listed and detailed below:

1. **Collaboration**
2. **Long-term view**
3. **Solution Driven**

Collaboration

Table 47: Participant Views – Collaboration

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Municipal managers should all be meeting on some frequency to understand strategic economic planning issues. Municipal managers should be doing so that they have a single view. And that's not happening at a local government level. That's the view I get. Each municipality just wants to work in its boundaries, and don't care about the other municipality, in the same province, in the same country. Our role is to cut across boundaries in the province, across municipal boundaries, so we can work in that space”.</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>“It's very, very important, collaborations allow you to get through tough times. Collaborations are very important it allows you to have some flexibility”</i> <i>“Collaborations allow you to get exposed to some of the solutions out there that these international partners have successfully implemented”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“If there's joint interests in place, both people can see the benefit and the value to them, then maybe it's easier to get participation”.</i> |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 10 | <i>“Joint interests will also reduce costs and time associated with interactions. It will also assist by getting stakeholders to work together because they are interested, and they will work together to generate solutions to challenges”.</i> |
| Participant 13 | <i>“I use the word synergising. It's about getting everyone together and trying to, you know, it's, I think it goes back to that cohesion thing acting as one team”.</i> |
| Participant 15 | <i>“I think it's something that we need to do for the future. Currently creating joint interests is not happening. We are planning as individuals, but I think in the future we need to plan together so that we minimize even the use of our resources”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

From Table 47, Participant 1 clearly articulated the need for collaboration on a higher level across different municipalities. This links to Participant 3 who suggested that collaboration can unlock novel solutions to current challenges faced. Local government entities can learn from each other and international partners, hence the need for leaders of the EWS to have the ability to effectively collaborate. Participant 13 summarised his thoughts on collaboration by suggesting that teams and personnel within the EWS to synergise

Long-term View

Table 48: Participant Views – Long-term View

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <i>“So, you have the vision, you make an investment, and there's going to be other things that we bring to the table as human beings. The ability to see people's level of commitment, to see the vision of how we want to make our country. So, you need people who are going to step outside their normal jobs. Start to be visionary about things, start to care about it. Start to dare!”.</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>“My branch takes care of public private partnerships, which goes beyond the realm of your normal supply chain management capital contracts, which is very short term to medium term operational type contracts. My one is more the strategic 20 year public, private, partnerships concession type contracts, where you look at holistic picture, that's ranging from your technical, financial and operational aspects, as well as legal aspects, to ensure that you are compliant”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“Particularly for us in the planning space its quite long-term objectives from a technical point of view”.</i> |
| Participant 13 | <i>“Need to have a vision!”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The comment by Participant 1 in Table 48 illustrates that leaders of the EWS need to dare to dream big and have a long-term view, not only for the EWS, but for South Africa. Participant 3 re-iterated that there are tools such as public, private, partnerships, which can be used to achieve the long-term view.

Solution Driven

Table 49: Participant Views – Solution Driven

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 6 | <i>“One thing I forgot to mention, I am solution driven”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“At the end of the day, I am here to get the job done”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“Make sure you meet your commitments. Because if you don’t meet your commitments, nobody’s going to believe what you say at any stage”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“I think generally, I focused more on the outcomes, just a personal management style”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

The views of the participants expressed in Table 49 established that an important characteristic required by leaders of the EWS is a solution driven approach. Participant 8 noted that it was important to meet pre-determined commitments as this also built trust amongst stakeholders.

Overall, these results indicate that leaders of the EWS require a strategic approach. In most cases they should be solutions driven, organised, and collaborative, with a long-term view in mind.

5.4.6 Conclusion of Research Question Two

The aim of research question two was to identify the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the EWS. The interview questions posed to the 16 participants provided a rich data set for analysis. The qualitative, inductive, analysis process, resulted in five emergent themes which answered research question two. The five themes identified are summarised in Table 50 below.

It must be noted that Tables 24, 28, 37, 42 and 46, summarise the stakeholder characteristics identified under each theme. To convey the most relevant data, the results for the 3 most frequently occurring characteristics in each theme were illustrated. The top three stakeholder characteristics were selected based on the frequency of emergence in each theme. These characteristics were further supported by evidence from the interview participants and will be discussed in

Chapter Six.

It was evident from the interviews that all the participants were confident when speaking on the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the EWS. Great emphasis was placed on the importance of trust, honesty, and ethics by approximately 90% of the participants.

Table 50: Summary of Themes for Research Question Two

| What are the key stakeholder management characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the EWS? | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| | Theme One: Managing Stakeholder Relationships | Theme Two: Professional Competency and Emotional Intelligence | Theme Three: Ethics, Professional Integrity and Reputation | Theme Four: Progressive and Agile Leadership Characteristics | Theme Five: Strategic Approach |
| 1 | The ability to manage power dynamics | Technical Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical • Trust | Embrace change | Collaboration |
| 2 | Effective Communication | Understanding Role | Honesty | Passion | Long-term View |
| 3 | Having face to face meetings with stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the environment • Understanding finance • Recognising the value of people • Emotional intelligence • Experience • Decision making | Openness and Transparency | Creative/ Innovative | Solution Driven |

Source: Author's Own

In the final part of the results section, the themes relating to how all the identified stakeholders can be included in the initiatives of the EWS will be presented.

5.5 Research Question Three

How can the identified stakeholders be included in all initiatives of the EWS for effective stakeholder management?

Following on from a presentation of the results of the stakeholders identified and the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management, the aim of research question three is to explore and understand how leaders can effectively include all stakeholders in the initiatives of the EWS. The results for this research question was obtained by formulating interview questions centred around the Initial Research Model (Figure 3) and The Stakeholder Engagement Wheel (Figure 6). The goal is to analyse and use the results to propose a framework which leaders can adopt to undertake effective stakeholder management in the EWS.

The aspects focused on for this research question were the outcomes of effective stakeholder management. This was combined with the Stakeholder Engagement Wheel to formulate the interview question pertaining to research question three, which is indicated in the Interview Guide (Table 5).

Through answering the questions, participants explained what effective stakeholder management meant to them, and how they tried to achieve this within the EWS. It also touched on the concept of joint interests and factors that would be important when creating joint interests. The questions furthermore sought to develop an understanding from the participants of how they would best interface with stakeholders in their initiatives. Taken together, the interview questions enabled an understanding of how effective stakeholder management can be employed by leaders of the EWS.

During the process of inductively analysing the results, 48 unique codes were identified and distributed across five themes. It must be pointed out that during the analysis of the results, the context in which a participant had expressed their view was taken into consideration. As a result, similar or identical codes which appeared in other research questions and themes were identified again based on their relevance to research question three. A limitation of the analysis process was the level of subjectivity involved. The researcher interpreted the findings within the limits of their own understanding and biases. To overcome this bias, the triangulation of the results with the literature and the Initial research model was adopted, as discussed in Chapter Six.

Figure 19 provides an overview of the five themes which will be used to develop an answer to research question three. The total number of codes identified over 16 interviews captured under each of the five themes, is also expressed as a percentage on the graph. The highest number of codes obtained was related to the theme of having a documented and structured approach. The results for each of the five themes are detailed in the sections to follow.

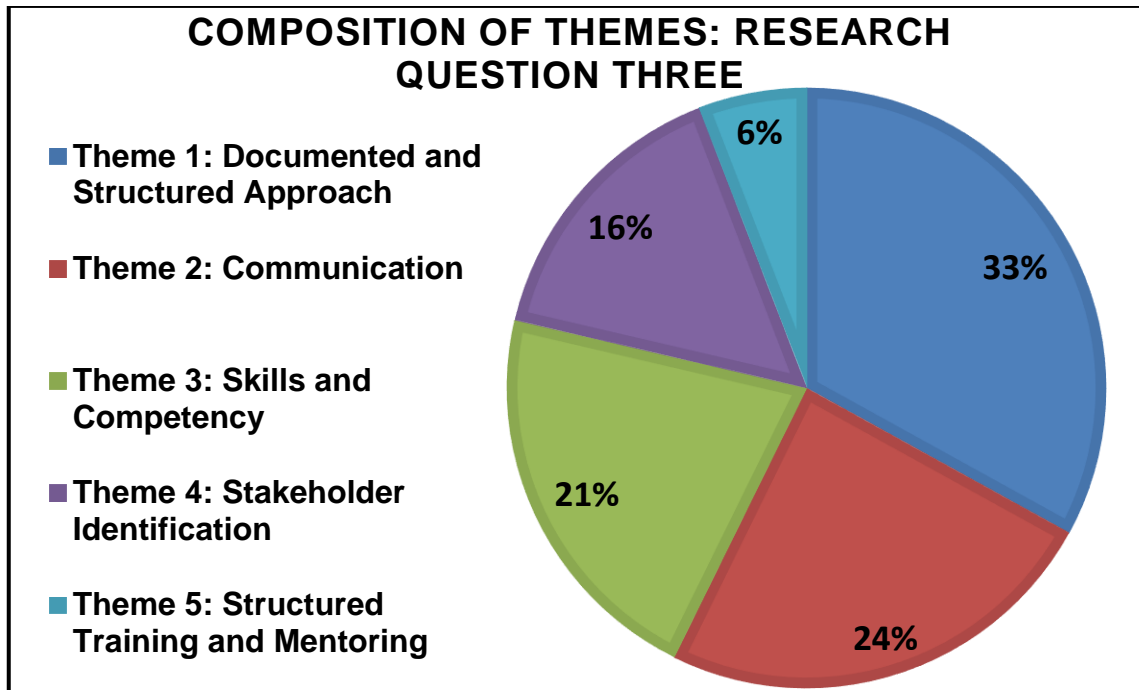


Figure 19: Percentage of Codes Obtained per Theme: Research Question Three
Source: Author's Own

Table 51: Participant Wise Theme Distribution

| Theme | Participant | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Theme One: Documented and Structured Approach | 9 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| Theme Two: Communication | 8 | | 2 | 1 | | | | 2 | | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 3 |
| Theme Three: Skills and competency | 4 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Theme Four: Stakeholder Identification | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Theme Five: Structured Training and Mentoring | | 2 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | |

Source: Author's Own

Table 51 indicates the participant wise theme distribution which provides information about the number of times a theme was identified during each participant interview. The theme of having a documented and structured approach is the most prevalent

to ensuring that leaders undertake effective stakeholder management.

5.5.1 Theme One: Documented and Structured Approach

Participants had emphasised the importance of having a documented structured approach to stakeholder management. Participants further discuss the various types of agreements which are in place between the stakeholders. These agreements include a Global agreement and the Collective agreement. The results in Table 52 indicate some of the initiatives which can be implemented for a documented and structured approach.

Table 52: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Documented and Structured Approach

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Set a goal | 9 | International obligation | 1 |
| Service level agreement | 3 | Long term thinking | 1 |
| Executive engagement meetings | 2 | Monthly Meetings | 1 |
| Agreements and Collaboration | 1 | Performance Appraisal | 1 |
| Business continuity plan | 1 | Stakeholder mapping | 1 |
| Collective agreement | 1 | Steering Committee | 1 |
| Communication protocols | 1 | Supply agreement | 1 |
| Contractual agreement | 1 | Systems in Place | 1 |
| Creating stability | 1 | Top down approach | 1 |
| Formalised approach | 1 | Understand stakeholder needs | 1 |
| Global agreement | 1 | Wellness programs | 1 |
| Workshops | 1 | | |

Source: Author's Own

For a documented and structured approach to stakeholder engagement, the top three requirements, were identified and selected based on the number of times it occurred in the theme as a unique code.

1. **Set a goal**
2. **Service level agreement**
3. **Executive engagement meetings**

Set a goal

Table 53: Participant Views – Set a Goal

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Water is very complex and no longer a straight-line discussion. So now my engagement is more on that strategic overarching goal where we trying to influence legislation. We try to change legislation to become more enabling so we can achieve certain objectives, and the idea is to match that with government strategies, to understand where it will bring us as a country, what type of global agreements do we initiate”.</i> |
| Participant 3 | <i>“They must be clear with your vision that you have as a leader. You got to be very clear about what you want and then you follow the process”.</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>“Set yourself a target and you work until you achieve that no matter how difficult it is”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“Our board needs to sit with the mayor, and we need to develop the trust our chief executive needs to sit with them and develop that trust and develop a common goal”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“Build trust by saying we plan to achieve a common goal”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“Get a common understanding and agreement in terms of the way forward”.</i> |
| Participant 14 | <i>“They will have a common vision. Pull towards a common objective, the common goal”.</i> <i>“Define the objective of the work that is being done and also able to identify the success factors or what needs to be achieved in order to achieve those goals”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“Common goal, everything revolves around water and customer satisfaction. Successfully implementing everything you do to make sure that there's adequate water supplied”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

The views expressed by participants in Table 53 highlight the need for a common goal amongst stakeholders. Participant 1 explained that the current strategic overarching goal is to influence legislation that can lead to improvements across the nation. As pointed out by Participant 3, the goals set need to be clear and well-articulated.

Service Level Agreement

Table 54: Participant Views – Service Level Agreement

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 7 | <i>“And often an SLA is probably the better option, so that you can understand upfront what the core business is, and then what their requirements. What their stockholding requirements are”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“There are proper service level agreements internally, where everything is documented, but unfortunately, the overall stakeholder management plan, it has not been done for a while, as well as internal service level agreements”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“We have service level agreements, how do we manage those service level agreements and how do you manage the service requirements, so that we involve all parties in the whole value chain, so that the ultimate objective is to make sure that we have a satisfied customer”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

Participant 7 explained that a service level agreement (SLA) between stakeholders can assist in an understanding of business requirements. Participant 9 did however point out that it was unfortunate that SLA’s have not been regularly updated.

Executive Engagement Meetings

Table 55: Participant Views – Executive Engagement Meetings

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Contractually, we engage on a quarterly basis, at a strategic level and an executive level. That’s bound by a contract”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“So, they are regular engagements. I won’t say it’s too often maybe quarterly, and then some of them are annually, and then other ones which happen as and when required”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

Participant 1 explained that a contractual agreement between stakeholders enabled regular, quarterly engagements to take place. Participant 9 concurred with this notion, and further explained that meetings could also take place as and when required.

5.5.2 Theme Two: Communication

Communication was integral to undertaking stakeholder management initiatives, as explained by the participants. There are platforms such as workshops and liaison meetings which can enable communication to take place in a controlled environment.

The results in Table 56 indicate some of the initiatives which can be used to enhance communication, thereby enabling effective stakeholder management.

