

Public  
Administration  
and  
Governance  
in  
Democratic  
South Africa

Izimangaliso Malatjie  
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# Public Administration and Governance in Democratic South Africa

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Thanyani S. Madzivhandila and Mzukisi Qobo (Eds)



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# Foreword

Mashupye H. Maserumule 

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South Africa's National Planning Commission*

Once a skank shunned for its inhuman way of managing public affairs, South Africa ultimately redeemed itself when “the long nightmare of apartheid [ended], and the horrors of four decades of racial oppression began to give way to the bright hopes that had seemed such a distant dream to so many for so long”.<sup>1</sup> The country became a democracy in 1994. Its tryst with destiny was consummated on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April. This day marked that moment that “comes but rarely in history, when an age ends, and the soul of a nation, long suppressed, [found] utterance”.<sup>2</sup> Here, I am paraphrasing Jawaharlal Nehru’s words, an icon of India’s long struggle for freedom. He said this on 14 August 1947, as India was preparing for her independence from colonialism. His words to his fellow country men and women aptly define that moment when many South Africans said, “yesterday is a foreign country tomorrow belongs to us”.<sup>3</sup>

For the first time the universal suffrage became a democratic praxis that birthed a new country. This was what the liberation struggle has been calling for, as stated in the Freedom Charter and adopted by the Congress of the People in Kliptown on 26 June 1955: “Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies

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1 Donald Woods, 2004. *Rainbow nation revisited: South Africa's decade of democracy*. :01).

2 Jawaharlal Nehru. 1947. *Tryst with destiny*. Indian Prime Minister’s Inaugural Address made on the eve of India’s independence, 14 August.

3 Thabo Mbeki. 1999. Prologue. In Malegaburu William Makgoba(ed.) *African renaissance*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers pp. xiii–xxi.

which make laws”.<sup>4</sup> Nelson Mandela reiterated this in his Rivonia Trial of 1963-1964. He did not equivocate in his call for freedom from the dock despite the odds stacked against him. The apartheid justice system decided his fate harshly. It imprisoned him for more than two decades in Robben Island but failed to obliterate the idea that he stood for. For, its time had come. The struggle for freedom continued relentlessly. Ultimately, South Africa became a democracy with Mandela its first black president. His stewardship and the stellar steering of the transition from apartheid to democracy instantiated the fecundity for nation-building and social cohesion, including institution building for a democratic system of government.

Mandela’s leadership was the aura of hope. By signing into law the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa on 10 December 1996, Mandela set the country on an irreversible trajectory of optimism. His deputy at that time, Thabo Mbeki, spoke about the adoption of this constitution earlier on 8 May 1996 as the earth-shattering moment and the achievement of African ingenuity.<sup>5</sup> In their study of constitutional models across the world, American legal scholars David Law and Mila Versteeg, found the South Africa’s constitution to be one of the best in the world.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the American jurist Ruth Bader advised the Egyptians to look up to the South African constitutional model when they design their own. Its veneration is largely because of its protection of the socioeconomic rights. And this is where the substantive essence of democracy lies - the state’s commitment to improve the quality of life by providing basic services and necessities such as food, shelter, health care and social protection, especially for those who are in the margin of

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4 Freedom Charter, 26 June 1955, as adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown.

5 Thabo Mbeki. 1996. I am an African. A speech he made on behalf of the African National Congress on the occasion of the passing of the new Constitution of South Africa, Cape Town: Parliament.

6 David Law and Mila Versteeg. 2012. The declining influence of the United States Constitution. *New York University Law Review*, 87(3):762-858.

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society.<sup>7</sup> However, as the 28<sup>th</sup> American President Woodrow Wilson once said, at the centennial year of his country's constitution in 1887, "it is harder to run a constitution than to frame one".<sup>8</sup> The prescience of this reverberates in the contemporary efforts of organizing society.

In 2012, all the political parties in Parliament embraced the National Development Plan (NDP) as the country's lodestar for socioeconomic transformation and development. The NDP was intended to guide national efforts towards the vision of better life for all as envisaged in the Constitution. The Constitution and the NDP are but some of many important interventions for the evolution of the post-apartheid state against which to measure its progress. It is against this background this question arises: How did the country fare, thirty years into democracy? Various answers abound in the surging body of literature on South Africa's democracy coming of age. This book adds to this. It provides an empirical analysis of the evolution of the post-apartheid South Africa from the perspective of public administration and governance focusing on aspects as key as ethics, leadership and innovative governance. Its case study approach gives a nuanced analysis. It goes to the granularity of the issues. The book shows that South Africa's thirty years of democracy is the tale of antinomies.

In the earlier years of its evolution, great strides in nation-building, social cohesion and policy reforms were achieved. This was followed by efforts to build institutional capability to optimise the country's democratic system of government. South African Revenue Services (SARS) became one of the good stories to tell. It beat revenue collection targets and became one of the most important lessons on institutional reforms and public sector governance for modern

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7 Mashupye H Maserumule. 2022. Has freedom day become a reflection of our discontent? *News24*, 27 April.

8 John Rohr. 1986. *To run a constitution. The legitimacy of the administrative state.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

civilisations.<sup>9</sup> Coupled with this, especially in the first decade of democracy, the economy performed relatively well.<sup>10</sup> All look good for the country set for greatness. However, in the decades of democracy that followed, its developmental lustre started to dim. Along this came public discontent. It is surging; hence, many ask: Is our democracy in danger? Inextricably linked to this question is: How did the country's democracy lose its developmental lustre? This book engages these questions.

Various surveys show how state institutions have lost the confidence of the people. Trust in these has plummeted to its lowest. And this not only relates to the executive arm of government but to parliament, judicial system and the constitutional bodies established to promote constitutional democracy.<sup>11</sup> This does not bode well for the country's constitutional democracy. Many attribute the fate of the country's democracy to corruption in all its manifestation, including narrow concentration of power in the governing elites who often give in to the temptations to organise society according to their interests in the guise of serving the public good. This has always been the thesis of various studies on why nations fail. However, perhaps the analysis needs to go beyond this and look at other important variables for re-theorising the post-apartheid state.

In the early days of South Africa's democracy, the focus has always been on building a democratic state. The logic that undergirded this was that democracy is the condition

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9 Mashupye H Maserumule. 2022. South Africa has a plan to make its public service professional. It's time to act on it. *The Conversation*, 28 August.

10 Ricardo Hausmann, Tim O'Brien, Andres Fortunato, Alexia Lochmann, Kishan Shah, Lucila Venturi, Sheyla Encio-Valdivia, Ekaterina Vashnskaya, Ketan Ahuja, Bailey Klinger, Fredrico Sturzenegger, and Marcelo Tokamna. 2023. *Growth through inclusion in South Africa*. Working papers. Centre for International Development at Harvard University.

11 Plus 94 Research. 2021. *Afrobarometer Round 8 Survey in South Africa*.

## Foreword

for development rather than its outcome.<sup>12</sup> Only later, an attempt was made to correct this through the NDP by giving democracy a developmental slant. Unfortunately, this was not immediately followed by institutionalising statecraft. It was odd. Building “a state that is capable of playing a developmental and transformative role”<sup>13</sup> needs highly skilled and professional bureaucracy. This is a critical imperative of statecraft.<sup>14</sup>

At the anniversary of the country’s 30 years of democracy, the NDP’s timeline falls in less than six years while much of what it sought to achieve is still outstanding. Poverty and unemployment continue to exacerbate inequality. However, this book says it cannot be all gloom and doom. In their ideational profundity, authors of its different chapters make this clear, including in the propositions they are making for policy consideration. And these are the coterie of the thinking community that says South Africa can be, and must be, a success story.

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- 12 Mashupye H Maserumule. 2019. Effective state must first undo ‘dirty history’ of colonialism and apartheid. *New Agenda*, 19: 30-34.
- 13 National Planning Commission. 2012. *National Development Plan*. Pretoria: Presidency.
- 14 Mashupye H Maserumule & Ricky Mukonza. 2023. Only a focused return to statecraft can arrest the degeneration of SA’s democracy. *Daily Maverick*. 19 July.





# Introduction

*Izimangaliso Malatjie*,<sup>1</sup>  *Busani Ngcaweni*,<sup>2</sup>   
*Thanyani S. Madzivhandila*<sup>3</sup>  & *Mzukisi Qobo*<sup>4</sup> 

The prospects for successful public service administration and governance around the globe are becoming increasingly negative. This is due to a myriad of challenges governments are facing, which, amongst others, include the triple threat of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Other challenges faced include high levels of corruption, resource mismanagement by public sector officials, the emergence of new systems and technologies, and climate change. The challenges faced in South Africa are similar, but the context is different. Almost three decades after attaining democracy, the country is still reeling from the extreme impact of the apartheid regime. Apartheid was a grand theory under the National Party that not only laid the foundation for racial and discriminatory policies but also had a negative impact on all aspects of life. It had a social, economic, political, and cultural impact, especially on the black African population (Tshishonga, 2019:168).

During this era, high levels of segregation and racial exclusion were implemented to specifically deprive the black African majority population of services and opportunities. Separate development laws and policies were implemented, which only favoured white people's advancement and prosperity. Multiple laws and policies have been denied and stripped African people of their human rights, dignity, and freedom (Chipkin & Meny-Gibert, 2012; Gumede, 2014;

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  - 2 University of Johannesburg.
  - 3 Turf-loop Graduate School of Leadership (TGSL), University of Limpopo.
  - 4 Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand.

Tshishonga, 2019). Consequently, apartheid was categorised into occupational, geographical, and political spheres (Tshishonga, 2019). Separate development laws forcefully removed various indigenous and ethnic groups from areas of potential development to non-productive spaces with less potential to facilitate any successful development aspirations. South Africa's apartheid terror and administration, spanning over four decades, left a legacy that will take many years to rectify.

