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## **Participation of traditional health practitioners in the regulation of African traditional medicines: Empirical evidence from South Africa**

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Public participation in the development of regulation/legislation has gained increased prominence within the international research community, inspiring some theorists and policy-makers to talk of a 'new paradigm' for research and many organizations to review and reform their research programmes and practices. Although much is known about African traditional medicines, there are still many unanswered questions about its regulation. Ensuring broader public participation can have a real impact on the promotion and authentication of anecdotal knowledge of African traditional medicines throughout the world. This can change the ways in which government or concerned organizations think and act while dealing with the development of African traditional medicines regulation. This research was aimed at measuring the level of public participation and the role of trust and reciprocity amongst African Traditional Health Practitioners (ATHPs) from the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality in the regulation of African Traditional Medicines (ATMs) in South Africa. A quantitative research methodology was employed throughout the research process and data collected using self-administered questionnaires. The results indicate that reciprocity and trust play a statistically significant role ( $P > |t|$  value of 0.00 in reciprocity and 0.01 in trust) to influence levels of participation. In addition high levels of trust in government (62%) by ATHPs correlated with ATHPs decreased levels of participation in the current regulation of ATMs by government.

### **Biography**

Fikile Vilakazi has more than 18 years of work experience. She has been working in the fields of youth, women, gender, entrepreneurship development, and sexuality at different times in all these years. Her areas of focus included training, public education and advocacy. She had an opportunity to do student support and mentoring, field work, outreach programs, community mobilization, and building partnerships, manage and direct programs. She has six years of that period dedicated to fundraising, directing an organization, providing strategic direction to processes, organizational development including human, financial and technical resource management, monitoring and evaluation. Her experience has mainly been with student movements, community based and non-governmental organizations, coalitions and local government. In that time she has been exposed to different approaches and paradigms namely (1) integrated approach to development, (2) human rights based approach, (3) gender mainstreaming, (4) feminist approach and ideology. He/She is currently pursuing a Doctoral degree majoring in social and public policy with the University of Jyväskylä in Finland.

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