Table 56: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Communication

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Frequent engagement | 6 | Form teams | 1 |
| Liaison meeting | 4 | Organisational structure | 1 |
| Monthly meetings | 3 | Procurement workshop | 1 |
| Executive engagement meetings | 2 | Set a goal | 1 |
| Community liaison person | 1 | Water Week | 1 |
| Customer services charter | 1 | Workshops | 1 |
| Food/Tea | 1 | | |

Source: Author's Own

The top three initiatives to improve communication for effective stakeholder management was identified. The initiatives were selected based on the number of times it occurred in the theme as a unique code.

- 1. Frequent engagement**
- 2. Liaison meeting**
- 3. Monthly Meetings**

Frequent Engagement

Table 57: Participant Views – Frequent Engagement

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>“Will talk with people who are actually going run it, and not just the engineers who will design it in the way we would like it. So, this entire engagement became very varied, as opposed to the traditional approach of consulting a few, pertaining to something which impacted a whole lot”.</i></p> <p><i>“The city of Durban and the City of Pietermaritzburg should be the best of friends strategically on many projects pertaining to water, but they are not, so that's the stakeholder issue that's not happening at the local government level”.</i></p> |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 3 | <i>“The other function within my branch is to ensure that we have these collaborations going forward, so we can actually encourage innovation, we can bring in solutions to meet our challenges because that's basically it”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“Municipal managers should all be meeting on some frequency to understand strategic economic planning issues”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The views of Participants 1,3 and 16 collectively highlight the need for frequent engagement amongst stakeholders. These engagements will give rise to new and innovative solutions to service delivery challenges faced in the EWS.

Liaison Meeting

Table 58: Participant Views – Liaison Meeting

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Liaison meeting about technical issues are sometimes not being solved, it comes to the executive's meetings, when this meeting is largely a strategic dialogue”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“We also have planning and liaison meetings. We describe the projects that we are implementing, new projects, and we also provide progress on existing projects that we're implementing”.</i> |
| Participant 15 | <i>“We've got our monthly meetings, as you know, with our liaison teams, besides that, we got the metering forum, where we compare our meters”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“Now at an operational level, we have operational engagements, we have monthly operational meetings take place. And then we basically manage that process. The engagements ensure that operationally we are able to deliver the volume of water you want, and the quality you want, at the pressure you want, and then you basically receive that, and you are satisfied”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participants 1, 8, 15 and 16 acknowledged that the liaison meetings serve as a platform for stakeholders to engage. It was further highlighted by Participant 1 that issues that are not solved in the liaison meeting can at times incorrectly be tabled at other strategic stakeholder meetings.

Monthly Meetings

Table 59: Participant Views – Monthly Meetings

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 6 | <i>“There’s a regular monthly meeting, monthly is not enough. So, when it comes to the exact delivery of the project, I get involved in the project right up to the project manager”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“I arrange monthly meetings with the other branches and the stakeholders. I think they get more trust”.</i> |
| Participant 11 | <i>“We used to have monthly meetings where we discussed with all the senior staff. We had regular meetings with the superintendents and all the office staff, everybody knew I also had regular meetings with the field staff”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“You know a lot of our interactions would be meetings, there would be sessions, there would be engagement, you would be presenting certain ideas and programs”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

Participants 6 and 10 highlighted the importance of monthly meetings as a platform for engagement between branches and organisations in the EWS. Participant 12 further explained that ideas could be shared in these meetings.

5.5.3 Theme Three: Skills and Competency

The participants asserted that stakeholders with aligned competencies and skill levels should ideally be brought together to form teams that work towards a common goal. The results in Table 60 also indicate initiatives identified by the participants to ensure that leaders of the correct skill and competencies are placed in an appropriate role.

Table 60: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Skills and Competency

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Form teams | 11 | Community stakeholder engagement | 1 |
| Identifying stakeholders and their needs | 4 | Organisational structure | 1 |
| Competency | 3 | Partnership | 1 |
| Stakeholder mapping | 1 | | |

Source: Author’s Own

The top three initiatives to ensure that people of the correct skill and competency

levels engage in stakeholder initiatives, were selected based on the number of times it occurred in the theme as a unique code.

1. **Form teams**
2. **Identifying stakeholders and their needs**
3. **Competency**

Form Teams

Table 61: Participant Views – Form Teams

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>“Just select a group of people that talk the same language as we do, so bringing it closer to home”.</i></p> <p><i>“You break these complex issues down. We have created sub teams to go and carry on with the work, you probably collect more data to do more research by working in teams”.</i></p> |
| Participant 2 | <i>“I've achieved so much, because I've got a strong team. Strong believer in in the in the team leadership approach”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“So, the whole concept of supply chain management is teamwork. It's the cradle to grave concept”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“My management style is to try and lead those that are with me in a team environment, to achieve a common objective”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

The participant views expressed in Table 61 firmly agreed that to successfully attain a pre-determined goal, a team effort is essential. Participant 1 also mentioned that sub-teams can be formed to work towards a common goal.

Identifying Stakeholders and their Needs

Table 62: Participant Views – Identifying Stakeholders and their Needs

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 3 | <i>“It's quite good to start a project with the right people who know what they're doing and who are the basically the Big Brother in this process”</i> |
| Participant 14 | <i>“So, it' become important to know who to contact, and then to be able to relay the information quickly, and also to get the feedback quickly”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participant 3 explained that when starting a project, it is vital that people of the correct skill and competency level are involved in the initiatives from the start. Participant 14 also highlighted that this will make it easier to relay information to the correct

stakeholders who can provide feedback.

Competency

Table 63: Participant Views – Competency

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 1 | <i>“Inefficiency slows down the whole process and makes the whole business a lot more expensive. There are lot of investments that we’re making now that I would call efficiency projects as opposed to actual growth projects”.</i> |
| Participant 2 | <i>“First of all, we wish to be employing people that are competent, that’s where we should be starting off, we employ people that know the job, what we tend to do, we employ the wrong people to do the right job”.</i> |
| Participant 16 | <i>“Right expertise, it should be specific training requirements. I’ve been trained to do that now; we’ve lost some of those things in organization”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

Participant 1 asserted that inefficiency slows down work processes, therefore, it is essential that competent personnel are employed and trained from the start, as suggested by Participant 2 and 16.

5.5.4 Theme Four: Stakeholder Identification

Participants confirmed that enabling effective stakeholder management is founded on correctly identifying the relevant stakeholders for a particular initiative. The results in Table 64 highlight a few potential initiatives identified by the participants to identify the correct stakeholders for a particular initiative.

Table 64: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Stakeholder Identification

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Identifying stakeholders | 6 | Availability | 1 |
| Understand stakeholder needs | 5 | Stakeholder engagement department | 1 |
| Stakeholder Mapping | 3 | | |

Source: Author’s Own

The top three initiatives to ensure that the correct stakeholders are identified, were selected based on the number of times they occurred within the theme as a unique code.

1. **Identifying stakeholders**
2. **Understand stakeholder needs**
3. **Stakeholder Mapping**

Identifying Stakeholders

Table 65: Participant Views – Identifying Stakeholders

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 3 | <i>“You got to recognize your strategic stakeholders, the ones that are really here to assist, those are the success factors”.</i> |
| Participant 4 | <i>“Stakeholder identification I think it's a natural process. It should be a very natural, fluid process, it shouldn't be a mechanical process”.</i> <i>“Someone who knows his job inside out, is taking a direct interest and who has put himself on the firing line, right, doesn't generally need to spend a lot of time identifying the stakeholders”.</i> <i>“The most important stakeholder at any given point of time is the one who's holding up that process”.</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“The first thing I need to know is which is the best relationship I need to build, for me to deliver what I need to do”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“I believe it's extremely important and useful to identify stakeholders. A defined list of stakeholders should be further analysed and prioritized by order of urgency, importance, and potential impact”.</i> <i>“Stakeholder management to me starts with identification and prioritization of all the key stakeholders, and thereafter, very importantly, a communication strategy must be developed for stakeholders”.</i> |
| Participant 12 | <i>“If you can identify those key role players who are going to influence your project or program, and engage with them, invest the time and get them on your side to assist with the implementation, so they don't become stumbling blocks”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

Participant 10 pointed out the importance of identifying stakeholders, especially those that would have an immediate impact on an end goal. Participant 4 concurred and added that the most important stakeholder is usually the one who is obstructing a work process. It is therefore important to invest time in identifying stakeholders so that they do not become impede work activities, as suggest by Participant 12.

Understand Stakeholder Needs

Table 66: Participant Views – Understand Stakeholder Needs

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 2 | <i>“So, understand what is the interest of the individual, that ties in that common objective and what we want to achieve, and really building on that strength, because if the person that's trying to pull you down with the negativity of it not working, then you're going to allow yourself to go down”.</i> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“He needs to know who our stakeholders are and what their needs are”.</i> |
| Participant 7 | <i>“Because your stakeholders basically determine what your needs are. Your stakeholder engagement is specifically or especially important because you need to know what they need. You need to know what their current and future requirements are, what projects they have in place, so that you can then service them because SCM is really a support function. Your whole stakeholder needs analysis is necessary, because you need to know exactly what they require from you”.</i> |
| Participant 8 | <i>“Again, because we supply water to most of our stakeholders, our customers, we need to take their needs into consideration”.</i> |
| Participant 14 | <i>“The ability to understand a customer's needs and their values, so that one is able to deliver the product. To understand what the customer's requirements are and be able to share their values with us”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

According to Participant 14, understanding the needs of the stakeholder is important, for one to deliver the best service. Similarly, Participants 2, 6, 7 and 8 also agree with this view. Participant 2 also added that one should build on the strengths of the stakeholders through understanding their needs.

Stakeholder Mapping

Table 67: Participant Views – Stakeholder Mapping

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Participant 1 | <p><i>“Over time we've started to create stakeholder mapping. So, to realise that although we may just be about service provider to a municipality, that the residents are impacted by the work we do. So over the years we've started to engage beyond just our direct customer, we engage with communities via other programs or educating them about water, rivers and the environment so people start to understand that it's not just the water in the tap”.</i></p> <p><i>“Start to build a network across each other, so that's what we try to do in our stakeholder map. It's trying to get all relevant people”.</i></p> |
|---------------|---|

| | |
|---------------|--|
| | <p><i>“Stakeholder mapping is very complex, includes all these different departments, all these different communities, education, health, primary health, secondary health, looking at national departments”.</i></p> <p><i>“I feel it works very well. Its picked up areas that I would never in my wildest dreams thought of having a discussion with that group”.</i></p> |
| Participant 2 | <i>“What are the key people to contribute to that body of knowledge!”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“We were a little better about 10 years ago, we identified stakeholders, classified stakeholders, actually documented a stakeholder management plan. And that would be the document with the stakeholders, the deliverables, as well as the frequency of communication, how we plan to get feedback on those engagements as well. So, it's something which I have identified within our department has been a bit lacking over the last couple of years”.</i> |

Source: Author’s Own

Participant 1 explained that stakeholder mapping is a complex process but is needed to ensure engagement of relevant personnel. The mapping process can reveal groups of people that one would not have thought to communicating with. Even though stakeholder mapping is important, Participant 9 noted that it has been lacking in recent years.

5.5.5 Theme Five: Structured Training and Mentoring

It was recognised by participants that skill development was necessary, especially for personnel joining the organisation, taking on new roles and responsibilities. The results in Table 68 indicates that participants identified training and coaching and mentoring as important aspects of effective stakeholder management.

Table 68: Codes Falling Under the Theme of Structured Training and Mentoring

| CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME | CODE | FREQUENCY IN THEME |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Training | 5 | Coaching and Mentoring | 1 |

Source: Author’s Own

The two initiatives related to structured training and mentoring was identified as:

1. Training
2. Coaching and Mentoring

Training

Table 69: Participant Views – Training

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Participant 2 | <p><i>“You know, how we have utilities and municipalities have this notion that you just send people for training, you know, and you're doing nothing to follow up, or to see how that training is going to help improve the work itself”.</i></p> <p><i>“As part of the internal training processes, or even if it's one of the orientations of the organization, is the stakeholder component, because we are a public sector”.</i></p> |
| Participant 6 | <i>“In the recent years, I think there is lots of training and education which needs to be promoted within our environment. Lack of knowledge, lack of skills, people added to different positions, that has done some really bad damage. So, I would say we should spend more money on training and upskilling people”.</i> |
| Participant 9 | <i>“Some skill development would be beneficial, the behavioural competencies. But at my age, I don't foresee that changing”.</i> |
| Participant 10 | <i>“The capacity development and training aspects of my role are impacted and influenced by changing stakeholder expectations and demands”.</i> |
| Participant 14 | <i>“Well, I will say, as always, there's always room for improvement”.</i> |

Source: Author's Own

All participant whose views are expressed in Table 69 recognised the need for training. Participant 10 claimed that the changing stakeholder expectations and needs directly affect training requirements. Since the EWS is a public sector entity, training related to stakeholder management is essential, as pointed out by Participant 2.

Coaching and Mentoring

Table 70: Participant Views – Coaching and Mentoring

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 2 | <p><i>“But I think we should be looking strongly at coaching, and having this person under a person that's, you know, been in that situation for a long time to help coach, and then they will be able to see the different layers of stakeholders, and why are they important. Because, like myself, I know all the stakeholders, and I understand the importance of them, and it can be unfair for me then to just keep that to myself, and that is why I've got an understudy, and it's somebody that I brought in.</i></p> <p><i>“So in the end, to provide that kind of mentoring and coaching, because not everybody comes into a work situation, and understands organisational culture”.</i></p> |
|---------------|--|

Source: Author's Own

Participant 2 highlighted the need for coaching and mentoring, specifically pertaining to understanding who stakeholders are, and identifying their needs. There is importance and value in learning from a person who has experience, and who can explain the work environment.

5.5.6 Conclusion of Research Question Three

The aim of research question three was to identify how all the relevant stakeholders could be included in EWS initiatives for effective stakeholder management. The interview questions posed to the 16 participants provided data for proposing a framework. The qualitative, inductive, analysis process, resulted in five emergent themes which answered research question three. The five themes identified are summarised in Table 71.

It must be noted that Tables 52, 56, 60, 64 and 68 summarise all the initiatives or requirements related to each theme. To convey the most relevant data, the results for the three most frequently occurring initiatives or requirements were illustrated per theme. The initiatives related to enabling effective stakeholder management for each theme was further supported by evidence from the interviewed participants.

During the interview process, it was recognised by the researcher that participants were not confident when explaining how they undertake effective stakeholder management. Participant 4 explained that stakeholder management was a natural process and did not require any specific documentation. The rest of the participants were not aligned to this view, as they suggested that a documented process was required. Whilst such processes may have existed in the past, they have neither been updated nor used in recent years.