Since 1994, the democratic government has been striving to transform the lives of the country's citizens, aiming to influence socio-economic conditions, especially those affected by the apartheid system. To put it another way, the establishment of democracy in 1994 marked the beginning of an inevitable journey to undo the harm apartheid had caused. The establishment of these systems stimulated fundamental policies aimed at the reconstruction and development of society. First, it addressed the need to provide previously denied basic needs; second, it aimed to grow the economy; and third, it promoted social and economic development (Madzivhandila, 2014). "It was on the bases of this moral imperative given the shadow of apartheid and its resulting structural barriers to social and economic development that the promotion of social inclusion, redress and equity became the centre stage of policy formulation" (Madzivhandila, 2014:766).

Apartheid used policies and laws to practice separation and racially inclined development. As a result of this, the democratic government was required to pass new laws and develop policies and legislation to redress the impact of apartheid while paving a way forward for not only the previously marginalised black African people but for the newly formed rainbow nation, which prescribed equal rights for everyone in the country (Chipkin & Meny-Gibert, 2012; Gumede, 2014). However, this process could not be as straightforward and simple as everyone might have expected and wanted it to be. There were a variety of complex issues that the democratic government had to face and manage. This

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included the conversion of physical and financial resources into concrete service-delivery outputs for all, not just the white population as it was done in the past (Madzivhandila, 2014 :769).

The formulation and adoption of different policies were established as a paramount step towards social transformation through integrated social and economic development by the government in collaboration with social partners. This process was also undertaken to seek appropriate ways to unpack and address the deep-rooted structural causes of poverty and inequality in the country. There was a need to formulate policies with the purpose of discovering and presenting the true meaning of democracy. Additionally, the formulation of policies was also to enrich the human rights discourse and to reshape social welfare in the country (Rapatsa, 2014:887). The underlying broad objective was to foster a public administration that is inclined towards creating united, non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic service provision (Gumede, 2014:10).

The writing and adoption of the 1996 Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) were at the heart of this process. The impetus of the South African Constitution, amongst others, was to strongly emphasise the need to strengthen the rights of people to have access to health, sufficient food, water, and social security (Madzivhandila, 2014:766). These are basic human needs that black people were deprived of during the apartheid regime. The other important aspects the Constitution prescribes and which act as pillars for democracy include the presence of equal protection before the law, the right to human dignity, freedom of expression, and association, respect, and conformation to the Constitution as the supreme law. In addition, the adoption of important programmes and policies after 1994, such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994; Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1996; Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) in 2005; and the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2012, was established to bring

about transformation for most of the South African citizens (Gumede, 2014; Madzivhandila, 2014).

The RDP aimed at addressing the many social and economic problems facing the country, such as housing, shortages of jobs, inadequate education and health care, and the overall failure of the economy. While GEAR looked at measures to stabilise and build the economy, which was struggling during the transition period, AsgiSA intended to accelerate the growth of the economy as well as redistribute wealth. It was sought to mobilise the desperately needed hope for social change through integrated social and economic development (Gumede, 2012). The NDP, termed Vision 2030, was viewed as a consensus-building mechanism towards some envisaged end-state in which poverty, inequality, and unemployment would have been drastically reduced (Gumede, 2012).

The South African government adopted all these policies and legislation, along with many others, to bring about change and transform the lives of its citizens. Unfortunately, the initiatives associated with policies and legislation passed by the democratic government were met with many challenges. The democratic government struggled to address the structural and institutional challenges associated with inequalities, high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Nengwekhulu, 2009; Matyana & Thusi, 2023). Even though much has been done to try and transform the majority of the South African population; poverty, poor health services, an acute shortage of housing, and declining education standards still challenge the country. These challenges were exacerbated by underutilisation and/or unsustainable use of natural resources; poor or lack of access to socio-economic infrastructure and services; lack of access to water; low literacy and poor skills levels; poor migratory labour practices; and overdependence on social grants and other forms of social security (Madzivhandila 2014). Issues of corruption, nepotism, and interference in the day-to-day management and administration of government departments by political principals are also common (Nengwekhulu, 2009). New

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problems associated with climate change and global warming are also impacting progress towards achieving successful public administration and governance in South Africa.

Within this context, this book is premised on the understanding that, three decades after the attainment of democracy in South Africa, there are pockets of success in the country from which to learn and mobilise. At the same time, there are also specific remedial opportunities the country could adopt to facilitate much-needed transformation. These include issues of ethical leadership, building capacity, professionalising the public sector, and embracing technological advancements to provide services to South African citizens.

Issues of ethics, in most cases, go hand in hand with accountability and transparency in public administration and governance. The government should be open, transparent, and accountable to its people. This will lead to fewer episodes of maladministration and restrain corruption. Ethical leadership is also important to ensure effective and efficient service delivery, thus achieving the goals of the public sector (Tshaka, 2009; Mbandlwa; Dorasamy & Fagbadebo, 2020). Ethical leadership represents the ability of public officials to distinguish between doing the right thing and the wrong thing in relation to the use of state resources. Thus, the moral credibility of individual leaders plays a significant role in decisions made by government leaders, and it determines whether leaders are ethical or unethical (Mbandlwa et al., 2020). The issue of limited skills, knowledge, and capacity is blamed on the failure of the government to deliver services. Thus, improving service delivery will, in one way or another, depend on the availability and development of skills and capacity among those employed in the public sector.

To address some of the major challenges facing the South African government, it is paramount to invest in developing the skills and knowledge of the people. This is already evident with the current call for the professionalisation of the public sector. It is acknowledged that professionalisation

of the public sector can enable public officials to execute the mandate of the government successfully and ethically (Mathonsi et al, 2022). This can be done through education, training, and development. Thus, investment in this process will successfully transform the public sector. Furthermore, the South African government requires adaptive, professional, technically proficient, imaginative, and innovative employees. This includes embracing the idea of the adoption of new technologies and innovation.

The world is currently experiencing a major technological shift that is transforming every aspect of socio-political and economic life, including service delivery (Thani, 2020; Mathebula, 2021; Temitope; Jhon & Qwabe, 2023). The South African government needs to embrace these changes if service delivery is to be improved. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) presents opportunities for the South African government to address time and cost efficiency and improve customer satisfaction (Temitope, Jhon & Qwabe, 2023). In other words, embracing 4IR will provide major implications for public administration in the country, especially in delivering basic services such as water, sanitation, healthcare, electricity, and education.

This book comprises of three (3) thematic sections with a total of thirteen (13) chapters aimed at exploring, explaining, and addressing the complexities surrounding public service administration and governance in South Africa in the past three decades. The first part of the book looks at perspectives on ethics and governance practices. Five (5) chapters of this section address issues such as ethical leadership in the public sector, corruption, whistleblowing, and public service auditing. The second part of the book is focused on leadership and management practices. Important topics in this section include public sector performance management, transformational leadership in the context of management, and employee core self-evaluation and leadership as governance practices in post-colonial Africa. The last section of the book explores emerging innovative approaches in the public sector. Five (5) chapters of this section address issues

of mass media in municipal governance, the role of the youth in socio-economic development, and NDP prospects in the context of entrepreneurship and small business development. The last two (2) chapters in this section are focused on the prospects of 4IR and the role it will play in improving the public sector and curriculum reforms in the scholarship of public administration.

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**SECTION A:**  
PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICS AND  
GOVERNANCE PRACTICES



## CHAPTER 1

# Improving governance in the public sector: can ethics be taught?

Izimangaliso Malatjie,<sup>1</sup>  Busani Ngcaweni<sup>2</sup>  & Ntobeko Magubane<sup>3</sup> 

### Introduction

The public sector is one of the largest employers in South Africa, employing close to two million people across all tiers. The executive or political heads are elected officials who are entrusted with the efficient and effective executive management of public sector institutions.

In order for the government to effectively execute and realise the primary objective of the Sixth Administration of Democratic South Africa outlined in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) - that of fostering a capable, ethical, and developmental state - it requires leaders who embody dedication, ethics, commitment, qualifications, and aptitude in equal measure (DPME, 2019:4).

Section 195 of the Constitution (SA, 1996:99). outlines the basic principles and values of public administration and sets a high standard of professional ethics. Amongst other values, it mentions that public administration is required to be development-oriented and utilise resources efficiently and effectively. Therefore, public officials are to conduct themselves in a way that upholds these constitutional values.

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In 2021, President Cyril Ramaphosa underlined the importance of ethical behaviour in the public sector in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) by stating that “Advancing honesty, ethics, and integrity in the public service is critical if we are to build a capable state” (Ramaphosa, 2021).

There is a national emergency, and it has become more pronounced as South Africa faces challenges of ethical leadership in both the private and public sectors. Recently, the Zondo Commission, Public Investment Corporation (PIC) Commission, and Courts of Law released reports that shed light on the conduct of public officials. There have also been several reports by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) dealing with the same matter. This phenomenon is not unique to South Africa. There are many reports of multinational companies that have been implicated in unethical and corrupt activities. These include corporate scandals including Enron, WorldCom, Nortel, and AIG. These malfeasances have repeatedly demonstrated that corporate leaders are not immune to unethical behaviour (Bedi, Alpasla & Green, 2015; Naidoo, 2012a).

Corruption undermines public trust and diverts public funds intended for service delivery (Kekae, 2017; Malatjie, 2023). Disconcertingly, corruption impedes the achievement of governments’ objectives, especially in delivering public services and advancing economic development (Kekae, 2017:1). Consequently, increased concerns about the decline of public confidence in government institutions due to unethical behaviour have prompted governments around the world to review their approaches to ethics in the public sector (Manyaka & Sebola, 2013; Sebola, 2018). Therefore, the need to promote professional ethics becomes important not only in the private sector but in the public sector as well.

Despite the implementation of the necessary legislation, incidents of unethical behaviour have continued unabated in the public sector. This has prompted the government to develop ways that aim to highlight the importance of ethics in the public sector. Raga and Taylor (n.d.) assert

that “government and society cannot promote and enforce ethical conduct and behaviour solely through the utilisation of ethical codes of conduct or through the promulgation of a plethora of legislation.” It is against this backdrop that it becomes necessary to adopt ethics training as one of the important elements of fighting corruption in the public sector (Kroukamp, 2012; Manyaka & Sebola, 2013; Mollo, 2010).