Table 71: Summary of Themes for Research Question Three

| How can the identified stakeholders be included in all initiatives of the EWS for effective stakeholder management? | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Theme One: Documented and Structured Approach | Theme Two: Communication | Theme Three: Skills and Competency | Theme Four: Stakeholder Identification | Theme Five: Structured Training and Mentoring |
| 1 | Set a goal | Frequent engagement | Form Teams | Identifying Stakeholders | Training |
| 2 | Service level agreement | Liaison Meeting | Identifying stakeholder and their needs | Understand Stakeholder needs | Coaching and Mentoring |
| 3 | Executive engagement meetings | Monthly meetings | Competency | Stakeholder mapping | |

Source: Author's Own

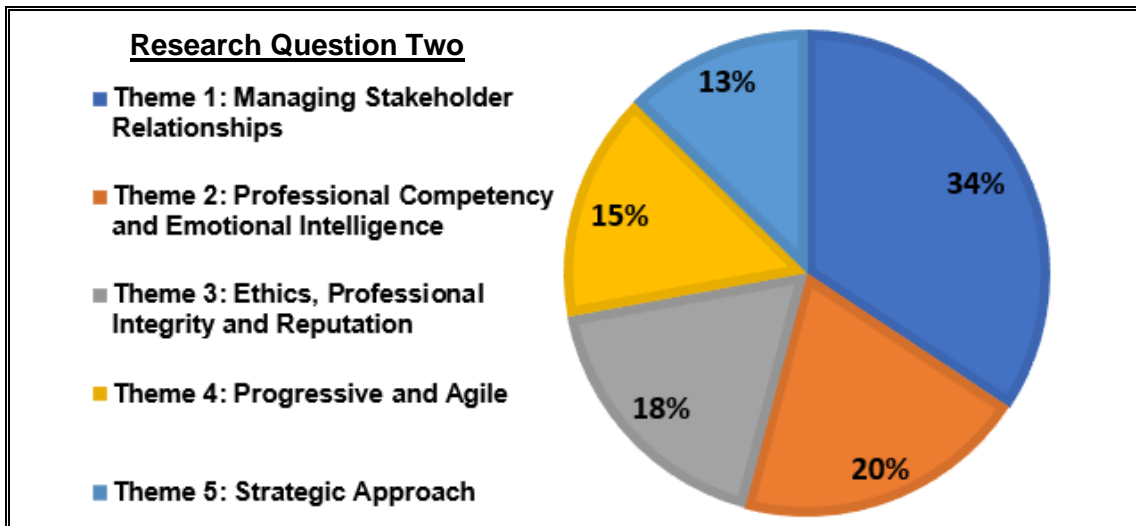
5.5. Conclusion of Results

The process of analysing the results of 16 semi-structured interviews was aligned to the inductive, qualitative methodology outlined in Chapter Four, and presented in this chapter. Researcher bias is noted to be a limitation of this process; however, the researcher was aware of this and made every attempt to remain impartial when analysing the results. Based on Figure 11 and as explained in Section 5.2, the data was not analysed prematurely as data saturation was only reached in the final interview with Participant 16.

Using maximum variation purposive sampling, a rich data set was obtained with varied perspectives and experiences that emerged. The insights provided by the participants enabled an understanding of stakeholder management in the EWS. Through the data analysis process, themes emerged in response to each of the three research questions. The themes for each research question are summarised in Table 72. Included under each theme in the table are the three main codes identified per theme, based on the frequency of their occurrence. For instance, where there are more than three codes per theme, this is due to certain codes having occurred an equal number of times within the theme.

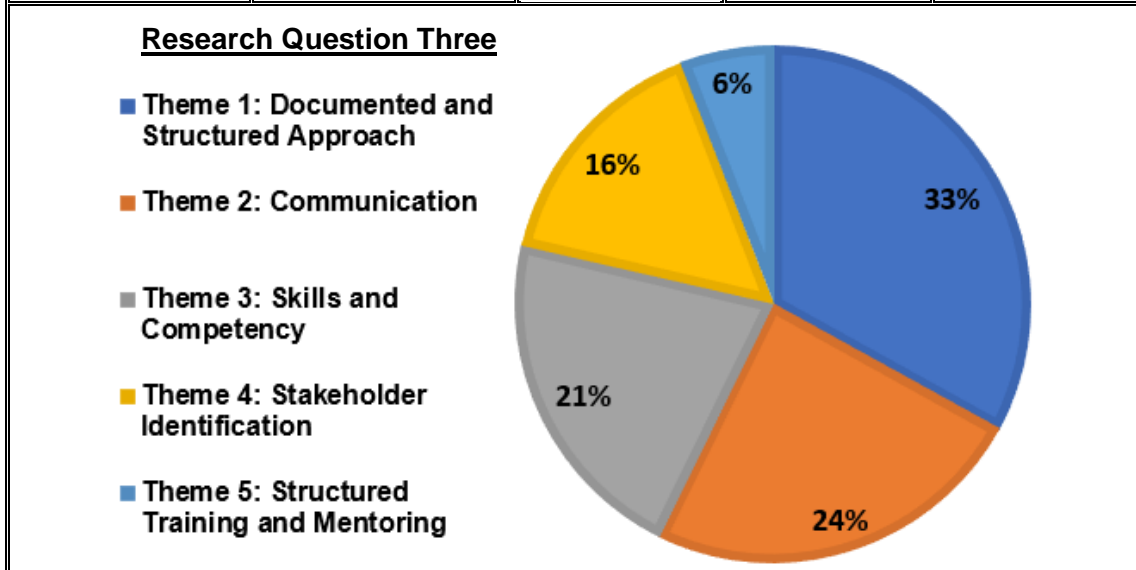
Table 72: Summary of Results for All Research Questions

| Research Question One: Who are the stakeholders of the EWS? | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|------------------|------------|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|----------------------|----|
| Theme One: Primary Social Stakeholders | Theme Two: Secondary Social Stakeholders | Theme Three: Secondary Non-Social Stakeholders | | | | | | | | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff 2. DWS 3. Finance Department 4. National Treasury 5. Politicians 6. Unions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citizens 2. Customers 3. External Stakeholders 4. International Stakeholders | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DEA 2. Durban Water Re-cycling | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Research Question One</p> <p>■ Primary Social ■ Secondary Social ■ Secondary Non-Social</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Research Question One Stakeholder Distribution</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Stakeholder Type</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Primary Social</td> <td>63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary Social</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary Non-Social</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | | Stakeholder Type | Percentage | Primary Social | 63% | Secondary Social | 35% | Secondary Non-Social | 2% |
| Stakeholder Type | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Primary Social | 63% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Secondary Social | 35% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Secondary Non-Social | 2% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research Question Two: What are the key characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the EWS? | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Theme One: Managing Stakeholder Relationships | Theme Two: Professional Competency and Emotional Intelligence | Theme Three: Ethics, Professional Integrity and Reputation | Theme Four: Progressive and Agile | Theme Five: Strategic Approach | | | | | | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to manage power dynamics 2. Effective Communication 3. Having face to face meetings with stakeholders | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical skills 2. Understanding role 3. Understanding the environment 4. Understanding Finance 5. Recognising the value of people 6. Emotional Intelligence 7. Experience 8. Decision making | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethical 2. Trust 3. Honesty 4. Openness and Transparency | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embrace Change 2. Passion 3. Creative/ Innovative | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration 2. Long-term View 3. Solution driven | | | | | | | | |



Research Question Three: How can the identified stakeholders be included in all initiatives of the EWS for effective stakeholder management?

| Theme One: Documented and Structured Approach | Theme Two: Communication | Theme Three: Skills and Competency | Theme Four: Stakeholder Identification | Theme Five: Structured Training and Mentoring |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set a goal 2. Service level agreement 3. Executive Engagement Meeting | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frequent Engagement 2. Liaison Meeting 3. Monthly Meetings | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form Teams 2. Identifying Stakeholders and their needs 3. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying Stakeholders 2. Understand Stakeholder Needs 3. Stakeholder Mapping | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training 2. Coaching and Mentoring |



Source: Author's Own

For research question one, primary social stakeholders were most frequently identified by the participants, as can be seen in Table 72. Similarly, for research question two, managing stakeholder relationships was the most important

characteristic required by leaders in the EWS. For the final research question, Table 72 illustrates that a documented and structured approach was the most pertinent in terms of leaders ensuring effective stakeholder management.

The additional results which emerged for each theme is included in the section for a particular theme in the first table. The first table in each section details all the codes obtained per theme and their frequency in the theme.

Together, the results in this chapter provided important insights into identifying the stakeholders of the EWS, identifying the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management, and the requirements for leaders to enable effective stakeholder management. These results will be triangulated with the Initial Research model (Figure 3), and the literature from Chapter Two to reduce researcher bias and validate the results in Chapter Six. The next chapter discusses this further.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The intent of this chapter is to unpack the research findings presented in Chapter Five, and to put forward a structured argument based on the objectives of the research, results obtained, patterns discovered, and literature reviewed. The themes formulated from the codes in response to each research question will be discussed in the context of the EWS. The characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management will be examined.

As explained in Chapter Four, triangulation of the results will be undertaken with the literature review and Initial Research Model (Figure 3) from Chapter Two. This method of discussing the results will explore and answer the three research questions formulated in Chapter Three. This has contributed to the development of two conceptual frameworks for improving stakeholder management, which will serve to enhance the service delivery of water in the EWS. The frameworks will illustrate the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management, and the process of how to achieve successful stakeholder management.

The present study was designed to answer each of the three research questions through a qualitative, inductive, analysis approach. Table 72 in Chapter Five provides a summary of the results for all the research questions and will be used as a framework for organising this chapter. The answer to each of the research questions were formulated from the themes identified, which were in turn generated from the codes identified during data analysis. Each of the themes and pertinent codes will be discussed in relation to the research questions, and the triangulation of data will validate and enhance the quality of the results discussed.

6.1. Discussion for Research Question One: Who are the stakeholders of the EWS?

As explained by Freeman (2010), stakeholders are groups or individuals who have a vested interest or influence on the organisation, in this case the organisation being the EWS. It was inferred that stakeholders must not be excluded from any initiatives or processes as they have the ability to negatively or positively influence outcomes. Identification and clarity pertaining to who the stakeholders of the EWS where was achieved through this study.

Khojastehpour and Shams (2020) suggest that leaders often have a wide variety of

stakeholders to satisfy. Literature also revealed that within the public sector governance and administrative environment, leaders of the EWS had numerous stakeholders to interface with (Government of South Africa, 2000; Wilson et al., 2008; Megdal et al., 2017). Molale (2019) provided additional evidence in the form of the IDP, which affirms the high level of stakeholder engagement required in the EWS. Dibie and Quadri (2017), also argued that should the EWS be successful in improving the service delivery of water, it is of utmost importance that the relevant stakeholders be involved in all initiatives.

Figures 14, 15 and 16 identified 78 stakeholders which leaders in the EWS must interface with, as confirmed by the participants of the study. This substantial number validates the views from literature that leaders are expected to manage a wide variety of stakeholders. Most participants however at first appeared uncertain about who their stakeholders were. For participants to identify the stakeholders they interfaced with, they had to pause and reflect on the people they had most recently interacted with. Only Participant 1 was able to provide a list of stakeholders, which was drawn from official documentation. This study provided clarity on who the stakeholders of the EWS are, but most importantly, it highlighted the need for leaders of the EWS to be able to identify their stakeholders.

Bjorna (2015), observed that local government is comprised of two groups of stakeholders. The first group is internal stakeholders who are individuals or groups that are within the EWS. The research pointed out that participants considered these stakeholders to be Primary social stakeholders which is explained further in Section 6.1.1. The second group is referred to as external stakeholders and was validated to be secondary social, or non-social stakeholders by the participants. Bjorna (2015) believes that although the stakeholders may differ with regards to their needs and demands, it is the responsibility of leaders in the EWS to identify the stakeholders and satisfy their needs within the mandate of the sector.

It was somewhat unexpected that participants from Umgeni Water would be unable to readily identify their stakeholders, nor a structured and documented process by which they are identified or managed. The literature review had highlighted the four main groups of Umgeni Water's stakeholders in Figure 2, however, the feedback from participants indicated that they were not aware of these stakeholder groups. None of the participants noted or suggested these stakeholder groups during the one-on-one interviews. On the contrary the literature review for the EMWSD had not

produced any document outlining the stakeholders. This appeared to be confirmed by the results from the participants of EMWSD, who had no points of reference for identifying their stakeholders. These participants had to reflect on recent engagements, to establish their list of stakeholders.

Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), remarked that the systemic approach to identifying stakeholders is fundamental to effective stakeholder management. They also concluded that stakeholder identification had the most important role to play in the process. Buchholtz and Carroll (2018) further supported the importance of the stakeholder identification process to ensure effective stakeholder management. Best et al. (2019), argued that identifying all stakeholders and their priorities was a challenging task.

The Stakeholder Salience Model (Figure 4) and the Power/Interest Matrix (Figure 5) are tools which will enable leaders to identify their stakeholders (Mitchell et al., 1997; Johnson and Scholes, 1999). By identifying the type of stakeholders' leaders must interface with, they will be able to determine the level of communication required for managing the stakeholders identified. To aid the process of stakeholder identification, Buchholtz and Carroll (2018), proposed four main groups which stakeholders could be classified according to.

Based on the results of this study, the themes which emerged from the data analysis process was aligned to the four main stakeholder groups proposed by Buchholtz and Carroll (2018). One unanticipated finding was that participants did not identify stakeholders that could be classified as Primary non-social stakeholders, the third group designated by Buchholtz and Carroll (2018).

Primary non-social stakeholders include the environment and other non-human groups, implying that this would include water from dams, rivers, oceans and streams as a natural resource (Buchholtz & Carroll, 2018). Since water is the primary resource being managed by the EWS, it was surprising and concerning to note that none of the participants had identified this natural resource as a stakeholder. The remaining three stakeholder groups were recognised as themes in response to research question one and are discussed further.

6.1.1 Theme One: Primary Social Stakeholders

Buchholtz and Carroll (2018) explained that Primary social stakeholders are groups of people or individuals who are directly involved with the EWS or have a direct impact on service delivery and the objectives of the sector. It is an accepted notion that the largest number of stakeholders would belong to the group of Primary stakeholders for any organisation or sector, as they have a direct impact on the outcomes. Consistent with the above, this research acknowledged that 63% of the stakeholders identified by the participants were Primary social stakeholders as per Table 72.

Participants had emphasised that all Primary social stakeholders identified had a direct impact on the mandate of the EWS to deliver quality water to the citizens. All 16 participants held the view that stakeholders can impact the goals in both a positive and negative way, hence the importance of understanding the type of power and influence the stakeholder possesses, as explained by Buchholtz and Carroll (2018). Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), furthermore argued that the power of a stakeholder can determine the extent of the influence they have on the EWS.