The National School of Government (NSG), the training arm of the government, has introduced a compulsory online ethics programme for all public officials. The aim of the training programme is to build an ethical culture among public officials by developing their capacity for personal and professional ethical conduct (NSG, 2021). It is envisaged that providing ethics training will give effect to the constitutional principle of promoting a high standard of professional ethics in the public sector and enable the state to function more efficiently. The paper presents a qualitative study with the main aim of determining the importance of the ethics-training programme and answering the research question of whether ethics can be taught.

### **A note on the methodology**

In order to use empirical evidence to argue the question raised in this paper, the NSG was approached to use available data. Data were collected from the NSG’s Training Management System (TMS) for individuals who registered for the course “Ethics in the public service” during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. This is a free online (eLearning) course available to all public servants in South Africa. The sample consisted of 38013 participants and was reduced to 30211 learners who completed the course. Standard characteristics such as demographics, personal and occupational variables were identified. This allowed for a descriptive statistics analysis, as depicted in the results and discussion section.

After the participants completed the course, they were required to complete an anonymous satisfaction survey questionnaire. Therefore, the second set of data had no other

variables except for the questions. This strongly limited inferences from the feedback that challenged the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in determining the long-run impacts of the course on the public service. The questionnaire had nine questions, however, only five fell within the scope of the study. In no order of importance, the following questions were asked:

Q1. The course addressed my learning needs.

Q2. The course improved my knowledge of the topics that were covered.

Q3. The learning material was applicable to me.

Q4. The learning material was relevant for my working environment.

Q5. The learning material provided me with examples of practical application.

Participants were required to give feedback on a 4-point scale (1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly disagree) before they could download their certificate. Before the use of evidence, analysis, and discussion, it is important that the section be contextualised with an outline of key debates and practices on ethics in the public sector.

The section above outlines the methodology used in the study. The next section defines the meaning of ethical leadership in the public sector and initiatives undertaken so far to enhance it. In this section, definitions are added on ethics and ethical leadership beyond just the public sector.

## **Ethical Leadership in the Public Sector**

### **Defining Ethics**

In recent years, ethical standards within the public sector have experienced a noticeable decline. This challenge is not only unique to the public sector; but the private sector has also reported incidents of unethical behaviour that resulted in corruption. Consequently, ethical leadership is seen as a

## Chapter 1

potential solution to address corruption and a lack of moral values (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017:5).

Ethics are moral principles or standards used by organisations and human beings to govern their decision-making and behaviour. It is generally used in combination with norms and values to determine what is right or wrong (Toor & Ofori, 2009; Bedi et. al., 2016). An ethical dilemma is a scenario that requires arduous decision-making and a choice between two possible courses of action, each of which entails a partial or comprehensive transgression of moral principles. Leaders constantly face the challenge of mastering ethical dilemmas that arise within and outside of their organisations. To be effective and successful over time, leaders need to manifest optimal ethical conduct and moral standards in daily conversations, decisions, behaviour, and actions to achieve substantial follower ethical behaviour. On the contrary, leaders perceived as unethical can be destructive, dangerous, and even toxic.

Ethics pertain to individual conduct concerning what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable by society as a whole. Therefore, ethics sets standards regarding good and bad behaviour. Ethics address the conduct and character of an individual. These standards are applied to the personal and professional lives of individuals. In addition to these definitions, Amundsen and De Andrade (2009:6) define ethics as principles used to evaluate behaviour as right or wrong, good or bad, and prescribe what humans ought to do. Table 1.1 below outlines the definitions of ethical leadership:

**Table 1.1:** Ethical leadership definitions

“The demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making.”	Brown et al. (2005:120)
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<p>Ethical leadership is defined as “simply a matter of leaders having good character and the right values or being a person of strong character”.</p>	<p>Freeman &amp; Stewart (2006:2)</p>
<p>“Ethical leadership is the integration of virtues, deontology, utilitarianism, and professional ethics to acquire competency skills which seek to benefit followers, institutions and society by living in accordance with normative values acceptable to institutions, followers and society.”</p>	<p>Singo (2018:12)</p>
<p>“Ethical leadership demonstrates the will and ability to strategically position, design and sustain an organisation successfully, to develop employee competence and to direct human and organisational energy in pursuit of performance and achievement that stands the test of effectiveness and efficiency.”</p>	<p>Van Aswegen &amp; Engelbrecht (2009:228)</p>
<p>Ethical leadership is defined as “a manifestation of honesty and credibility, concern, doing the right thing, openness of communication, personal life based on morality standards, being fair in decision-making, values and ethics, punishment and reward application, and finally role modeling.”</p>	<p>Aryati et al. (2017:245)</p>

The above definitions indicate that leadership is a position of influence and power within the public sector, and leaders need to be consistently moral and ethical in both their personal and professional conduct (Singo, 2018:11). According to Eide, Dulmen, and Eide (2016), ethical leadership definitions commonly share themes such as inspirational motivation, concern for others, integrity, honesty, and fair-mindedness. They also involve setting standards and expectations



for appropriate and inappropriate codes of conduct, accountability, as well as rewards and punishment.

Brown et al. (2005) provide a clear definition that has two components of ethical leadership. The first categorises ethical leaders as moral individuals, specifically, as role models who demonstrate ethical behaviour. Secondly, ethical leaders are moral managers who actively promote ethical behaviour. The two qualities allow leaders to determine and communicate ethical standards and hold followers accountable for unethical behaviour. Bedi et al. (2016) assert that ethical leaders influence followers' work-related outcomes in two broad forms: directly through role modelling and indirectly through social exchanges.

In role modelling, motivation and informational means are instrumental in influencing ethical behaviour (Bandura, 1977). Leaders use role modelling to demonstrate the types of actions they seek to reward and promote. Further, leaders' behaviour is perceived as an informational guide for behaviour that is generally acceptable. In addition, social exchange processes are also found to be useful to leaders in shaping followers' ethical behaviour (Brown et al. 2005). It has been found that, "Social exchange theory proposes that the norms of reciprocity or perceived obligation to return favours undergirds many social relationships" (Blau 1964; Alpaslan, Bedi & Green 2016: 4). In terms of this theory, leaders' care and support are reciprocated well when followers perceive that a leader is caring for their well-being. On this premise, Brown et al. (2006) suggested that ethical leaders create emotions of trust and fairness in their followers, as well as an organisational environment where followers are more likely to reciprocate with beneficial organisational behaviour.

### **Fundamentals of Ethical Leadership**

Ethical leadership pertains to elements of personal conduct that are perceived as ethically appropriate in making decisions and establishing relationships with others in a manner that others are inspired to follow. Furthermore, ethical leadership

exemplifies moral managers who lead by example and communicate moral standards, embodying moral individuals with personal qualities like integrity and honesty (Lawton & Paez, 2015). Public servants must embody qualities of good character, encompassing objectivity, selflessness, and honesty (Lawton & Paez, 2015). These are crucial in interactions with clients, consumers, or patients through beneficence and non-maleficence to advance shared interests and justice (Lawton et. al., 2013).

Leaders aim to embed their assumptions, values, and beliefs into the collective understanding of followers by influencing the shared cultural elements of a given standard and subsequently transmitting these to their followers (Schein, 1985). Schein argued that leaders achieve this by utilising primary and secondary embedding mechanisms. The primary embedding mechanisms encompass aspects that leaders can control, measure, find interesting, and use to provide rewards and status. These, inter alia, include coaching, teaching, and role modelling, which have strong direct impacts on the followers' values, beliefs, and assumptions (Schein, 2010). Avolio and colleagues propose that a " follower's perception of a leader's ethical leadership relates directly to these primary embedding mechanisms" (Schaubroeck et. al., 2012:1060).

Observations indicate that ethical leadership comprises elements of both a moral manager and a moral person. In this regard, as a moral person, a leader behaves exemplarily and leads with a caring, just, and principled approach. A moral manager or leader specifies acceptable and unacceptable conduct, establishing sanctions and rewards based on such behaviour. A leader's capacity is evaluated during what Schaubroeck et al. (2012:1069) term critical incidents, such as when a colleague's ethical transgression is brought to the leader's attention. The response to this is critical as it "is diagnostic and will influence followers' perception of the leader as a moral manager" (Schaubroeck et. al., 2012:1066).

On the opposite end, secondary embedding mechanisms may be comparatively more ambiguous and have a potentially

lesser impact than their primary counterparts. These include ethical culture, workflow designs, organisational structures, processes, and official statements from leaders. Combined, primary, and secondary mechanisms are expected to structure the common perception of ethical leadership at a unit level as a compositional construct (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). “When individuals perceive their leader as a proponent and exemplar of ethical behaviour, they report individual and work unit psychological states that are conducive to more ethical conduct” Walumbwa et. al., (2011) as cited in Schaubroeck et. al., (2012). Chonko (2009) argues that followers are more likely to practice pro-social conduct when they perceive strong ethical leadership, and therefore less likely to demonstrate counterproductive or deviant behaviour.

### **Governance in the Public Sector**

Good governance entails effective and efficient use of power and resources, constitutionalism and rule of law, justice and equity, and electoral and participatory democracy to redress the abuse of resources (Madue, Tsolo & Ramoabi, 2014:879). According to the Batho Pele Principles as contained in the White Paper (SA,1997:10) on transforming public service delivery:

“Government is responsible for providing efficient, effective and economic services, accountable for quality service provision, must be transparent on how government departments are managed, provide considerate treatment of the public, share information on the quality of services provided, provide equal services to all citizens and consult with citizens about the services they are entitled to receive”.

Thus, the public sector has a responsibility to the communities to deliver services as outlined above and to ensure that these principles are not compromised. Leaders in the public sector are responsible for ensuring that all public officials uphold these values and that public sector organisations deliver on their constitutional mandates. As outlined in the National

Development Plan 2030 (NDP), the government's vision is to establish a society free from corruption, served by public servants who demonstrate accountability and leaders who have both high integrity and ethical standards (NDP, 2012).

Over the years, there has been an increase in governance failures and non-compliance with legislation in several public sector organisations. Consequently, poor governance weakens an organisation's potential, eventually leading to financial irregularities stemming from fraud, corruption, and other illegal activities. Research indicates that governance is a primary factor contributing to suboptimal performance in public sector organisations (Kikeri, 2018; Malunga, 2007; Mutize & Tefera, 2020).

Ethical transgressions are not limited to the civil service or senior officials. It is simply a pandemic that transcends all sectors. Globally, one can look at the great recession and economic downturn between 2007 and 2009. In a domestic context, numerous commentators argue that catastrophic events, such as state capture, COVID-19 relief fund exploitation, and the July 2021 looting, all stem from poor risk management practices, flawed organisational culture, inadequate controls, and governance failures. To date, many observers are convinced that ethics and compliance units within organisations failed dismally, thereby allowing deceitful conduct and excessive risk-taking practices (Greenberg, 2010).

The Business Insider (2020) article reported that many construction companies colluded through bid-rigging during preparations for the FIFA World Cup 2010. Consequently, the budget for building the stadiums had to be expanded by R14 billion compared to initial projections. The list of these misconducts never ends. The cases relating to VBS, Bosasa, Sharemax, Sasol, EOH, and Goldfields are all important to consider. As Greenberg (2010) suggests, such risky behaviour in pursuit of short-run benefits by many organisations indicates that some organisational controls failed to deliver what all stakeholders expect. Greenberg further argues that

these adverse business outcomes confirm that compliance and ethics programmes are simply “check-the-box” routines to “fulfill legal requirements specified on paper but do not affect fundamental change in corporate behaviour.”

Bonime-Blanc and Brevard, (2009) long proposed that “In an era of cataclysmic repercussions of ethical breaches throughout the world, it is critical for senior management – and, even more so, for boards of directors – to exercise active oversight on issues of business integrity and compliance”. It is evident that ethical dilemmas, encompassing personal, occupational, and unrealistic presumptions, can arise anywhere in the world, at any time, and at any level of organisations.

To mitigate the challenges of ethics and corruption, it is necessary for Senior Management Service (SMS) public service members to disclose their interests annually. This is so that heads of departments, such as the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) will be able to detect and manage conflicts of interest at an early stage. It is expected of departments to act against employees who are found to have conflicts of interest (DPSA, 2021). According to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (SA, 2019), Priority 1 of government is to have a state that is capable, ethical, and developmental. A state characterised by strong leadership is people-centred and exhibits better-quality service delivery. To achieve Priority 1 of government, the public service invested resources in the development and training of public servants on ethics (Malatjie, 2023). Therefore, over and above disclosure requirements, the government has introduced compulsory ethics training for all public sector officials and the NSG provides the training.

## **The Case for the National School of Government’s Ethics Course**

Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa envisages a public service that promotes a high standard of professional ethics. To serve this premise, during the

State of the National Address (SONA) held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2019, the President of South Africa emphasised the administration's commitment to establishing a government that is characterised by ethical leadership and anti-corruption governance. "In improving the capabilities of public servants, the NSG is introducing a suite of compulsory courses, covering areas like ethics and anti-corruption, senior management and supply chain management, and deployment of managers to the coal face to strengthen service delivery" (Ramaphosa, 2019). This statement clearly indicated a strategic role that the NSG is mandated to execute to re-institutionalise the public service in the country.

Training and development in the public sector is of paramount importance and has been enshrined in the Constitution. However, over the past years, service delivery has been declining due to the unethical and corrupt behaviour of public officials. The NSG has been mandated to provide education, training, and development of public service officials. An example of such a compulsory training programme is the Ethics in the Public Service online course, applicable to all public service officials. The main aim of the training programme is to build an ethical culture among public officials by developing their capacity for personal and professional ethical conduct. The learning outcomes of the course are for participants to reflect on and gain insight into their own values; recognise ethical dilemmas in the workplace; apply values, principles, and standards contained in public prescripts; and uphold and promote professional ethics in the workplace (NSG, 2021).

The online training programme is free of charge, has a duration time of 16 hours, and the students can complete it in their own space and pace. Once all course requirements have been met, participants receive a certificate of completion (NSG, 2021). The success of organisations depends on the knowledge, skills, and commitment of their employees, especially leaders. Training and development are critical to empower leaders to enable them to make decisions and enhance performance, ultimately taking organisations to higher levels.

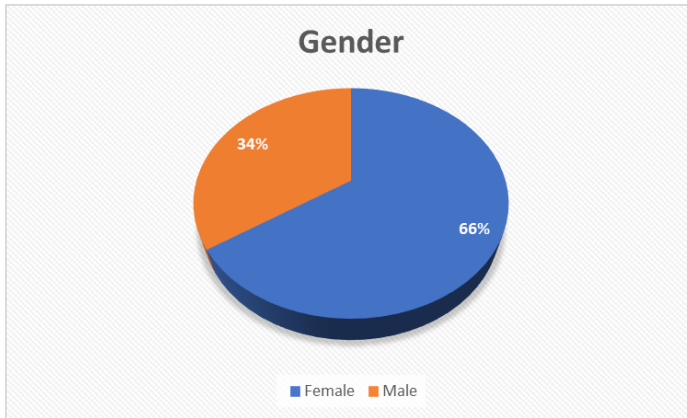
As a practical step, the former Minister of Public Service and Administration issued a statement in 2020 calling on public servants to register for the Ethics course in order to use time more productively during the lockdown period. The Cabinet approved the course in 2018 and decided that it had to be compulsory for all public servants and that rollout should start on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2020. In this statement, the Minister emphasised that “Ethical conduct and organisational integrity are keys to eradicate fraud and corruption in public service and administration. As the training arm of government, it is therefore imperative that NSG implements a training programme that will equip public officials with the skills and competencies to make ethical decisions, to develop organisational integrity, to prevent fraud and combat corruption in the Public Sector” (Mchunu, 2020). As presented in the course brochure, the NSG envisages that by providing ethics training, it will give effect to the constitutional principle of promoting a high standard of professional ethics in the public service and enable the state to function more efficiently. Therefore, the main purpose of ethics training is to promote and institutionalise a culture of integrity and professional ethics as enshrined in the constitution.

### **Results and Discussion**

As indicated earlier, administrative data from the NSG is used to analyse how participants feel about the course and if they are empowered by the Ethics course. The authors start by looking at participation differentiated according to gender, as indicated in Figure 1.1.

There were more females (66%) who attended the course than males (34%) for the period under investigation. Generally, in the public sector there are more females as compared to males and this is a requirement according to legislation as outlined in the Women Empowerment and Equity Bill where it is stated that there should be a minimum of 50% representation and participation of females in decision

making structures (SA, 2013). Hence there were more females in the course than males.



**Figure 1.1:** Course Attendance Grouped According to Gender

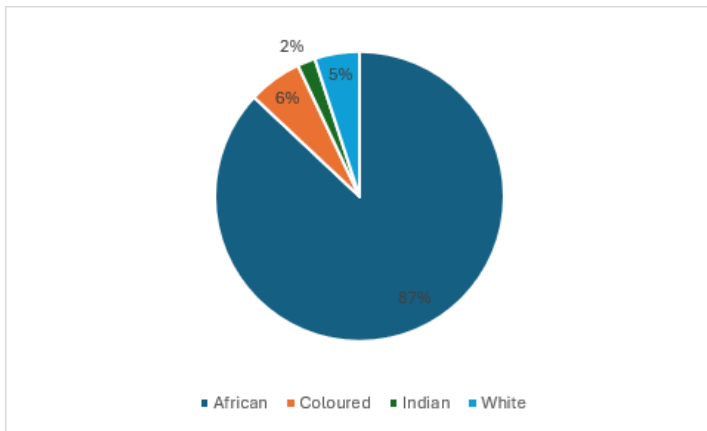
The study by Shonk (2020), however, went further to find that when financial incentives are present, “no matter a person’s gender, financial incentives can tempt them to take ethical shortcuts.” The contradictory findings indicate that the significant gender gap in ethics training programmes is a discovery warranting further exploration, especially given the male-dominated composition of the executive level in the country’s public service sector. Additionally, the DPSA’s employment equity mandate stipulates 51% female representation at the SMS and executive levels; nevertheless, this remains a challenge in many departments. It is only found in levels below SMS where the target is consistently met and occasionally exceeded.

Figure 1.2 below illustrates the proportionate attendance of population groups. The programme’s participants were predominantly African (87%), followed by Coloured (6%), White (5%), and Indian (2%). These proportions align with the racial distribution in the public sector.

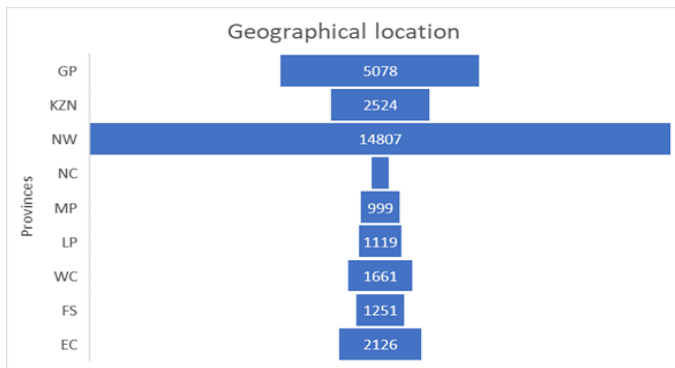
The geographical representation of participants is depicted in Figure 1.3 and the data paints an interesting



picture. Since the course is conducted asynchronously online, a random pattern that corresponds with the size of the civil service across all provinces was assumed. However, as Figure 1.3 below demonstrates, Northwest (14807), GP (5078), and KZN (2524) have the most representatives who attended the course. The representation of attendants from the Free State (1251) and WC (1661) can be seen in the middle range, and the lowest representation from attendants is from Limpopo (1119), MP (999), and NC (468).