Of the 47 Primary social stakeholders identified by the participants, staff, DWS, Finance Department, National Treasury, Politicians and Unions were the top six primary stakeholders mentioned. These findings confirm that the leaders of the EWS have a wide variety of stakeholders to work with, with each of these stakeholders having different needs and objectives. The responsibility remains with the leaders of the EWS to manage and address their needs where reasonably possible.

Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016) explained that to improve service delivery, infrastructure projects were required in developing countries such as South Africa. These types of projects usually required consensus from stakeholders of varying cultures, backgrounds, professions, levels of skill and knowledge. The research supports the notion that primary social stakeholders have varied needs and objectives.

An unexpected finding arose during the interview with Participant 4, who expressed the belief that staff should not be considered as stakeholders. Participant 4 pointed out that with an autocratic leadership style, staff were not necessarily part of the value chain. Staff were only considered to be a stakeholder if there was a problem in which they were involved or working towards. This contrasted with the views of the

other the participants, who firmly believed that staff are a stakeholder directly involved in achieving an end goal. The view of majority of the participants is supported by the literature and the definition of a Primary stakeholder, it is therefore concluded that staff are an important stakeholder in the value chain.

Participants identified the internal Finance departments and the National Treasury as key primary social stakeholders. These stakeholders are responsible for the funding to the operation of the EWS. Other stakeholders who had a direct impact on the EWS, as identified through the study, were Politicians and Unions.

Participant 1 had described the interactions with Politicians and Unions as often being difficult, leading to high levels of frustration. Participant 11 also felt that the Unions introduced politics into the service delivery of water, adding even more challenges to carrying out the tasks pertaining to service delivery. On the contrary, Participant 2 mentioned that Politicians and Unions cannot be excluded as they are key stakeholders that should be involved in the EWS.

Taken together, these results align with the literature which suggests that leaders in the EWS have numerous Primary stakeholders to manage. These stakeholders directly impact service delivery in different ways, some positively and others negatively. Regardless, none of these stakeholders can or should be ignored. Leaders in the EWS have an important role to ensure engagement with all the stakeholders. This includes the Secondary social and non-social stakeholders which will be discussed in the following sections.

6.1.2 Theme Two: Secondary Social Stakeholders

Buchholtz and Carroll (2018), explained that Secondary social stakeholders were also influential, but usually had an indirect or consequential impact on the initiatives of the EWS. This suggested that leaders of the EWS had correctly identified this group of stakeholders in relation to their influence on the EWS. An analysis of the results shown in Figure 15 indicates that that the participants identified 29 Secondary social stakeholders. Citizens, Customers, External Stakeholders, International Stakeholders, Traditional Leadership, and the Water Research Commission comprised the top six most frequently mentioned stakeholders.

Participants 7,9 and 10 had identified various Secondary social stakeholders, and

collectively referred to them as external stakeholders. This finding is consistent with that of Bjorna (2015), who argued that local government has both internal and external stakeholders who influence the EWS. These participants also explained that whilst the stakeholders may be grouped as external, they may be prioritised differently based on their specific needs.

Citizens, Communities and People were collectively termed as Citizens, which refers to the users of water in the EWS. Masiya et al. (2019), boldly claimed that the citizens of eThekweni are dissatisfied with the poor levels of service delivery they receive. Bjorna (2015), argued that the levels of satisfaction of citizens pertaining to the delivery of safe drinking water was a measure of the success of local government, inclusive of the EWS. Malakoana et al. (2020), also remarked that that the predominant expectation of all stakeholders was that they receive safe drinking water.

The views of the participants were distinctly aligned to the literature. Participant 11 believed that the leaders within the EWS were employed by the citizens, therefore serving the citizens was the most important function of the EWS. Participant 1 also remarked that for the EWS to improve service delivery and make a difference, they had to go out to the citizens and understand their needs. Based on the notion by Bjorna (2015), that the citizens were the measure of success for the EWS, it is without a doubt evident that the citizens are a secondary social stakeholder to the EWS.

Participant 12 confirmed that citizens expect to have water running through their taps 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Participant 1 further explained that personnel regularly engage with the communities to understand the expectations of the people and serve them better, having even started swimming lessons in some communities. This is contrary to the findings of Masiya et al. (2019) who claimed that there are low levels of public participation and engagement. The level of interaction between leaders in the EWS and the citizens can therefore not be conclusively determined, as there are varying opinions from the results of the study and literature.

EMWSD purchases 71% of the water produced by Umgeni Water to provide to the citizens (Umgeni Water, 2019). What was positively surprising is that Umgeni Water considered the citizens to be a large part of their customer base, not just EMWSD who is the direct bulk purchaser of water. Participant 16 supported this approach by

stating that engagement with communities enabled them to better serve the needs of the communities.

To better serve the needs of the citizens, Participants 1,2 and 3 endorsed the EWS for making strides in collaborating with international stakeholders to form partnerships. Participants suggested that these collaborations also enabled countries in Africa to better serve their people through the delivery of basic services. Participant 1 highlighted the emphasis placed on engaging with international stakeholders during International Water Week, to engage and find solutions to the challenges of service delivery in South Africa. The collaborations with International stakeholders are in accordance with Patzer et al. (2018), who believes that as society is transforming within South Africa, engaging with international counterparts will assist to advance the water services in the country.

Similar to partnerships with International stakeholders, the views of Participants 2 and 8 from Table 20 indicate the importance of the role of research in advancing the work undertaken by the EWS. Participant 2 highlighted that there are research agreements in place with the WRC, which affirmed their inclusion as a secondary social stakeholder with a vested interest in improving service delivery.

Participants 1 and 2 argued that there were many cultural practices which had to be considered when undertaking work in a new area, therefore, the identification of traditional leaders as stakeholders was relevant in a South African context. As explained in Chapter One, the context of this study is important and relevant to the findings. The history and culture of South Africa justifies the importance of consulting with traditional leadership at the start of infrastructure projects related to the improvement of service delivery.

Like the discussions pertaining to Primary social stakeholders, leaders had a wide variety of Secondary social stakeholders to interface with. It was interesting to note the alignment of the views expressed during the interviews to the background of South Africa, as explained in Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. Participants acknowledged that they had to interface with certain stakeholders based on the traditional and cultural needs of the people to realise service delivery projects. The next section will discuss Secondary non-social stakeholders who are the voice of environmental or non-human groups

6.1.3 Theme Three: Secondary Non-social Stakeholders

Best et al. (2019), advised that vocal and demanding stakeholders usually display their power to take priority over those stakeholders that may not have a voice or are submissive. This justifies the need for leaders in the EWS to remain attentive to the views of Secondary non-social stakeholders who represent stakeholders such as natural water resources, the environment, and non-human groups. These stakeholders may not be as vocal or powerful.

An unexpected finding from the identification of stakeholders was that participants did not identify the natural resource of water as a stakeholder however, they did identify the Department of Environmental Affairs. Approximately 70% of participants interviewed had indicated that water is a natural resource which needs to be secured into the future, however none had indicated dams, rivers, the ocean, or other water sources as stakeholders. These views indicate that leaders of the EWS require a more structured approach to identifying their stakeholders so that they do not leave out relevant stakeholders to the EWS.

Participant 8 had highlighted the importance of ensuring that any substance discharged into the river should be of a certain quality as stipulated by the Department of Environmental Affairs. Participant 3 aligned with views of Participant 2 who expressed that innovation was required when considering the sustainability of the environment. Participant 3 further expressed that the Durban Water Re-cycling initiative is the primary proponent for the conversion of wastewater into potable drinking water. It was pointed out that they continue to be a successful model for water re-use and the voice of re-cycled water.

The participants argued that Secondary non-social stakeholders are different to the other stakeholders identified. They represent the voice of the environment and non-human groups who are not as vocal and demanding, hence, the importance of their role in the EWS can sometimes be dismissed. It is the responsibility of leaders in the EWS to ensure that they correctly identify these stakeholders.

6.1.4 Concluding Remarks for Research Question One

As outlined in Chapter One, the first out of the three objectives of this study were to identify the stakeholders that affect or are affected by the service delivery of the

EWS. This objective of the research was successfully achieved through its methodology and design.

Leaders in the EWS have many stakeholders to manage. The needs, personalities, requirements and objectives of individuals or groups of stakeholders are quite varied. Stakeholders range from the average citizen to officials in the office of the president. The wide spectrum of stakeholders identified by the participants has confirmed that the task of identifying stakeholders in the EWS is indeed complex.

Although the participants were able to list some of their stakeholders, it was evident that there was no formal, documented stakeholder identification process which took place. One can deduce that leaders are not adequately equipped to identify their stakeholders, and this may adversely affect the performance of their roles and the overall task of delivering water to the citizens of eThekweni. Considering that the United Nations (2019), identified water as key for the survival of humans and the environment, it was even more surprising that participants of the EWS did not recognise this. This was further evidenced by the results which indicated that none of the participants had identified the natural resource of water as a stakeholder.

Building on to research question one which identified the stakeholders of the EWS; Buchholtz and Carroll (2018) recommends that leaders should consider attributes such as legitimacy, power, and urgency. These attributes would assist leaders of the EWS to identify the type of stakeholder they are interfacing with, thereby, providing them with the correct level of service and attention. In response to research question two, the ability to manage the power dynamics of stakeholders was crucial in managing stakeholder relationships. Section 6.2 will expand on this further.

6.2. Discussion for Research Question Two: What are the key characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the EWS?

The study by Dal Maso et al. (2018), proposed that stakeholder theory bridged the gap between the performance of an organisation and the external needs of the stakeholders. This was effectively regarded as stakeholder management. The purpose of this research question is to explore and identify the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management. This suggests that leaders of the EWS require the skills to manage the service delivery of water, as well

as the expectations and characteristics of all the stakeholders identified in research question one.

Walsh (2005), pointed out that leaders are expected to function in a complex environment which is constantly changing. This complex environment was confirmed by Participant 11 who pointed out that the citizens often exercise their right to make themselves heard, usually taking the form of service delivery protests, barricading of roads, and burning tyres. Participant 12 added their experience of managing a project which was terminated due to the demand of the community. Alexander et al. (2018) reported the alarming statistic of there having been over 14 000 protests that took place between 2005 to 2017, some of which resulted in violence and damage to infrastructure. As discussed in research question one, it was concluded that leaders within the EWS must manage the expectations, needs, and emotions of all stakeholders, regardless of the engagements being positive or negative.

The work by Freeman et al. (2017), affirmed that the complex environment within which leaders need to function is centred around managing for stakeholders. Haruna (2009), refers to this type of management as community-based leadership, which emphasises the relational aspect between the leaders of the EWS and the communities. Participant 2 aligned with the views of Haruna (2009) and firmly argued that the communities are the main stakeholders of the EWS. Participant 1 had also indicated that some recent work involved the brainstorming of ideas for investing in underprivileged communities, the attempt being to formulate a business case for every person to benefit from water resources.

Taking all the above into consideration, it is evident that community-based leadership is recommended for managing stakeholders of the EWS. This suggests that leaders need to focus on the characteristics required to manage all types of relationships, by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of all relevant stakeholders (Haruna, 2009). Section 6.2.1 explains the characteristics required by leaders to manage stakeholder relationships.

6.2.1 Theme One: Managing Stakeholder Relationships

The findings of this study are consistent with that of Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) and the Initial Research Model (Figure 3). The model had established from literature that maintaining good relationships was an important characteristic required by

leaders for effective stakeholder management. This was supported by the research findings in Table 72, which illustrated that the theme of managing stakeholder relationships was most frequently mentioned by the participants.

Falling under the theme of managing stakeholder relationships, participants had identified the ability to manage power dynamics, undertake effective communication, and have face to face meetings with the stakeholders as the most important characteristics required by leaders. Kujala et al. (2019), also expressed their agreement with leaders understanding the importance of creating value through every relationship, not just for the EWS, but for every stakeholder.

What is thought-provoking is that only one participant discussed “Batho Pele”, which when directly translated means “People First”. The ethos of Batho Pele has deep roots in the context of South African history and can be linked to community-based leadership. A significant component of managing relationships required leaders to manage the power dynamics between communities, organisations, individuals, and the environment.

Participant 1 confirmed that even the smallest community was powerful, as every citizen had rights. Although some stakeholders may be power hungry, Participant 6 emphasised that leaders must maintain a “*balance*”. The “*balance*” referred to understanding the stakeholder’s needs and giving them the appropriate level of importance. As discussed in Section 6.1, leaders need to understand the power a stakeholder has to effectively manage them, and this view is consistent with that of Buchholtz and Carroll (2018).

Once a leader can understand the power a stakeholder has, they can then communicate with them more effectively. Participant 6 observed that communication was an important skill required to ensure that a team can work together towards a common goal. This was further corroborated by Participant 12 who offered an interesting quote to explain the importance of communication, “*There’s more wars caused through poor communication than anything else*”.

The Initial Research Model (Figure 3) and Sershen et al. (2016), concurred that open channels of communication facilitated the formation of stronger relationships. Communication also aided in closing the gap between the expectations of the citizens and the services delivered by the EWS. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions,

and concerns regarding face to face meetings, most participants argued that face to face meetings was the best mode for communicating with stakeholders. Participant 2 explained that face to face interactions with stakeholders provided one with the opportunity to analyse the facial expressions and emotions of the stakeholder, thereby adjusting one's response. It is therefore evident that face to face interactions is the preferred mode of communication with stakeholders.

Consistent with literature, this research noted that managing stakeholder relationships was the most important characteristic required by leaders for effective stakeholder management, along with stakeholder identification as discussed in section 6.1. The next most important characteristic identified by the participants was professional competency and emotional intelligence.

6.2.2 Theme Two: Professional Competency and Emotional Intelligence

Participants explained that notwithstanding the importance of communication, leaders must also possess the relevant technical knowledge, and a sense of self-awareness to appropriately engage at the right time, in the right way. In order for leaders to embody the characteristics of professional competency and emotional intelligence, participant identified that the following characteristics were required: Technical skills, Understanding one's role, Understanding the environment, Understanding finance, Recognising the value of people, Emotional intelligence, Experience, and Decision making. The study by Sershen et al. (2016), confirmed and validated these findings.

Sershen et al. (2016), claimed that the solutions to certain water governance problems could be achieved by ensuring that leaders had a thorough technical knowledge of the water sector. They also needed experience and the ability to understand their environment and role to make decisions. Emotional intelligence was imperative to managing conflict and keeping stakeholders satisfied (Sershen et al., 2016).

It was concerning to note that Participant 1 and 4 had remarked that the knowledge base of leaders in the EWS had significantly declined. It was further asserted that personnel often do not recognise their lack of knowledge and proceed with acting as an interface with stakeholders. Through their study, Sershen et al. (2016), also argued that there exists a knowledge gap in the water sector.