**Figure 1.2:** Course Attendance Grouped According to Population Group



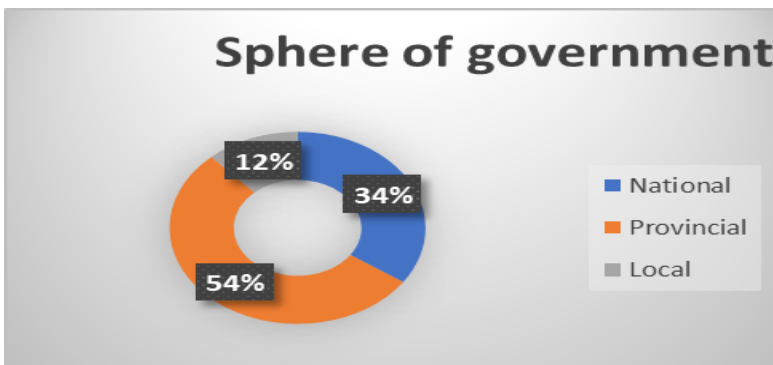
**Figure 1.3:** Course Attendance Grouped According to Province

The NW province was placed under administration from 2018 until 2021, due to maladministration and corruption (SA, 2021). As such, it was necessary to have employees in the NW attend a course on ethics to improve the understanding of governance. Hence there is a higher number of course attendees from NW than any of the provinces. Out of a total of 64 543 public servants in NW (DPSA, 2022), 14 807 attended the ethics course. . In comparison, the WC shows lower numbers of course attendants. Although the NW had the highest course attendance, the WC, with lower numbers 1661 out of a population of 83625 public servants (DPSA, 2022) , achieved a higher audit status. The 2020/21 overall audit outcome indicates that despite the NW's improvement to an unqualified audit opinion, the audit outcomes relating to financial reporting remained generally stagnant, while the WC attained their outstanding audit status in the year under review (AG, 2021).

The audit report further indicates that NW still has a lot of work to do with regards to governance improvement and mentions that the situation in NW is due to “Lack of strong accountability and effective oversight, resulting in negative impact on service delivery”. The WC is performing well as they have proper controls in place with regards to governance, and it is mentioned that this is the case because it facilitates a “Robust control environment, solid and consistent pattern of good financial governance” (AG, 2021). The key service delivery department in the NW is one of the top ten contributors to irregular expenditure, with the Department of Health accounting for R0,14 billion. WC does not appear on the irregular expenditure list (AG, 2021). Hence, it can be inferred that the reasons outlined in the AG report are compelling the NW to have the highest number of course attendees, aiming to enhance their overall understanding of governance and ethics. The analysis further provided information regarding the classification of employment of the participants in the specific departments or spheres of government. This was done to establish which sphere of government mostly embraced the constitutional premise that public servants need to uphold

high ethical and moral standards, as emphasised by the President and Minister in the previous section.

The assumption is that the local government is the governmental sphere struggling with a multitude of ethical dilemmas and the most diverse and complicated service delivery challenges. Figure 1.4 below shows a comparison of course attendance and participation among the three government spheres. The analysis demonstrates that despite the fact that local government faces the greatest challenges in ethical leadership and effective governance, the attendance of the Ethics course was comparatively lower. The low uptake of the course in local government could be attributed to the fact that the NSG mandate was only expanded in 2021 (NSG, 2022) to include the local government sphere, all along NSG was training only in the National and Provincial governments. Moreover, the course was only compulsory to national and provincial government employees as the prescript is not applicable to local government. While the course was not targeted for local government employees, there is a percentage of employees in local government who took interest in the course. The analysis shows that local government had a participation rate of only 12%, compared to the national (34%) and provincial (54%) government figures. Additionally, 50% of the participants were from NW, as discussed earlier.



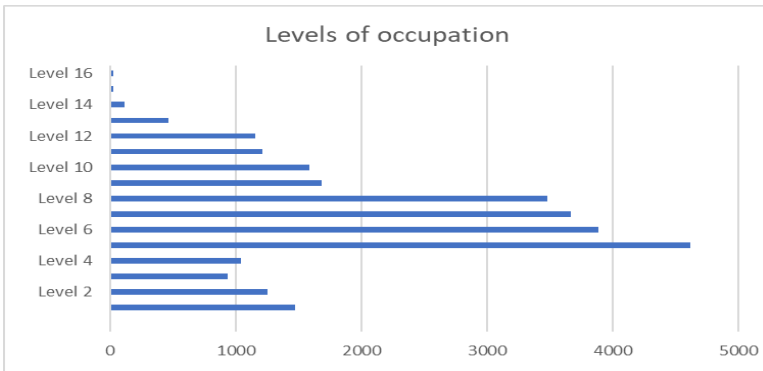
**Figure 1.4:** Course Attendance Grouped According to Spheres of Government

For emphasis, the former Minister in the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, stated that as of 31 January 2020, only 53% of municipal officials met the minimum competency levels, 52% of municipal CEOs achieved minimum competency levels, and 53.7% of senior managers achieved minimum competency levels ( Bussinesstech, 2021:1). Furthermore, within the 2019/20 audit report, only 27 out of 257 municipalities obtained clean audit outcomes, accounting for R5.5 billion in unaccounted spending (Daily Maverick, 2021:1). Moreover, SALGA CEO, Xolile George, revealed that although councillors do not require any qualifications, their ineptitude has become a challenge (SALGA, 2021). Finally, President Ramaphosa (2020) stated that, “We simply cannot afford local government to fail,” and the sphere is “too important to our people and their lives, to our developmental objectives and to the very future of this country”. Therefore, it is crucial for the NSG to enhance the attendance of local government in this free online course. This objective could be achieved by establishing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with COGTA, thereby enabling the enforcement of mandatory training requirements.

The analysis of the data regarding the salary levels of the attendants shows that senior managers were least likely to participate in the course. Directors serve in the Senior Management Service (SMS), while also being mainly involved in the day-to-day operations of the populated middle and junior levels of management. Ethical directors serve as mediators in the interrelationship between organisational culture and follower employee outcomes. Directors will lead by example through designing and enforcing ethics policy and procedures; publishing ethics prescripts; and communicating the expected standards of conducting ethics matters in the organisation to all civil servants (including SMS). Figure 1.5 below depicts participation according to different salary levels.

Middle managers, ranging from salary levels 9-12, showed an attendance rate of 21.1%. Their participation is much better than that of SMS members. However, more still needs to be done to improve participation at this level.

Lower-level employees, spanning salary levels 1-8, constitute majority attendance at 76.4%, possibly attributed to their role in receiving and executing instructions from their superiors. As such, there is a higher degree of monitoring participation. Despite the course being mandatory, senior managers still show non-compliance, evident in their low participation rate of 2.4%. Ironically, in numerous reports of misconduct, it is often senior managers who are implicated for unethical behaviour (Dorasamy, 2020; Kekae, 2017; Makamu, 2020).



**Figure 1.5:** Course Attendance Grouped According to Salary Levels

Particularly, leaders project ethical culture through formulating procedures and policies to promote ethics and condemn unethical behaviour. Literature suggests that it is the middle management, deputy directors, and assistant directors (levels 9 to 10), who are in a better position to serve as ethics champions in the public service. Results indicate that out of a total of 9 385 members of senior management only 780 attended the course (8% attendance rate) and from a total of 91 416 lower management services 2500 attended the course (2.7% attendance rate).

The previous section addressed the participants' demographics. The next section will focus on the qualitative aspects of this inquiry, as this will evaluate the impact of the course. To evaluate the course, a compulsory feedback survey

was used. The completion of the survey was a prerequisite for receiving an electronic certificate.

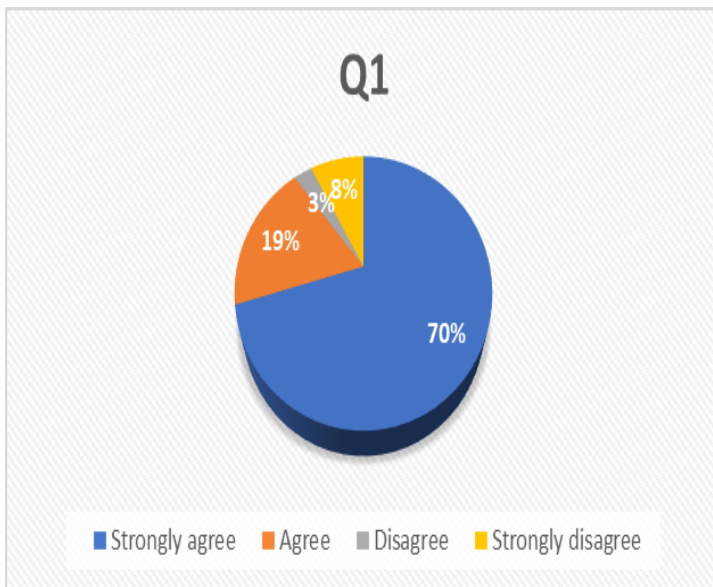
### **The Feedback Survey**

The process of assessment forms a pivotal part of the culture of teaching and learning. The process is generally undertaken using two broad types of assessments: summative and formative. At the conclusion of a module or unit, summative assessments are used to evaluate students' progress; identify whether learning objectives were met; to determine whether they can advance to the next level; and ascertain whether certification requirements are met (OECD, 2008). In contrast, formative assessment entails the iterative and interactive evaluation of learners' accomplishments, aiming to identify learning needs and adjust teaching methods accordingly (OECD, 2008). The latter method surpasses the former by enabling the incorporation of new techniques to enhance responses to diverse learner needs, achieved through adaptable and differentiated teaching. This approach strengthens learner achievement and mitigates discrepancies in student outcomes.

The principles of formative assessment are applicable to, *inter alia*, academic and policy-making institutions to pinpoint areas of improvement and to advance constructive and effective philosophy throughout the teaching and learning process. Provincial and national governments utilise this tool as a means of meeting long-term goals; to promote lifelong learning; and to access a new set of skills (OECD, 2008). Motivated by both qualitative and quantitative evidence, the government is driven by the understanding that integrating formative assessment into training programmes enhances learner achievement and addresses the diverse learning needs of broader population groups. With this justification, this section examines the formative assessment the NSG used to determine how its Ethics course affected the participants' orientation towards ethics.