On the contrary, Participant 8 and 10 mentioned that there was a good pool of technical skills and expertise in the EWS. Based on these mixed views, it is clear that personnel across the EWS interact with people of varied skill level and technical expertise. It can nevertheless be concluded that technical skill is a characteristic required by leaders for effective stakeholder management, whilst also enabling them to fulfil their role.

Participants 2, 7 and 8 linked understanding one's role to having the correct technical skills so that they can function in their role and fulfil the mandate of the EWS. One also needs to account for the view of Participant 1 who remarked that political considerations interfere with leaders fulfilling and understanding their roles. According to Participant 10 leaders need to understand the context and environment within which they work to ensure that they can keep abreast of their roles and responsibilities. Building on the technical skills, Participant 6 argued that leaders in the EWS must have an understanding of finances, so that they are able to ensure financial viability when spending public money.

The Initial Research Model (Figure 3), had not identified Technical skills, understanding one's role, understanding finance, and appreciating context as leadership characteristics required for effective stakeholder management. These skills were however identified by Sershen et al. (2016), as lacking in the area of water governance, and therefore imperative for leaders to have.

The Initial Research Model (Figure 3) confirmed that leaders also require emotional intelligence to manage stakeholders of varying cultural and educational backgrounds. Participant 10 confirmed this assertion, whilst Participant 3 further emphasised that leaders in the EWS need to be sensitive and kind when managing stakeholders. It was concerning that Participant 13 noted that leaders in the EWS were fearful of making difficult decisions and managing the reaction from stakeholders. According to Participant 10 this could be improved through a combination of experience and technical training, effectively improving the way decisions are made and managed with the stakeholders.

Taken together, these results reflect those of Sershen et al. (2016), concerning the association between effective stakeholder management, professional competency, and emotional intelligence. The participants had strongly agreed that leaders must have the technical know-how required for their roles, as well as the ability to apply

emotional intelligence so that decisions are made considering the emotions of those involved. Emotional intelligence is also important for recognising the value of the employees and the contributions they make towards achieving the objectives of the organisation. Participant 12 was honest and admitted that in the past, leaders focused on technical knowledge, but in recent times he confirmed that emotional intelligence was essential. This leads on to the next theme which is concerned with ethics, professional integrity, and reputation.

6.2.3 Theme Three: Ethics, Professional Integrity and Reputation

Building on professional competency and emotional intelligence, the characteristics of ethics, professional integrity and reputation were the third most frequently identified theme by the participants (Table 72). It was encouraging to note that participants understood the importance of ethics and reputation when interfacing with the public sector. The role of leaders in providing water to the people required them to be ethical, trustworthy, honest, open, and transparent, all of which were identified by this research as important characteristics for leaders to undertake effective stakeholder management.

Participants 1, 2, 6, 7,8,12 and 13 confirmed that ethical and trustworthy leaders were more likely to do what is in the best interest of the public. This is supported by the statement from Participant 1 who acknowledged:

“If we focused on ethics, then whatever we doing, is in the best interest of the public we serve, and we do it to that level of dignity, to that level of commitment that means you’re on the right ethical journey in the public sector, because those are your people”.

The participants further emphasised that leaders always have a choice, and ethical practice influences the decisions leaders make. The view of Participant 4 was rather interesting as it was mentioned that being an ethical leader also requires one to understand that there is a blurred line. Leaders must sometimes act beyond the ethical border for good reasons, which is often triggered by life threatening situations. This suggests that emotional intelligence, ethics, and trust combined are characteristics required by leaders.

The Initial Research Model (Figure 3), combined with the views of Kujala et al. (2019)

and Best et al. (2019) from literature, agreed that ethical and trustworthy leaders were more effective at stakeholder management. Kujala et al. (2019), further argued that trust encompassed mutual respect, commitment, fairness, and transparency. This view was corroborated by Participant 4 who felt that it is an instinct of people to trust, and no leader wants to go through their life continually being suspicious of others. Participant 6 endorsed the importance of building trust between stakeholders to so that the initiatives undertaken by the EWS could go faster and meet the project goals.

Participants felt that an important part of trust and ethics was the ability of a leader to be honest, transparent, and open. It was highlighted by Participant 6 that a leader should set realistic expectations and be honest about what they can and cannot achieve. Participant 7 jokingly mentioned that being a “talker” often put stakeholders at ease, easing tension and opening channels of communication. This suggested that if leaders are talkative, it could result in stakeholders believing that leaders are open and transparent.

A leader who embodies ethics and professional integrity to maintain a reputation of honesty and trustworthiness is essential to restoring and building the trust between stakeholders. Participant 12 captured this well by offering the following advice:

“It can take you 20 years to develop a reputation, you can take 5 minutes to break it. I think trust just isn't something that that comes immediately, it is demonstrated overtime and I think it's through behaviour.”

These findings were consistent with that of Sershen et al. (2016) and When et al. (2018), who claimed that commitment from leaders and restoring and enabling trust between stakeholders would enhance water governance and service delivery in the EWS. Participant 6 was clear about the importance of building trust, as once a trust relationship is formed, it can make “*things go faster*”. This suggests that by creating trustworthy relationships, leaders will be able to execute initiatives towards improving service delivery with greater efficiency. This follows on to the next section which discusses leaders been progressive and agile.

6.2.4 Theme Four: Progressive and Agile

Participant 2 eloquently captured the theme of leaders being progressive and agile,

while reminiscing about a meeting held with Bill Gates who is a co-founder of the Microsoft foundation. He explained that Bill Gates was an impatient optimist and had the ability to recognise when he was not making inroads towards a goal. Under such circumstances, Gates would abandon his current solution to move forward on a different path. In accordance with the results of this study, the approach could be identified as progressive and agile. Leaders need to embrace change, be passionate, and embody creativity and innovation as illustrated by the results from this study in Table 72.

The comparison of the findings from this study with those of other studies by Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016); Sershen et al. (2016); and the Initial Research Model (Figure 3); confirmed that the ability of a leader to respond to change in an agile and progressive manner are important characteristics for effective stakeholder management.

Participant 14 was nostalgic upon reflecting on his years of experience, and his learning which was shared as *“continuous change is a part of life”*. He also recommended that the best way to navigate this change would be to quickly embrace the change and become part of it, whilst also taking the relevant stakeholders on the journey. This finding supported Molale (2019) and Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016); who argued that local government often had to operate in a state of flux, having to react to change at extremely short notice. Leaders of the EWS therefore have a responsibility to ensure that the change is managed without creating tension or friction amongst stakeholders (Molale, 2019).

An interesting characteristic required for effective stakeholder management which emerged from this study, and was not identified in literature, was passion. Participant 6 and 7 had fervently remarked that what drives them is their passion for working in the EWS and driving outcomes. Participant 13 highlighted this with the following saying, *“If there’s no passion in the leader, there’s no passion in the people”*. This suggests that the stakeholders which leaders engage with are driven by the passion of the leader. If stakeholders recognise that leaders are passionate and want to make progress, they will also align to this notion. Through this study the importance of leaders being passionate about their job in the EWS emerged. It is therefore important for leaders to embody the characteristic of passion.

The passion of Participant 3 came through the interview when he claimed, *“We are open to innovation; we are open to have the conversation!”*. The ability of a leader to

be creative and innovative was also a characteristic which emerged through this study, Sershen et al. (2016), had also alluded to leaders becoming creative to enhance water governance and service delivery.

Collectively, this research confirmed that leaders of the EWS must embrace change. Participant 6 positively asserted that, *“You cannot change the world, you can change for the world”*. Stakeholders will recognise and support a leader in their change initiatives if they can feel and see the passion of the leader. Participant 9 highlighted that leaders in the EWS usually employ the same approach and solutions, with little innovative and new thinking. By stakeholders recognising the passion of the leaders and supporting them, leaders in the EWS will be encouraged to be innovative; an approach that will form part of their strategy.

6.2.5 Theme Five: Strategic Approach

Theme Five incorporates the characteristics discussed in Themes One to Four, combining them to form the strategic approach which leaders are required to adopt for effective stakeholder management. The findings of Theme Five aligns with the argument posed by Sebidi and Madue (2018), who pointed out that leaders require the relevant skills and ability to align stakeholders with a common vision and strategy.

Consistent with literature, this research confirmed that the three most identified characteristics required by leaders, are the ability to collaborate, have a long-term view and be solutions driven. The Initial Research Model (Figure 3) and the study by Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), further endorsed these characteristics for leaders to have a strategic approach. Table 22 which reflects the distribution of themes per participant, also highlighted that Participants 1, 4 and 12 were in strong agreement with leaders having a strategic approach.

The comment by Participant 1 about silo mentality was not unexpected, based on his agitated tone of voice. Participant 1 explained that the organisations and municipalities in the EWS preferred to work within the confines of their own boundaries. Participant 3 was adamant that collaboration is important to get through difficult times, and to provide flexibility in terms of the solutions implemented. Formulated from the definition of leadership, Yukl (2006), promoted the idea of creating common goals and shared interests amongst relevant stakeholders, which suggests a collaborative approach is required by leaders.

During the interviews, Participant 13 underlined the need for leaders to have a vision and long-term view. Participant 1 was fully supportive of this perspective and further advised that leaders of the EWS need to become more visionary, need to care enough about the sector and start to “*dare to make South Africa a better place*”. These assertions reflect the findings from literature of Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), who postulated that the correct levels of collaboration with stakeholders will enable both leaders and stakeholders to work towards a common goal.

Having a strategic approach informs the way in which leaders can encompass all the characteristics discussed in Sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.5. These characteristics will enable leaders to improve and become more effective when managing stakeholders in the EWS. A conceptual framework is proposed in the next section to capture the characteristics identified through this study.

6.2.6 Concluding Remarks for Research Question Two

Contrary to expectations, this study did not find a significant difference between the characteristics of leaders proposed in the Initial Research Model and literature reviewed, in comparison to what emerged from the results. The research did, however, unpack the characteristics required by leaders in greater detail.

In Chapter One, the findings by Molale (2019), had highlighted that leaders understood they have a role to play by creating a platform which enables the engagement with stakeholders. The reality, however, was that the leaders were not always aware of the characteristics, knowledge and skills required to undertake effective stakeholder management. The purpose of this research was to identify the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management, with the objective of proposing a conceptual framework. The research was able to successfully meet this objective and answer Research question two outlined in Chapter Three.

The literature highlighted the need for such studies which were context specific in a South African, local government context. Since the subject of stakeholder management is context specific, Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), confirmed the need to explore and identify the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the EWS.

A circular conceptual theoretical framework is proposed in Figure 20. The circularity is illustrative of the fact that the characteristics required by leaders work together for effective stakeholder management. They are not stand-alone characteristics which leaders can pick and choose to embody.

The concept of a circular model was borne from the interviews with the participants, as they did not list or indicate a linear process for managing stakeholders. On the contrary, they mentioned a combination of different skills and characteristics required to manage the various stakeholders, based upon the context of the engagement. As outlined in Section 6.1, it is imperative for leaders to correctly identify and acknowledge the role of each party in effective stakeholder management. It also emerged from the research that both stakeholder and leader have a role to play in the engagement process.

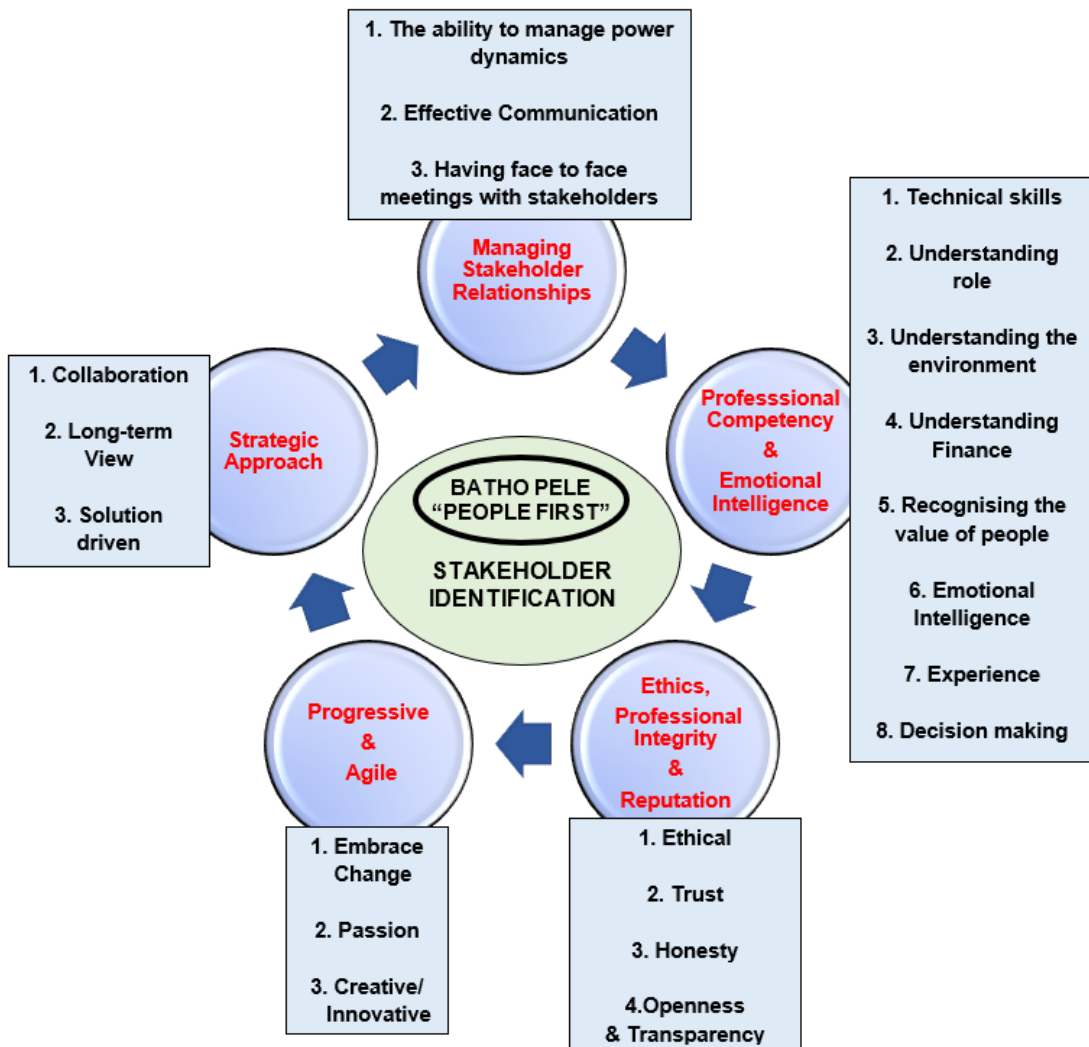


Figure 20: Framework – Characteristics Required by Leaders for Effective Stakeholder Management in the EWS
Source: Author's Own

6.3. Discussion for Research Question Three: How can the identified stakeholders be included in all initiatives of the EWS for effective stakeholder management?