The NSG used an anonymous survey to assess the varying perceptions of attendees using specific questions related to the content and facilitation. The purpose of the survey is twofold. Firstly, the survey measures how specific components of the training raise ethical awareness, and the challenges that accompany that awareness. Secondly, to assist the school to evaluate, review, and re-align its training facilitation in a manner that addresses those challenges while strengthening the capacity in the public sector. This brings insight about the underlying factors behind the major failures in service provision in certain areas, and to conduct training to address identified learning needs of public servants. Based on the feedback from public servant employees who completed the course, the subsequent summary statistics were computed.

**Q1. The course addressed my learning needs**

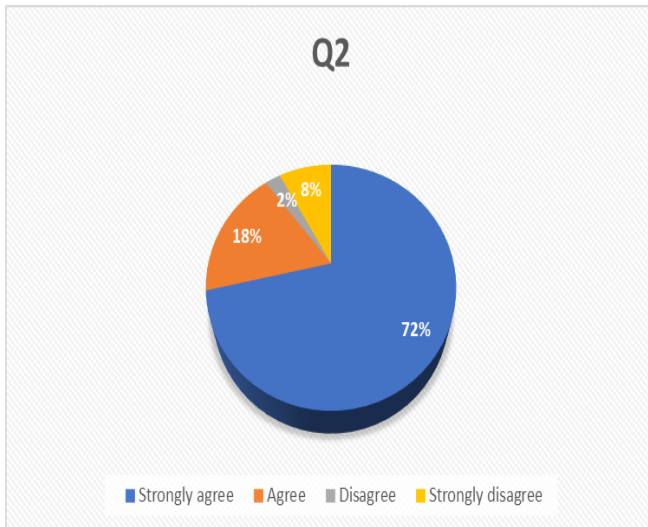


**Figure 1.6:** Learning Needs

Noessel (2003) argues that learning needs refer to an existing gap between the current knowledge state, enthusiasm, and

skillset of a learner relative to what they expect to achieve from a learning experience. Acknowledging and identifying these needs from the onset serve as an effective model to empower students and instructors early in the learning programme. The insights can be instrumental in customising the training facilitation strategies to enable trainees to reach and exceed learning as well as personal objectives. Figure 1.6 suggests that 90% of the participants were convinced that the course did address their learning needs in terms of ethics matters, with 70% strongly agreeing and 19% agreeing. Whereas 11% (3% and 8%) felt that, the course was insufficient in empowering them to manage ethical dilemmas better. While related to learning needs, the second question asks participants how informative they found the topics covered in the course.

**Q2. The course improved my knowledge of the topics that were covered**



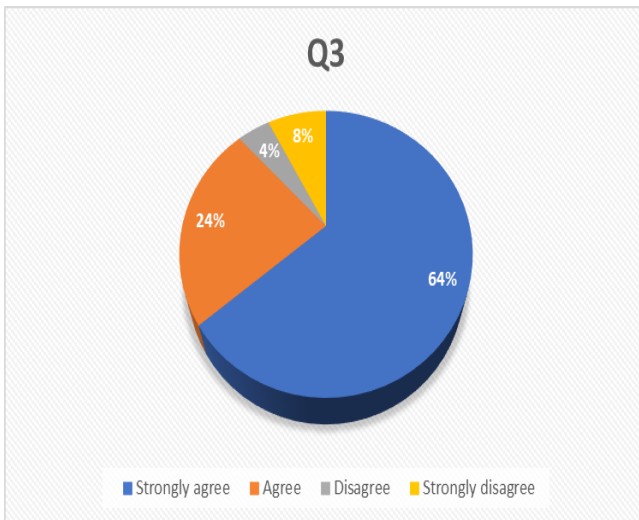
**Figure 1.7:** Ethics Knowledge

Employees face internal ethical battles with multifaceted consequences, encompassing emotional, moral, and



physiological dimensions. Not all ethics training programmes tap into the weight of these battles. Consequently, many individuals tend to bend laws, rules, and policies, seeking shortcuts to the solutions to these battles. Therefore, when conducted effectively, these programmes must empower workers to become whistle-blowers due to the associated risks to the organisation as well as the individual. When questioned about the improvement in their knowledge of ethics following the course, 72% expressed strong conviction that the course effectively addressed their knowledge gap in ethical challenges, while an additional 18% affirmed this improvement. However, 10% remained unconvinced about being adequately empowered to confront ethical dilemmas as they arise in public service after attending the course. The following two questions assessed the relevance and applicability of the contents of the course to people and their working environment.

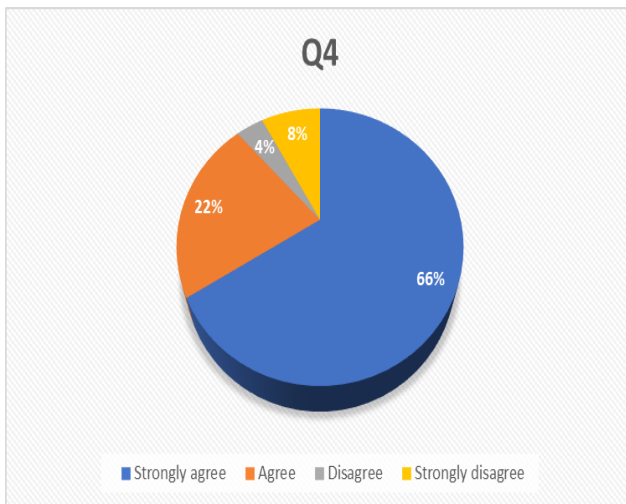
**Q3. The learning material was applicable to me**



**Figure 1.8:** The course applicability

In a complex world of consistent ethical dilemmas and ethical transgressions, organisations need to emphasise education on ethics through training to avoid assuming that workers are always fully aware of what is right and wrong in a given situation based on personal standards of conduct. In fact, individuals need more exogenous input, assistance, and considerations to make the most suitable and appropriate decision, particularly at the workplace. Although a total of 12% rejected the applicability of the course to practical workplace situations, a total of 88% (64% and 24%) felt that the course was applicable.

**Q4. The learning material was relevant to my working environment**

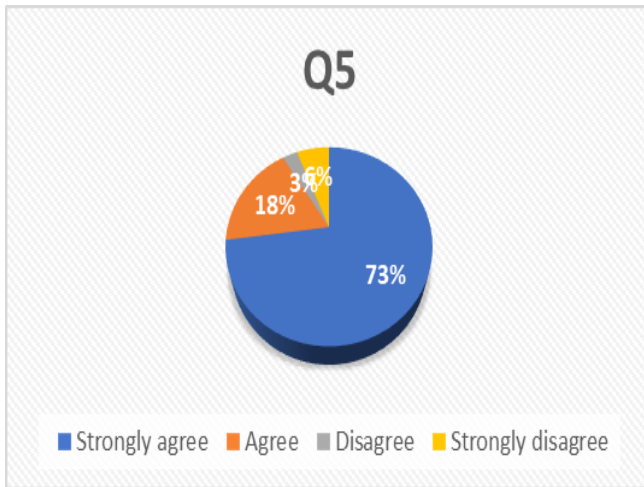


**Figure 1.9:** The course relevance

In a workplace, ethics compliance is important when considering forming strong and effective teams. This is because it is impossible for employees who disregard ethics to honour the mission of the organisation. These employees live up to unreasonable standards that lead them to behaviour that is misaligned with organisational values. Looking at the graph above, 66% of the people strongly support the relevance

of the learning material to their working environment. Thus, attendees have a stronger belief in that their learning needs were met and that they gained relevant knowledge from the course. The last question assessed the practicality of the learning material.

**Q5. The learning material provided me with examples of practical application**



**Figure 1.10:** The course practicality

Findings in Figure 1.10 conform to the observed pattern that a generally high proportion (73%) of attendees felt that the training provided practical examples of applying ethical principles when confronted with arduous real-life situations. However, 9% of the attendees still maintain a contrasting perspective, asserting that the material lacked practical application.

In summary, across analyses of the answers to the five survey questions, the proportions of the attendees who strongly affirm that the course was necessary, relevant, and impactful to them and the workplace constituted the majority of the responses, ranging between 64% and 73%. However, it is notable that about a tenth of the attendees consistently

rejected the essence and practicality of the course. The reasons for this could be because of various factors, including the content, facilitation of training, or applicability. Due to the limited survey in terms of questions asked, the study was not able to determine the main reasons for this outcome. The proportions strongly in disagreement, as well as those strongly in agreement, consistently exceeded the proportions merely in disagreement or agreement, respectively. This suggests that respondents exhibited greater clarity and distinctiveness in their responses. Nonetheless, the average score recorded (from 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly disagree) was 1.5, 1.5, 1.6, 1.5, and 1.5 for Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, and Q5, respectively. The NSG interprets this as a generally positive perception of the course and the training provided.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Values, morals, and ethics have strong impacts on daily judgement and human behaviour. Educational and developmental programmes that tap into these concepts are designed to produce positive outcomes, particularly in leadership and organisational culture in general. This is true in the corporate world as well as the public sector. The study and the subsequent analysis present the following recommendations:

- Gender disparities and regional biases in ethics are deemed unacceptable, particularly since financial incentives like bribery transcend gender and occur everywhere. Consequently, enhancing the participation of learners across all provinces should be pursued by establishing Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with the office of the Premier in each respective province.
- Through the expanded mandate, the NSG needs to prioritise the local government sphere when providing high-impact training in various developmental areas. Negotiating Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with departments responsible for local government and/or

municipalities to ensure improved participation of learners from the local government sphere should be prioritised.