Research questions one and two dealt with identifying the leaders of the EWS and the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management respectively. The findings from these questions laid the foundation for question three, which seeks to develop an understanding of how the leaders in the EWS can undertake effective stakeholder management, enabling the proposal of a conceptual theoretical framework that leaders can adopt.

The findings for research question three were not encouraging, with participants displaying hesitation when answering interview questions, often seemingly unsure of what stakeholder management entailed. This assessment is supported by the participant wise theme distribution in Table 50, which indicated that this research question generated the fewest themes. This further confirmed the view of Molale (2019), who reported that leaders were not always certain about how to undertake stakeholder management. Most participants held a vague understanding of how to undertake stakeholder management, which was limited to achieving performance metrics. Little consideration was given to the quality of the engagements or the broader vision to improve service delivery.

Participant 1 offered an example which illustrated the lack of effective stakeholder management. It was explained that based on the geographical location of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, these two cities should ideally collaborate on several service delivery projects; however, this was unfortunately not the case. Sershen et al. (2016), contended that a silo mentality is prevalent within the EWS, which likely explains the lack of collaboration and internal stakeholder engagement.

The study by Sershen et al. (2016), had suggested that a possible starting point to effective stakeholder engagement was working with the public to obtain buy-in and raise awareness. The results of this research are indeed useful in informing leaders on how to undertake effective stakeholder management so that public buy-in can be achieved. Five themes were identified in response to enabling effective stakeholder management, these themes will be discussed throughout Section 6.3.

6.3.1 Theme One: Documented and Structured Approach

Of the five themes identified for ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are included in the initiatives of the EWS, the implementation of a documented and structured approach to stakeholder management was the most highly recommended by the participants. This suggestion entails, amongst other things, the establishment of goals, developing service level agreements between stakeholders, and ensuring that executive engagement meetings occur at pre-determined intervals.

The study undertaken by Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), for construction stakeholder management in Ghana had also confirmed the importance of setting clear goals and ensuring senior management level support. Although Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016) also suggested the implementation of a documented approach, the concept of developing a service level agreement between stakeholders only emerged through this study. This result may be explained by the fact that organisations in local government departments have established the need for service level agreements to detail the roles, responsibilities, objectives, and outcomes between stakeholders.

Participant 7, aligned with views of Giacomini et al. (2018), who supported the use of service level agreements to understand upfront the core business requirements of all stakeholders. Participant 7 further explained that once the core business requirements are understood, leaders can adequately meet the needs of their stakeholders. On the contrary, Participant 9 argued that whilst service level agreements work well to manage the expectations of stakeholders, this *“has not been done for a while, as well as internal service level agreements”*. Participant 9 observed that one of the reasons which could explain the outdated state of the existing service level agreements was continuous change in leadership. The current situation as explained by Participant 9 was confirmed by Participant 16 who claimed an understanding of *“How do we manage those service level agreements, so that we involve all parties in the whole value change”*, was needed

These results reflect the need to take into consideration the findings of Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), who suggested that leaders should understand that the needs of stakeholders can change. Given this constant state of change, leaders must engage frequently and adapt new strategies to ensure that objectives are successfully met. Executive engagement meetings are a platform for senior management to be aware of and support the initiatives or changes (Eyiah-Botwe et al., 2016).

Overall, these findings suggest that leaders need to set a clear vision, clear targets and goals which can be captured within service level agreements. Considering the findings by Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), leaders need to further ensure that the service level agreements are frequently reviewed and updated based on the changing needs of the stakeholders. For the consistent evaluation of the needs of stakeholders and service level agreement amendments, Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016) emphasised the importance of communication, which is the next theme to be discussed.

6.3.2 Theme Two: Communication

Participant 1 remarked that *“walking the journey of stakeholder management as a leader in the EWS is not the same as walking the journey anywhere else”*. This claim by Participant 1 could possibly be explained by understanding that leaders in the EWS directly impact the livelihood of citizens, and that this involves a high level of responsibility. It was pointed out by Weaver et al. (2019), that the efficient and effective sharing of information helped to make the task of leaders in the EWS easier. This sharing of information, and continuous communication with the citizens will aid the process of effective stakeholder management.

Frequent engagements, liaison meetings, and monthly meetings were identified from the research as starting points to enable communication amongst stakeholders. Participant 1 pointed out that the traditional approach to project execution was to consult with the few people who would implement service delivery related initiatives. In recent times these engagements have involved a wider variety of selected stakeholders, which is as a result of the realisation that service delivery initiatives have *“impacted a whole lot”*. The importance of communicating with all stakeholders as a finding of this research corroborates the theory from the literature reviewed in section 2.4.3 and the Initial Research Model (Figure 3).

Citing the research of Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), who proposed the Stakeholder Engagement Wheel in Figure 6, it is seen that leaders of the EWS may benefit by understanding the iterative nature of stakeholder engagement and the importance of communication to ensure that stakeholders are always kept abreast of changes. Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), also recommended the incorporation of a communication plan into the documented process of stakeholder management.

One can conclude from this research that documented and structured communication plans, that could perhaps form part of SLA's, would aid in facilitating communication between stakeholders. The communication plans can also outline pre-determined intervals for liaison meetings or monthly meetings with stakeholders. Participant 8 confirmed that these types of meetings create a platform for stakeholders to "*describe the projects that we are implementing*", as well as provide updates on the current and future needs of relevant stakeholders.

Sershen et al. (2016), explained that leaders can improve the way communication is undertaken and start to "Connect knowledge champions" (Table 3). These individuals or groups can be responsible for sharing information pertaining to service delivery goals with the relevant stakeholders, thereby promoting buy-in. The sharing of knowledge leads on to further discussion on the theme of Skills, Competency and Stakeholder Identification.

6.3.3 Theme Three and Four: Skills, Competency and Stakeholder Identification

It was a finding of this research that it is important that appropriately skilled and competent personnel are recruited to work towards a common goal and undertake effective stakeholder management. Serhsen et al. (2016), put forward the concept of connecting people with similar knowledge and inter-sectoral planning as potential solutions to water governance challenges. Building on that thinking, participants revealed the advantages of the formation of teams to address challenges, and more efficiently utilise skills sets for effective stakeholder management.

When participants were asked to share a stakeholder engagement experience which was significant to them, it was surprising that all participants described an engagement which occurred in a team environment. These participants encouraged working in a team environment. This notion of common minds coming together was defended by Participant 2 who boldly claimed, "*I've achieved so much, because I've got a strong team*". Taking together the findings of Serhsen et al. (2016) and results from this research, a case can be made for the formation of carefully selected teams comprised of personnel of similar skill and competency to work towards a common objective.

This view is defended by Participant 1 who suggested that personnel of a similar

skilled level and motivation should be grouped together where possible, *“Just select a group of people that talk the same language”*. Although leaders may be supportive of selecting personnel of the correct skill and competency to form teams, a disappointing finding from this study was that the EWS often fails to recruit and retain skilled and competent personnel. Participant 2 remarked about how *“We employ the wrong people to do the right job”*. This loss of skilled personnel in the EWS was supported by the work of Sershen et al. (2016), who also claimed that there was a lack of technical capacity in the water sector.

As explained above, identifying the correct stakeholders to advance a vision is an important part to ensuring effective stakeholder management. It was further suggested by the participants that this could be achieved by mapping stakeholders. The concept of a stakeholder map was best described by Participant 1 as *“Start to build a network across each other, so that’s what we try to do in our stakeholder map. It’s trying to get all relevant people”*. This is a valuable finding as it suggests that a stakeholder map can be a useful tool for leaders.

The development of a stakeholder map ties in with the second focused step of the Stakeholder Engagement Wheel proposed by Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016). Participant 1 however cautioned that *“stakeholder mapping is very complex”*. Although stakeholder mapping is complex and does involve numerous departments as discussed in section 6.1, Participant 1 was still in support of undertaking this task. He further asserted that stakeholder mapping *“picked up areas that I would never in my wildest dreams thought of having a discussion with that group”*. Based on these findings and alignment with literature, it is evident that stakeholder mapping will enable leaders to correctly identify the relevant stakeholders, who also have the required level of skill and competence.

As highlighted by Participant 1, an adverse effect of not identifying the correct stakeholders could be that business in the EWS *“Becomes a lot more expensive”*. It is imperative that leaders in the EWS start to effectively engage with the relevant stakeholders to retain skilled and competent personnel, whilst also ensuring that the correct stakeholders can be identified to build teams capable of taking forward the vision of the EWS. Aligned with building teams and ensuring that personnel selected are of the correct skill level, structured training and mentoring is vital and will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.4 Theme Five: Structured Training and Mentoring

Of the five themes identified in response to research question three, structured training and mentoring was the least common theme identified by the participants in relation to undertaking effective stakeholder management. This was not a surprising outcome considering that the participants interviewed were at senior manager level; and were generally of the opinion that training was only essential for new personnel joining the organisation.

Although studies by Sershen et al. (2016), and Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), recognised that there is a skills gap in the water sector, none of the reviewed literature made mention of mentoring programs to assist leaders with stakeholder management. Participant 2 noted that while the status of EWS as a public sector organisation meant that managing stakeholders was highly prevalent, there was little training incorporating the stakeholder component. Lacroix and Megdal (2016), further asserted that water governance is complex, implying that leaders in the public sector were challenged by managing stakeholders and working in a complex environment.

Structured training and mentoring considered, Participant 4 shared his belief that stakeholder management cannot be easily taught, instead *“It should be a very natural, fluid process, it shouldn’t be a mechanical process”*. Considering the loss of skilled personnel by the EWS, as reported by Sershen et al. (2016), Participant 6 and 9 both argued that there should be focus on implementing training: *“I would say we should spend more money on training and upskilling people”*. It was evident to the researcher that there existed no metrics to measure the effectiveness of stakeholder management, nor the effectiveness of training and mentoring of personnel who engage with stakeholders.

The findings of Sershen et al. (2016), indicate that skills development is required in the EWS, whilst learning on the job can be supported through mentoring. Participant 2 held the view that one needed *“to provide that kind of mentoring and coaching, because not everybody comes into a work situation, and understands organisational culture”*. It is evident that personnel require structured training and mentoring to gain the practical experience of working in the EWS.

The sharing of knowledge was supported by both Sershen et al. (2016) and Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016). Although the view of Participant 4 stood out as he firmly held the

opinion that coaching and mentoring was not essential, most participants advocated for structured training and mentoring. This would assist new personnel entering the EWS in understanding their stakeholders. As Participant 2 expressed, *“I know all the stakeholders, and I understand the importance of them, and it can be unfair for me then to just keep that to myself”*. This view cemented the importance of structured training and mentoring for leaders to undertake effective stakeholder management in the EWS.

6.3.5 Concluding Remarks for Research Question Three

An objective of this research was to explore and understand how the relevant stakeholders can be included in the initiatives of the EWS for effective stakeholder management. The objective was to propose a conceptual theoretical framework which can guide leaders to enable effective stakeholder management. The essence of this chapter was summarised eloquently by Participant 9:

“We were a little better about 10 years ago, we identified stakeholders, classified stakeholders, actually documented a stakeholder management plan. And that would be the document with the stakeholders, the deliverables, as well as the frequency of communication, how we plan to get feedback on those engagements as well. So, it's something which I have identified within our department has been a bit lacking over the last couple of years”.

Based on the views of Lacroix and Megdal (2016), Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016) and Participant 9, it was reasonably confirmed that a documented and structured approach to stakeholder management was essential. The development of SLA's between stakeholders, combined with frequent revisions to capture their changing needs is an important component for enabling leaders to undertake effective stakeholder management.

The conceptual theoretical framework proposed in Figure 21 captures the findings of research question three discussed in this section. It further serves as framework which can be used by leaders of the EWS to undertake effective stakeholder management. The framework is conceptually circular to indicate that the process of effective stakeholder management is iterative, one must revise each step in the framework for it to be effective. This iterative nature of undertaking effective stakeholder management was also postulated by Lacroix and Megdal (2016).

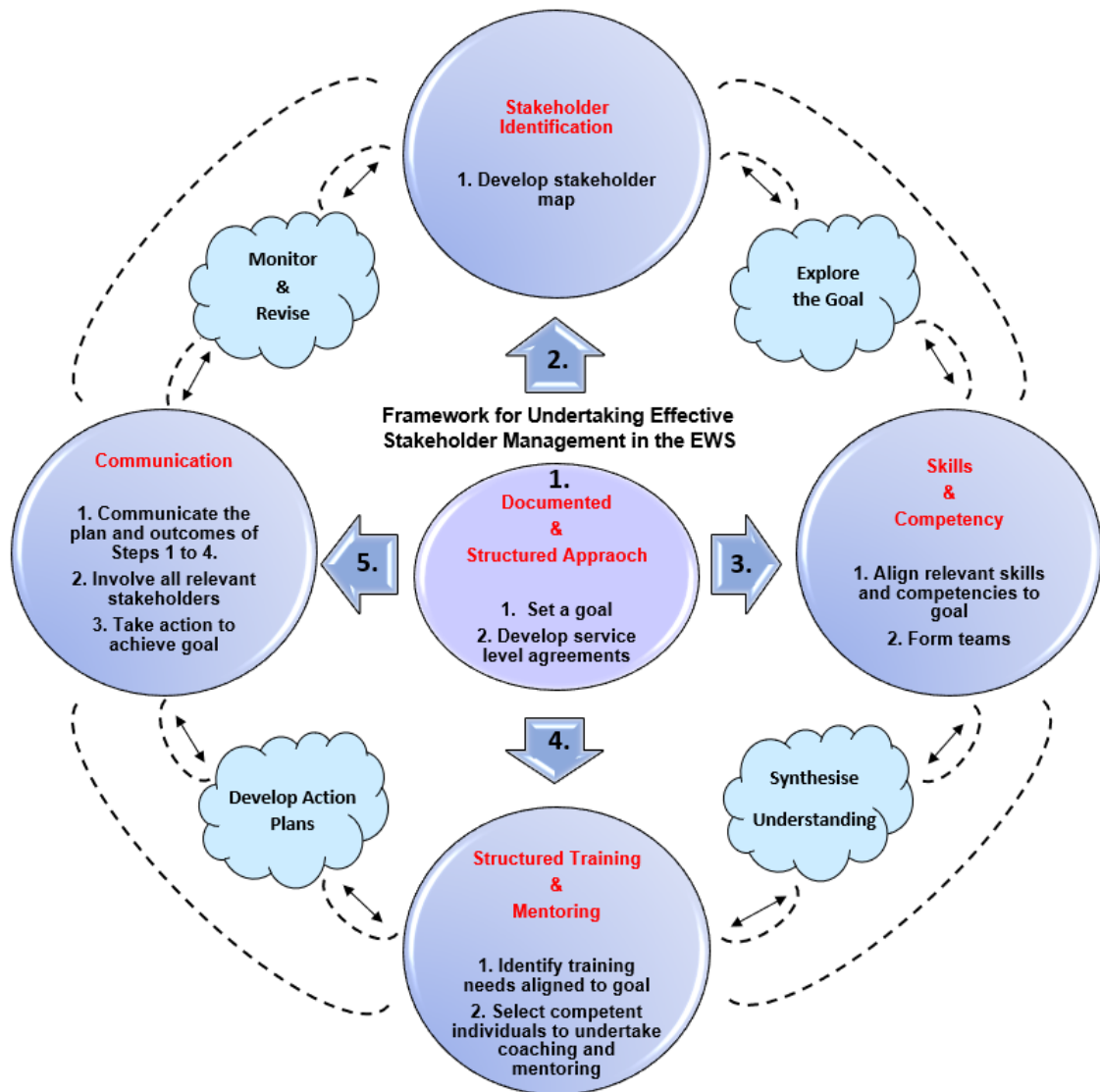


Figure 21: Framework for Undertaking Effective Stakeholder Management in the EWS

Source: Author's Own

6.4. Conclusion of Discussion – Managing Relationships

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the findings from Chapter Five which emerged through the research. The findings were discussed in conjunction with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, confirming and verifying the results. The three overarching research questions outlined in Chapter Three were answered through the results discussed in this chapter. The discussion of each question confirmed that the objectives of the study outlined in Chapter One were met. New concepts emerged through the views and knowledge shared by the participants, whilst confirming other concepts and views with literature and the initial Research Model (Figure 3).