- The NSG feedback questionnaire is routine and too limited for effective inference of data. As such, the last three questions should be reconsidered, as all of them are basically asking the same thing. Additional demographic characteristics (e.g. age, number of years in the public sector) should be added to the questionnaire and the survey should be kept anonymous.
- The NSG should consistently enhance its strategic partnerships with other departments and the corporate sector. This will expand the range of courses offered, including ethics, and simultaneously amplify the impact on empowering public servants.
- If ethics transgression is a global issue and the private sector equally struggles with the same problem, why not contemplate extending this course to private sector officials as well? Given that this is a free and compulsory course intended to have a broader impact, such inclusion could contribute to marketing the training facility and the course itself. The government serves not only the public sector, and ethical challenges pose a significant risk to the entire country.
- Participation in the course by SMS members needs to be improved and this could be done by including the course as part of their performance agreements to be monitored by human resources (HR).
- The mandatory disclosure of financial interests through DPSA should apply to all public servants rather than being restricted solely to managers, as it currently stands. The issue of ethics extends across all salary levels, necessitating comprehensive compliance.

With the mandate to promote good governance, the Auditor General of South Africa persistently raises concerns about corruption and unethical conduct in the public sector (AGSA, 2022). This is despite the government having launched multiple programmes and initiatives (Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan; professionalisation of the

public sector, including ethics training) to curb corruption. Literature (Manyaka & Sebola, 2013; Sebola, 2018; Sihver, 2011) highlights the importance of ethics training as a cornerstone for anti-corruption in the public sector. It is worth noting that the NSG compulsory Ethics training was only introduced two years ago, and it might be too early to see the impact of the training.

Therefore, to answer the research question of whether ethics can be taught? The answer is yes. It should be noted that for government to fight the scourge of corruption in an effective manner, there is a need not only for ethical training but for continued evaluation of the training programme to assess the impact. Ethics training should not be a one-time occurrence; rather, it should be an ongoing process to continually reinforce the awareness and commitment of public servants to uphold the fundamental values and principles enshrined in the constitution, ensuring a steadfast adherence to the highest standards of professional ethics. Meanwhile, ethics training should not only be specific to the public sector, but it also needs to cut across all sectors. Thus ethics should be included in the curriculum of university education as well. Ethics should be a way of life for all individuals within the country, and it is imperative to instil this value from an early stage.

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## CHAPTER 2

# The battle of ethical leadership and political power in South Africa

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### **Introduction**

The efficacy of statecraft and good service delivery heavily relies on the basic principles of ethical leadership. The basic principles of ethical leadership are outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Section 195 under the basic principles governing public administration. These principles are the foundation for a well-functioning and capable developmental state (Gloppen, 2019; Zondi, 2021). However, it currently appears that the public office bearers are obsessed with satisfying their personal needs using state coffers. Consequently, ethical leadership principles are undermined, compromising the ability to deliver public services. This is due to the ill-use of political power amongst the officialdom to manage public administration.

The most draining predicament with political power is that it causes service delivery backlogs because political office-bearers are often obsessed with their egos and would do anything to nurture them. On the contrary, ethical leadership is about servant hood, ultimately related to good service delivery and governance (Nooteboom & Termeer, 2013). However, this chapter discusses the issues of ethical leadership and political power, respectively, to fulfill its objectives. This comes against poor service delivery and weak governance, exacerbated by the perpetuation of poor accountability within government departments and agencies (Modipa & Motseki, 2022). Hence, the argument of this study is that political

power currently supersedes ethical leadership in the current state of public administration. The chapter brings to the attention of the reader that the challenges of governance and service delivery are closely linked to poor ethical leadership in public administration.

At the current juncture, it appears that public administration is currently politicised with the infiltration of political interference. Politicised public administration is susceptible to corruption and weak governance (Selelo & Masenya, 2021). This essentially occurs because individuals prioritise the hegemony of power and the infiltration of politics into the administration of government affairs when they assume public office (Von Holdt, 2013). Nevertheless, ordinary citizens still face a quandary of poor socio-economic service delivery due to the conflicting interests of public servants regarding power and leadership. The government is unable to meet its target of eliminating or not curtailing the proliferation of socio-economic hardships that the proletariat is enduring (Selelo & Masenya, 2021).

This chapter was motivated by the unchanging milieu of marginalised and poor people, the continuous issues of political power, and how these challenges have intruded on the legitimate functioning of the government. The people on the ground still reside in devastating living conditions after the democratic breakthrough in 1994. They are in a state of confusion, anarchy, poverty, unemployment, and inequality. While observing these revolting living conditions, those who are in positions of leadership in public offices continue to squander public resources for self-benefit as opposed to ethical leadership and service to their electorates. This chapter begins with a literature review by providing definitions of key terms and an analysis of ethical leadership and power. It also presents an overview of the legacy of corruption.

## **Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter is to assess and discuss the challenges of ethical leadership and political power in the

South African public administration sector. This section elucidates and discusses different themes of the study and provides detailed analyses and arguments from different scholars. The literature review is the backbone of the study because it seeks to fulfill the purpose of the chapter. It commences by defining the key terms used throughout the chapter.

### **Definition of Key Concepts**

The key concepts used throughout the chapter are defined below:

#### *Political Power*

Sullivan and Chapel (2021) define political power as “the ability to control the behaviour of people through the passage, approval, and implementation of laws and regulations” . It relates to the power to influence and change the outcomes of events. Meanwhile, Woerner and Troolin (2022) define political power as “a group of people or individuals who have a control and influence over a nation’s beliefs, actions, and behaviours” . The authors further indicate that with political power, individuals or groups of people can do evil or good.

#### *Politicised Public Administration*

It relates to the political administration dichotomy principle, wherein the politicians give orders, direction, and shape policies, while the bureaucrats must execute the orders of their political masters (Fry & Nigro, 1998). Mafunisa (2003: 85), cited in Sebola (2014), indicates that politicisation of public administration “results from a threat and a political sabotage by the previous administration.” Sebola (2014) reiterates that the debate on the politicisation of government administration has been critiqued in length over the past decades. Thus, the demarcation between politics and administration is difficult in modern-day public administration. Perhaps the politicisation of government administration is a result of cadre deployment by the governing party of the day.

### *Ethical Leadership*

Villirilli (2021) views ethical leadership as “a means of behaving according to a set of principles, morals and values which are recognized by the majority as sound basis for the common good.” The author indicates that ethical leadership is aligned with principles such as integrity, trust, respect, honesty, fairness, and transparency. According to the Western Government University (WGU) (2020), ethical leadership is about demonstrating and promoting normatively appropriate conduct that is the key to being a great leader. The following section discusses the conceptual analysis of ethical leadership and political power in government.

### **The Conceptual Analysis of Ethical Leadership and Political Power in Government**

Ethics, leadership, governance, service delivery, and power are concepts that are often used in lecture halls, academia, and boardrooms. At times, it might also be placed at the top of the government’s agenda (Doh & Stumpf, 2005). The terms are used timely and strategically in the political sphere to lure electorates and enhance confidence in public servants. Despite the government’s interventions and earnest efforts to enforce ethical leadership and good governance, the prevailing reality suggests that much attention and eagerness to implement such concepts appear to be nothing more than a symbolic gesture or a distant pipedream. This is evidenced by the persistent occurrence of rapid and rampant unethical behaviour, corruption, poor governance, inadequate service delivery, and a notable lack of accountability.

The aforementioned discussion provides the impetus for delving into and presenting the content of this chapter. Consequently, it is recognised that there is a battle between ethical leadership and the interference of political power in government, which undermines good governance and service delivery. This is because the officials who are obsessed with political power behave maliciously, corruptly, and illegally and violate laws and principles governing public administration.



Nonetheless, Woerner and Troolin (2022) argue that political power, contrary to common belief, is not inherently negative; instead, they contend that it is inherently beneficial and essential for the welfare of society. According to them, political power is a prerequisite for legislation, and without it, societal cohesion would disintegrate (Sullivan & Chapel, 2021). Conversely, Woerner and Troolin (2022) assert that when authority falls into the wrong hands, political power has the potential to be harnessed for malevolent purposes.

Political anarchy and weak bureaucratic processes managed to find their way into government processes to halt or curtail the levels of service delivery and instill the principles of political power, corruption, and pursuing self-interest (Von Holdt, 2013). These principles are detrimental to government processes of service delivery and good governance. Moreover, Jessop (2017:11) defines power as “the capacity of a given force to produce an event that would not otherwise occur”. A government is currently using the idea of power, which is primarily associated with politics, with unethical intentions. Specifically within South African politics, the term ‘political power’ has evolved into a means of securing and perpetuating leadership positions within the government. Consequently, this chapter undertakes a conceptual analysis of the ethical leadership and power dynamics within public service, examining their impact on good governance and service delivery. The examination delves into the foundational principles of political power and ethical leadership.

Regarding ethical leadership, public officials must promote and provide resources to a wider audience in their areas of jurisdiction (Nooteboom & Termeer, 2013). Leaders in government offices are given time, space, and latitude to render services in their own areas of jurisdiction. However, the emphasis should be placed on being fair and providing unbiased delivery of services to all the electorates to achieve good governance. Nooteboom and Termeer (2013) opine that this could be achieved if ethical leaders’ distance themselves from backdoor deals, cartels, and conspiracies. The authors expand on the latter stance, stating that to avoid such illegal

activities and malicious accusations by ethical leaders, the principles of transparency should be instilled and practised. Inevitably, the government has experienced the serious dilemmas of ethical breaches, poor management, and political mutineers who are at times glorified and deployed by fellow political camaraderie to occupy government offices.

Stogdill (1948), cited in Doh and Stumpf (2005), indicates that ethical leadership is associated with achievement, capacity, participation, responsibility, and accountability. Although other scholars have argued that leadership is situational, which means the environment is a determinant factor for a leader to triumph. However, leaders must follow some basic principles highlighted by Stogdill above. Interestingly, Ravin and Rubin (1976:37), cited in Doh and Stumpf (2005), define a leader as “someone who occupies a position in a group, influences others in accordance with the role expectation of the position and co-ordinates, and directs the group in maintaining itself and reaching its goal”. Doh and Stumpf (2005) imply that to achieve such a goal, it would require a sense of ethics, responsibility, and morals in those who occupy government offices and serve people well. Hogan and Kaiser (2005) highlight the perception that the concept of leadership has generated intense debates in the history of human science. However, it is inadequately understood and implemented in different organisations. The authors maintain that leadership exists for two main purposes: firstly, to solve problems, and secondly, to generate moral values and perspectives for unethical leaders.