Many of the concepts identified from literature pertaining to stakeholder management were applicable to this research. This study confirmed the findings of Sershen et al.

(2016), Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016), Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), and Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), but did also add new insights. The evidence suggested that effective stakeholder management in the EWS was predominantly about managing the relationships between stakeholders with varied needs, educational levels, backgrounds, and cultures. The context of this study being the EWS resulted in the offering of additional characteristics which leaders required, to undertake effective stakeholder management. This was mainly due to the complex environment and numerous challenges which leaders in the EWS encountered.

The first objective of this study set out to explore and identify the stakeholders of the EWS. A total of 78 different stakeholders were identified under the categories of Primary social, Secondary social, and Secondary non-social stakeholders. The results conveyed that generally, most participants did not have a structured or documented process for identifying stakeholders, and largely recalled stakeholders whom they most recently had interacted with. Of notable concern was the finding that none of the participants had identified the natural sources of water such as dams, rivers, and the ocean as stakeholders. These findings confirmed that a more structured approach to identifying stakeholders was required for leaders in the EWS.

Leading on from the identification of stakeholders of the EWS, the second objective of this study was to explore, identify and understand the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the EWS. Based on the overall findings for research question two, this study further supported the idea that managing stakeholder relationships and possessing an appropriate level of emotional intelligence are the dominant characteristics required by leaders of the EWS. Following an aggregation of the results for research question two, this study offered a framework which illustrated the characteristics required by leaders of the EWS in Figure 20.

The final objective of this study was to explore how the identified stakeholders could be included in the stakeholder management initiatives of the EWS. It was firmly established from the study that a documented and structured approach, inclusive of determining goals, establishing a communication plan, and identifying the correct stakeholders was the key to effective stakeholder management. An additional contribution of this study was the framework offered in Figure 21 for undertaking effective stakeholder management in the EWS.

Despite the exploratory nature of this study, there are still limitations, as the

embedded case study approach was solely focused on the EWS. It is therefore recommended that the results be extended, with care being exercised, to other local government sectors in South Africa, or countries with a similar governance structure to that of South Africa. The conclusion of this study in Chapter seven will elaborate on the limitations, practical, and methodological contributions of this research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH

The structure of the research was divided across seven cohesive chapters and set out to explore the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector. As a learning from the global financial crisis, Freeman et al. (2017) asserted that leaders must start managing in accordance to the needs of their stakeholders, and pointed to the importance of effective stakeholder management in the 21st century.

The real-world problem which necessitated this research was confirmed by Malakoana et al. (2020), as the expectation of citizens from the eThekweni region that they receive a consistent supply of quality drinking water. Chapter One argued that the citizens of eThekweni were dissatisfied with the level of services received from the eThekweni Water Sector. It was also established by Gumbi and Rangongo (2018), and Malakoana et al. (2020), that improving the service delivery of water could in part be achieved through effective stakeholder management by personnel at leadership levels.

Chapter Two went on to develop the understanding of the theory of stakeholder management, as seen through the lens of seminal scholars such as Freeman. This chapter also focused on the literature pertaining to stakeholder management in the context of local government. Previous research had indicated that some of the skills required for effective stakeholder management included identifying stakeholders, managing relations, building trust, and communicating effectively.

Dal Maso et al. (2018) pointed out the paucity in literature pertaining to context specific studies for stakeholder management. The breadth of the domain of stakeholder management led to the development of the Initial Research Model (Figure 3), which was used to align the research questions and interview questions with the purpose and objectives of the study in Chapter Three. It was therefore the intention of this study to close the gap between the broadly suggested characteristics for leaders; and the specific characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector.

Chapter Four detailed the exploratory, qualitative approach adopted while undertaking this study. The research to focused on the eThekweni Water Sector, and obtained the perspectives of 16 senior managers from Umgeni Water and eThekweni

Municipality Water and Sanitation Department by utilising an embedded case study investigation. This was accomplished by undertaking one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Lune and Berg (2017), confirmed the suitability of a case study approach for a qualitative study of this nature. The inductive approach to analysing the results obtained and illustrated in Chapter Five served to answer the three research questions outlined in Chapter Three.

This followed on to the discussion of the results which confirmed that the objectives of the study were successfully met. These objectives included identifying the stakeholders of the eThekweni Water Sector; establishing the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector; and finally establishing how leaders can successfully undertake effective stakeholder management.

By achieving the objectives of this study, this research expanded on the literature reviewed and contributed two conceptual theoretical frameworks, which graphically captured the findings of this study. The remainder of Chapter Seven will summarise the key findings of this research and explain the contributions made by this study, but also acknowledge the limitations of the research. The chapter will conclude by suggesting future research to build on this study.

7.1 Principal Findings for Research Questions

This section will outline the key theoretical findings obtained from this research. It is structured such that the findings are outlined per research question which are also aligned to the objectives of the study.

7.1.1 Research Question One: Who are the stakeholders of the eThekweni Water Sector?

Research question one aimed to identify the stakeholders of the EWS by understanding who the participants believed were their stakeholders, and the process they used to identify them.

Apart from Participant 1, all participants revealed that they had no structured or documented approach to identifying their stakeholders. They based the identification of stakeholder on those personnel or groups whom they had most recently

encountered. Participants emphasised that the stakeholders classified as Primary social stakeholders had a direct impact on the service delivery mandate of the eThekweni Water Sector. Buchholtz and Carroll (2018) explained that this was expected since Primary social stakeholders are defined as those that are directly involved or have a direct impact on the eThekweni Water Sector.

Based on the explanation by Buchholtz and Carroll (2018), it was not surprising that 63% of the stakeholders identified were Primary social stakeholders. These Primary social stakeholders included staff, the Department of Water and Sanitation, internal Finance Departments, National Treasury, Politicians and Unions.

An unexpected finding was that none of the participants considered the environment or natural resources such as rivers, dams, and oceans as stakeholders. The United Nations (2019) identified water as key to the survival of humans. The eThekweni Water Sector was directly responsible for managing and delivering this resource, yet water was not identified as a stakeholder. Buchholtz and Carroll (2018) had proposed that water would be a Primary non-social stakeholder as this included the environment and non-human groups.

The literature reviewed confirmed that within the public sector governance and administrative environment, leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector had numerous stakeholders to interface with (Government of South Africa, 2000; Wilson et al., 2008; Megdal et al., 2017). Combining the results of research question one and the views from literature, this research suggests that leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector should utilise tools such as the Stakeholder Saliency Model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997) in Figure 4; and the Power/ Interest Matrix offered by Johnson and Scholes (1999), in Figure 5. This will aid the formulation of a systemic, documented approach to identifying stakeholders.

7.1.2 Research Question Two: What are the key characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management within the eThekweni Water Sector?

Research question two aimed to identify and understand the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management. The research by Freeman et al. (2017), confirmed that leaders are required to work in complex environments. They further suggested that to successfully navigate their way and realise their visions, leaders must

understand the characteristics required to effectively manage their stakeholders.

The findings of this study complemented those of Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) and the Initial Research Model in Figure 3. By structuring the interview questions around the Initial Research Model, this study was able to extend the findings from literature, thereby making a theoretical contribution by proposing the Framework in Figure 22.



Figure 22: Framework – Characteristics Required by Leaders for Effective Stakeholder Management in the EWS
Source: Author's Own

This framework eloquently captures the results from the research and highlights the most important characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management. At the centre of the framework is the identification of stakeholders by the leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector. This is combined with "Batho Pele", which emerged through the research as an important principle of local government in South Africa, affirming the important of stakeholders.

The most dominant characteristic required by leaders, as identified by the participants of the study, was the management of stakeholder relationships. The other themes which emerged were professional competency and emotional intelligence; ethics, professional integrity, and reputation; progressive and agile; and strategic approach. Graphically illustrated next to each theme in the framework are the characteristics which a leader should embody to display all the five themes described above.

It is important to note the circularity of the framework. There is no pre-determined order in which a leader should begin to adopt these characteristics. Leaders should instead work to embody all of them at the same time. This confirms the iterative nature of stakeholder management as explained by Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016).

7.1.3 Research Question Three: How can the identified stakeholders be included in all initiatives of the eThekweni Water Sector for effective stakeholder management?

Freeman (1984) had emphasised that stakeholders can prevent a sector or organisation from attaining its goals. For this reason, it was imperative that no individual or group be left out of the initiatives undertaken by the eThekweni Water Sector. Research question one identified the stakeholder and was followed by research question which sought to develop an understanding of the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management. Question three addressed how leaders can incorporate the characteristics into a process for undertaking effective stakeholder management.

Molale (2019) had observed that the South African Government was dedicating significant resources to address service delivery challenges, yet still failed to meet the targets that were set, or even the expectations of the citizens. Statistics South Africa (2020) pointed out that 32.6% of households in KwaZulu-Natal reported water supply interruptions which lasted more than two days. The dissatisfaction of citizens was evident by over 14 000 protests which occurred between 2005 to 2017, many of which were directly related to service delivery (Alexander et al., 2018). Ndevu and Muller (2017) explained that local government is close to the citizens, hence, there is the expectation that leaders from the eThekweni Water Sector will engage and collaborate with the citizens and other stakeholders.

Of particular value to the leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector, this research makes a noteworthy theoretical contribution by offering a framework on how to undertake effective

stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector. The findings of this research built on the Initial Research Model (Figure 3), and the Stakeholder Engagement Wheel by Mott Lacroix and Megdal (2016), to propose the framework in Figure 23 below.

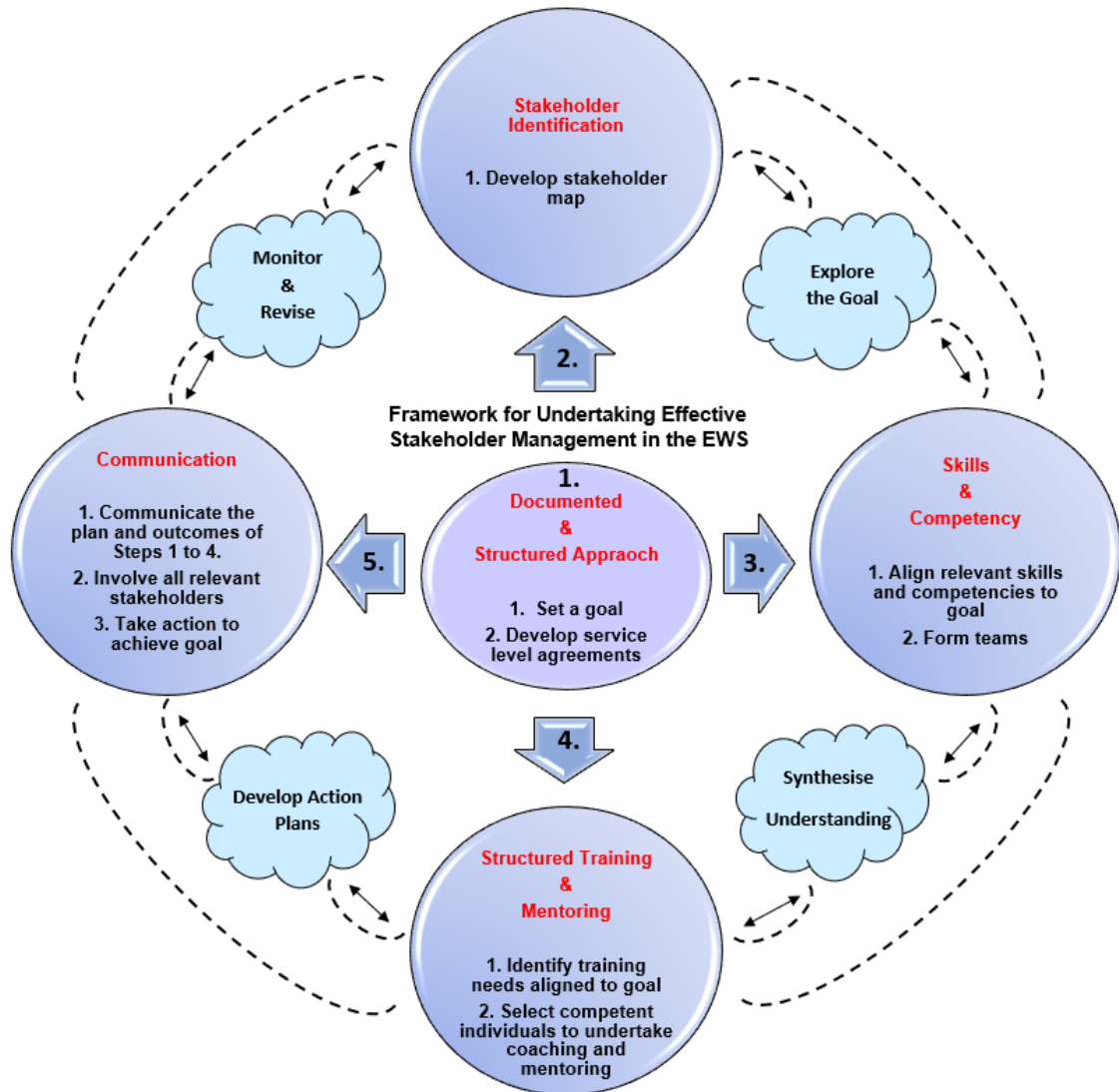


Figure 23: Framework for Undertaking Effective Stakeholder Management in the eThekweni Water Sector
Source: Author's Own

A documented and structured approach was identified as been fundamental to effective stakeholder management. It is vital that leaders clearly formulate their goals, which can be undertaken in the form of draft service level agreements. As explained by Giacomini et al. (2018), service level agreements act as contracts between stakeholders, and outline how the pre-determined goal will be achieved, taking into consideration all the different stakeholders involved.

To ensure that the correct stakeholders are identified, Step 2 concerns developing a stakeholder map which will correctly identify the relevant stakeholders and indicate

their needs, role, responsibilities, and relationships with other relevant stakeholders. Following on, Step 3 entails aligning the relevant skills and competencies of the stakeholders with the nature of the goal, and also includes the formation of teams where required, to achieve the objectives of the goal.

To ensure that the identified stakeholders and teams can achieve their objectives, Step 4 focuses on identifying the training, coaching, and mentoring needs of personnel, and implementing a programme to address these. The process culminates with Step 5, which requires that Steps 1 to 4 be communicated to the relevant stakeholders as per the stakeholder map in Step 1. Kujala et al. (2019) argued the importance of collaboration and creating joint interest amongst stakeholders, as can be achieved with the framework proposed in Figure 23.

Important to note is that communication works both ways between leaders and their stakeholders, as confirmed by Nguyen and Mohamed (2018). The circularity of the framework also indicates that the process of undertaking effective stakeholder management must be re-examined at frequent intervals. This will ensure that the changing needs of stakeholders are considered and communicated (Mott Lacroix and Megdal, 2016).

7.1.4 Conclusion and Conceptual Frameworks

This study by Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016) was reviewed in conjunction with the theory of stakeholder management, and the solutions to water governance proposed by Seršen et al. (2016). It was then applied to the context of the eThekweni Water Sector to further explore the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management.

Apart from the results in Chapter five which indicate who the stakeholders of the EWS are, the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management and the process for enabling successful stakeholder management, this research has managed to propose two new conceptual frameworks. This study confirmed the previous findings from literature and contributed additional evidence to build on the extant literature as can be seen from the frameworks proposed in Figures 22 and 23.

The frameworks represent the findings from the research questions, clearly

highlighting the research themes and their interdependent relationships. After reviewing the frameworks, leaders may understand the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management, and how to implement this in the eThekweni Water Sector. Flowing down from the themes, the frameworks also includes certain predominant findings known as codes, discovered through the research process in response to the purpose of this study.

7.2 Research Contributions and Implications

Midin, Joseph, and Mohamad (2016), pointed out that to advance sustainable development which meets the socio-economic needs of the citizens of an emerging economy such as South Africa, effective stakeholder management is essential. The proposed frameworks are a combination of the most pertinent findings in a single graphical representation. They represent the characteristics required by leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector for effective stakeholder management; and the process of how this can be successfully achieved. This in turn has both theoretical and practical contributions as discussed below.

7.2.1 Theoretical Contributions

It was noted from the literature reviewed that most of the studies were limited to characteristics of leaders or stakeholder management as stand-alone subjects. The contents of this research contributed to the extant literature. Achieving this by exploring the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the context of the eThekweni Water Sector. Both Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), and Amoatey and Hayibor (2017) concurred with the need for research of such a nature

Scholars of stakeholder management have called for more studies which explore the concept of stakeholder management in different contexts (Dal Maso et al., 2018). One needs to understand that the differences between countries, communities, and industries makes it important to understand context specific data in relations to stakeholder management, as remarked by Dal Maso et al. (2018).

It was further noted that there is limited literature focusing on stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector. Taking into consideration the renewed interest in formulating solutions in response to critical water shortages as highlighted

by Megdal et al. (2017), this research adds to the body of knowledge which can enable improved stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector to better manage the delivery of water to all citizens of eThekweni.

7.2.2 Methodological Contributions

A comprehensive summary of the classification of critical success factors for construction stakeholder management was provided in the work of Eyiah-Botwe et al. (2016). In their informative study, they had argued that stakeholder management was quite extensive and dependent upon the context within which it was occurring. By focusing on the eThekweni Water Sector as a specific context, this research also makes a methodological contribution to the body of extant literature.

To gain deep insights into stakeholder management for improved service delivery, this research took the form of an embedded case study investigation to explore the characteristics required by leaders for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector. By combining an inductive qualitative content analysis of the results obtained, with a partially deductive approach that anchored the study in literature, this study was able to propose two new conceptual frameworks. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017), had supported this approach since the research entailed exploring and understanding the views of senior managers from the eThekweni Water Sector in relation to their context.

Le Grange (2018) also held the view that for solutions to water challenges in a specific sector, a qualitative approach was required to obtain innovation solutions. The use of semi-structured, in depth interviews meant that the participants freely provided information on stakeholder engagement, thus obtaining a rich data set. This approach compares with that of a quantitative study, where the theory is already established upfront (De Vos et al., 2017). Molale (2019), further confirmed that the use of such methods would have provided a diverse range of opinions to be collected, thereby enabling the development of the proposed frameworks.

7.2.3 Practical Contributions for the EWS and other Relevant Stakeholders

The research contributed theoretically, methodologically, and practically to the field of study. The findings can be beneficial to both leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector and their stakeholders.

Based on the mandate of local government entities such as the eThekweni Water Sector to provide quality drinking water to the citizens, Okumah and Yeboah (2020), affirmed that effective stakeholder management will enhance the service delivery of water. The findings of this research confirmed the various stakeholders which leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector must interface with. This is valuable information, as it provides a basis for leaders to start understanding who the individuals or groups are that can impact their service delivery goals. This would then enable leaders to engage with the stakeholders to jointly work towards a common goal.

Sershen et al. (2016), held the view that in order to improve water governance, leaders had a responsibility to engage with stakeholders to make them aware of initiatives in the eThekweni Water Sector. The research therefore also raises awareness around the importance of stakeholder management and how to undertake it effectively.

The conceptual framework proposed in Figure 22 offers leaders a way in which to understand the characteristics required for effective stakeholder management. The framework in Figure 23 further outlines a process by which leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector can achieve this. Molale (2019), had pointed out that local government was dedicating resources to address service delivery, but still failed to achieve their objectives. The frameworks proposed by this study offer a long-term solution to the leaders of the eThekweni Water Sector where they can utilise existing resources and people, with minimal cost incurred.

7.3 Limitations of the Research

The methodology of this qualitative research was based upon understanding stakeholder management in the context of the eThekweni Water Sector. Lune and Berg (2017), pointed out that when conducting a qualitative study which involves interviewing participants, and attempting to understanding their social circumstances, one needs to be aware of the limitations of such an approach. Providing clarity to the constraints of the research will avoid misinterpretation of the results.

The arguments put forward in this research for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector were largely dependent upon the results obtained from

participant interviews. The results are exploratory and reflect the views of senior managers from two embedded case units within the population of the eThekweni Water Sector. This suggests that the findings were context specific to the eThekweni region in South Africa. Caution must therefore be exercised when generalising the results to other countries or sectors in local government. Bass et al. (2018), cautioned against transferring or generalising the results to other sectors or organisations, as embedded case study investigations do limit transferability

An interpretivist study by its nature enabled the researcher to draw conclusions based on the results obtained from the participants. This introduces researcher bias into the analysis of the results. The researcher made significant efforts to undertake self-awareness checks, however, the element of bias is never completely removed when analysing, interpreting and drawing conclusions from an explorative, qualitative study of this nature. Data triangulation was employed to overcome this limitation as far as reasonably possible.

The use of purposive sampling, with a strategy of maximum variation may have also introduced an element of bias since the researcher works in the eThekweni Water Sector. To overcome this bias, the researcher exercised self-reflection after each interview, to identify any pre-conceived bias.

This study involved 16 participants who were interviewed over a cross-sectional time horizon. This meant that the results of the study were obtained at a specific instance in time. To overcome the limitation, it was ensured that the sample group was diverse and from different professional backgrounds, to gain as many insights as possible over the short period of time.

An additional drawback to the process of undertaking qualitative inductive coding and results analysis, was that the researcher's bias may have led to incorrect inferences of what participants were trying to convey in their responses. Furthermore, the researcher is also aware of being a novice in the research process, which could have further impacted the interpretation of the results. Data triangulation of the results against literature reviewed, and the Initial Research Model was used to remove elements of bias when interpreting the results.

It must also be pointed out that the stakeholders identified in question one of the results were specific to the eThekweni Water Sector. It would therefore be difficult to

generalise these stakeholders to other contexts. It is recommended that for a different context, one understands the literature of stakeholder identification, and applies the process to the context to identify other stakeholders.

The research was conducted during a period where social distancing was encouraged, due the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic. As a result, certain interviews were undertaken via Microsoft teams, as opposed to in person. This meant that the researcher could not always maintain a standard setting for all interviews. The nature of a qualitative study suggests that context matters, hence the consistency of results obtained may have been skewed. The triangulation of data assisted to mitigate this and validate the data.

The conceptual frameworks in Figure 22 and 23 were prepared solely for the eThekweni Water Sector, and this was identified as a limitation to generalising the results. There is the possibility of extending this research to further analyse the themes of the proposed frameworks in a quantitative study or a more in-depth qualitative study. Recommendations for future research are outlined in the final chapter of this research below.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

As has been highlighted throughout this research on stakeholder management in the context of leadership, this area of study has been thus far relatively unexplored in the context of local government in South Africa (Amoatey & Hayibor, 2017; Nguyen and Mohamed, 2018; Molale, 2019). There is indeed the potential to widen the scope of studies and research carried out in the short to medium, to explore different questions and concepts. It is likely that such research may add even more context and colour to the extant literature.

As regards the leadership characteristics required for stakeholder management practice within the EWS, there are several variables that warrant further research in the effort to understand this relationship more clearly. The effect of gender on stakeholder management within the EWS, as well as the role of gender in leadership was a dimension not considered in this research, and not incorporated into the case study questions. This is an aspect that this researcher feels likely does affect stakeholder relationship dynamics within EWS, oftentimes subtly but more overtly at other times.

Of similar importance when investigating stakeholder relations, is stakeholder power. This research has highlighted the importance of understanding the power of various stakeholders, and how this affects stakeholder management. Future research can expand on this further, with an exploration of the nature of power, how it is exercised, and how stakeholder management is undertaken with stakeholders of varying power.

In relation to the above, it is recommended that future research further explores the local government sector and how the roles of stakeholders such as government officials, politicians, unions and day-to-day managers interlink, to deliver the respective services to their regions. Such studies would need to delve into the needs and requirements of the various stakeholders to understand how they influence service delivery. The development of a common goal approach is likely to depend on the findings of such research.

The above recommendations with regards to future research largely relate to the understanding of current practice, and how this may be improved or augmented. Future research that adopts a longer-term view may proceed to develop and recommend processes and practices that are required to be established.

A key finding of this research has been the identification of the importance of developmental training and mentoring within the eThekweni Water Sector, to facilitate effective stakeholder management. Future research can be done to seek more granularity on the types of training and development needed, and the structures of potential programmes that could be implemented to assist eThekweni Water Sector personnel in their day to day stakeholder engagement.

In relation to the above, such future research may also investigate the importance and effect of the emotional intelligence in the stakeholder management process, and how such a characteristic is addressed by training and development programmes.

Future research can inspect the process of developing stakeholder management plans which include stakeholder identification, classification and definition of relationships and an appreciation of power dynamics. Future research may also seek to develop an understanding of the fundamental metrics by which stakeholder management performance plans can be measured. The identification of the relevant key indicators or measurable elements will be valuable in the South African local

government context, as such a set may prove to be adaptable to other settings. Understanding the effectiveness of plans implemented, and their shortcomings, will enable leaders to adapt processes and modify their management approach.

7.5 End Note

Each chapter of the research built on the pre-ceding chapter to motivate the case for effective stakeholder management in the eThekweni Water Sector, with a consequential outcome of improved service delivery. Chapter One focused on explaining the challenges citizens faced regarding the service delivery of water. Chapter Two proceeded to confirm that the eThekweni Water Sector did face challenges pertaining to service delivery. The literature reviewed pointed out that effective stakeholder management was one of the solutions to improve service delivery challenges. Chapter Three proposed research questions in relation to the gap from literature. It was noted that stakeholder management literature was sparse in the context of the eThekweni Water Sector. Chapter Four outlined the method for answering the research questions, with the results presented in Chapter Five. These results were discussed in Chapter 6, with the introduction of two new theoretical frameworks which will assist leaders in the eThekweni Water Sector. Chapter Seven explained the benefits of the research to both scholars and practitioners, whilst also stating some of the limitations of the study and future research

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

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Ethical Clearance Approved

Dear Prathna Gopi,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.
You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.
We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

[Ethical Clearance Form](#)

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.

GIBS ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM 2020

G. APPROVALS FOR/OF THIS APPLICATION

When the applicant is a student of GIBS, the applicant must please ensure that the supervisor and co-supervisor (where relevant) has signed the form before submission

STUDENT RESEARCHER/APPLICANT:

29. I affirm that all relevant information has been provided in this form and its attachments and that all statements made are correct.

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Student Researcher's Name in capital letters: | PRATHNA GOPI |
| Date: | 30 Oct 2020 |
| Supervisor Name in capital letters: | KHAVITHA SINGH |
| Date: | 30 Oct 2020 |
| Co-supervisor Name in capital letters: | |
| Date: | 30 Oct 2020 |

Note: GIBS shall do everything in its power to protect the personal information supplied herein, in accordance to its company privacy policies as well the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013. Access to all of the above provided personal information is restricted, only employees who need the information to perform a specific job are granted access to this information.

FOR DOCTORAL AND FACULTY/RESEARCH ASSOCIATE/STAFF MEMBER RESEARCH ONLY

Approved

REC comments:

Date: 02 Nov 2020

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT LETTER





INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA.

I am conducting research on leadership skills required for effective stakeholder management at eThekweni Municipality, Water & Sanitation Department. I am trying to find out more about the leadership skills required from both the perspective of the Municipality and one of their major stakeholders considered to be Umgeni Water.

Our interview is expected to last about an hour and will help us understand the type of leadership skills required for effective stakeholder management in order to successfully navigate improved service delivery at the Municipality.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be reported without identifiers. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

| | |
|--|---|
| Researcher Name: Prathna Gopi | Research Supervisor Name: Khavitha Singh |
| Email: Prathnag@gmail.com | Email: khavitha.singh@twimsafrica.com |
| Cell: 084 711 0836 | Cell: 082 410 5999 |
| Signature:  | Signature:  |

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____