Silva (2016) notes that people have long viewed leadership as a measure of personal quality. The author made an assertion that a Chinese philosopher and thinker who lived more than 2,500 years ago did not make a universal definition of leadership but proposed that a leader should be someone who is virtuous and takes care of the people. Takala (1998) echoes a facet of knowledge, akin to the sentiment expressed by Plato, often regarded as the father of philosophy, emphasising that a leader should possess wisdom. Plato concurred and maintained that “the possession of a wisdom,

the one truth of an intellectual vision, providing the pathway to effective government as it assists in the appropriate conduct of human affairs, distinguishes leaders from followers” (Bryman, 2011). Meanwhile, Stogdil (1950) described leadership as “the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement”. However, Zaleznik (1977) emphasised that leadership is about using “power to influence the thoughts and actions of other people”. Zaleznik’s interesting definition encapsulates the core essence of the paper, as the term ‘power’ in this context is frequently associated with politics and government.

The term ‘power’ is often associated with the concept of ‘politics’, which negates the basic principles of ethical leadership. Most recently, Dawn (2020) describes leadership as looking for new ideas and supporting them pragmatically to ameliorate certain predicaments. Clearly, there is no consensus on the definition of leadership because leadership is ubiquitous and depends on the time, space, and context in which it is used. Most importantly, the definition of leadership revolves around the servanthood of the people for the benefit of the people and to enhance their living conditions. Leadership in government would mean that the officialdoms are able to carry out their tasks with a sense of direction and purpose to achieve the developmental mandate of the government. It would also mean that public servants provide basic services to their constituencies without any bias or malicious acts.

Bell (2016) points to leaders such as Hitler or Saddam Hussain to indicate that they have used their political power to do evil deeds. The author compares them to Martin Luther King and Winston Churchill, who used their leadership styles to motivate and provide a sense of direction to the countries they managed. Nevertheless, political power in South Africa has permeated and infiltrated government administration. The malevolent sin of political power lies in its intrusion and violation of fundamental principles within government and ethical leadership. Most significantly, the victims of power and

politics are the electorate, which continues to experience poor living conditions. The next section focuses on political power and governance in South Africa.

### **Political Power and Governance**

Public administration in South Africa endures pervasive corruption and the abuse of power by public servants. The culture of impunity among public office-bearers exasperates the weakening of public administration. This means that political office-bearers think that they could do anything, even violate legal principles, and get away with it by using their political power. This behaviour ultimately leads to unstable and poor governance and service delivery. Seteolu (2004) provides a rationale for this phenomenon, attributing it to the concentration of power and political recruitment within the central government, which erodes ethical leadership principles and processes. Therefore, the emergence of unethical political power and corruption in government provides contradictions that lead to the collapse and weakening of the government's ability to achieve its developmental mandate. Political power and corruption cannot be discussed independently, as the prevailing discourse and on-the-ground reality suggest an inherent correlation between possessing political power and engaging in corrupt practices.

Mlambo, Mubecua, Mpanza, and Mlambo (2019) aver that the individuals who are corrupt are also the ones who use their political power for self-glorification at the expense of the people. The authors further suggest that since the post-colonial epoch, the rise of corruption has been at the top of the agenda for most African countries. While Selelo and Masenya (2021) describe corruption as the looting of services and resources meant for citizens by public servants, Myint (2000) indicates that corruption is the use and abuse of status for personal accumulation. Although there are different definitions of corruption, the essence is that corruption is immoral. To this day, South Africa's condition remains aggravated by political anarchy, escalating levels of

unemployment, poverty, and inequality, as well as weakened legislation and poor economic growth stemming from the influence of politics, power, and corruption (Mlambo et al., 2019). The political adage in one of South Africa's native languages, "bakone ba tsweri maatla," translated as "comrades have power," undermines the principles of good governance and leadership.

As a yea-sayer may put it, politics and power are "the crocodiles of the same river," which appears to be valid and true because the offspring of such concepts is corruption. Political power and corruption are closely associated with poor governance (Khan, 2006; Mlambo et al., 2019). On the contrary, good governance is concerned with virtuous leadership and service delivery. Because corruption is not a fair process and is done with bad intentions, it poses a threat to democracy and good governance. A lack of morals, ethics, and greed that results in the underperformance of state institutions worsens political power and corruption. Khan and Pillay (2019) argue that corruption is an enemy of good governance because it violates policies and legislation, terminates public trust and dishonesty, worsens poverty levels, and enriches the few.

Although good governance is essential for developmental prosperity (Weiss, 2000), it is marred with politics and corruption. Echoing the words of McKittrick (1957: 508) cited in Marquette and Peiffer (2018), "... it may be assumed that a reform of government which offers nothing as a substitute for functions performed by the political machine, will find itself very shortly in a state of paralysis". Perhaps these words simply suggest that political interference in government, due to unethical power and corruption, makes it highly unlikely to achieve good governance and government reform. Ernest Ben writes that "politics is the art of looking for a trouble, finding it whether it exists or not, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedy" (Goodreads, n.d). In that quote, Ben attempts to show that politics are evil and often associated with malicious intentions. The quandary of politics is that it tends to be self-centred and makes the corrupt wealthy and holier-than-thou under false pretences and impressions.

The next section discusses state power and politics in public administration.

### **State Power and Politics in Public Administration**

With the apparent departure of colonial power from state institutions, a new paradigm emerged, namely 'state power.' The introduction of this concept was met with extreme optimism, envisioning its role in fostering extensive economic and social initiatives for the people (Sekeris, 2015). The intended purpose of the state's power also included offering political resolutions to politicians. Essentially, state power constitutes a crucial component of the political machinery, striving to influence the political landscape in both the realm of politics and government (Sabine, 1920). This new regime of governance (state power) emphasises that radical politicians should spearhead state institutions such as State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), micropolitics, macroeconomic policies, and broadly, the issues of land reform (Bellemare & Moser, 2012). It is concerned with the control of the army and the entire security cluster, backed by the intelligence services (Bellemare & Moser, 2012; Sekeris, 2015).

Sekeris (2015) designates state power as the state capacity, serving as the conduit for the socio-economic development of national governments globally. However, both internal and external forces in the public and private sectors are capable of capturing or controlling state power. The capture of 'state' power is due to political connections. Thus, the act of corruption in government becomes inevitable in the end. Martin and Solomon (2016) find evidence to support their claims that foreign private individuals, such as the Gupta brothers, have taken control of the South African government and its agencies. The brothers managed to control the internal affairs of the government and were even-tempered with its security when they landed at Waterkloof Air Force Base (Martin & Solomon, 2016). They were in charge of the government cabinet, with the prerogative to appoint and fire cabinet ministers. This is shocking and a disgrace to the country's

sovereignty because of the weak leadership. The enabler of this state capture was political leadership from public servants who lacked the zest and patriotic principles to serve the nation. The chapter brings to the attention of the reader that, when political or power leadership supersedes ethical leadership, the outcomes are always unpalatable. The repercussions hurt the economy, taxpayers, and innocent people.

### **Ethical Leadership and Political Power: The Legacy of Corruption**

Apartheid was seen as a scheme of prejudice and segregation on ethnic bases. It overshadowed the philosophy and political system in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 (Gloppen, 2019). When the African National Congress (ANC), under Nelson Mandela's leadership at the time, negotiated with the South African government, this deliberate policy that forbade non-Africans from entering public service, government positions, and politics altogether, came to an end in 1994. Prior to the elimination of Apartheid, public service was a persistent medium for rent-seeking and the favouritism of Afrikaners (Von Holdt, 2013). Policies favouring Afrikaner cultural and educational systems, the shifting of authority contracts to Afrikaner firms, and the financing of para-statal Afrikaner organisations were popular occurrences throughout the era of Apartheid (Gloppen, 2019). In the 1980s, the development of rural native land territories culminated in ambitious projects geared towards rent-seeking, as numerous homeland leaders oversaw vast investment associations (Beresford, 2015).

Simultaneously, the ANC was garnering financial support from international donors to establish a formidable opposition political party, positioning itself to campaign against South Africa's National Party and Apartheid (Gloppen, 2019). The directors of the ANC were provided with substantial sums of money without adequate bookkeeping. The ANC's commitment to societal loyalty was forged during the Apartheid era, resulting in distinct repercussions in contemporary ANC politics. In the mid-years of Jacob Zuma's

leadership, which political analysts characterised as nine wasted years, corruption grew to be rife in mainly government divisions, news organisations, the police force, and the armed forces.

There is an ongoing and robust debate regarding the origins of corruption and its definition in South Africa. The congenial government and political culture that began in the Apartheid era have made corruption problems hard to locate and confront (Flames, 2007; Melber, 2022). The administration under Jacob Zuma, post-2009, created an environment in which corruption has flourished under the current leadership (Dweba & Rashe, 2021). Both the recent and former political order established their own forms of corruption, profiting those in their internal spheres.

While instances of widespread corruption have persisted under the recent regime since 1994, novel forms of corruption have emerged, contributing to the proliferation of new layers of criminal syndicates draining the state's purse (Kgatle, 2018).

According to De Kadt and Larreguy (2018), post-apartheid South Africa is a captivating case study of the ways in which economic inequality can be replicated and maintained within a country's societal structure, permitting it to remain, penetrate its economy, and control its structures. The escalating disputes over injustice, commercial disparities, and societal rights deficiencies in South Africa bear witness to the enduring legacy of apartheid, the legally mandated system of racialised exclusion and discrimination that came to an end 30 years ago (Tivaringe & Kirshner, 2021). Despite the democratic agenda of 1994, which clearly encouraged the development of commercial and societal rights and an all-encompassing culture, the pleasure of these rights is still elusive for millions of South Africans. Leonard (2021) contends that the latest voting outcomes verify that increasing economic disparity, unemployment, and corruption have corroded popular faith in the governing ANC political party and its policies.



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The chapter brings to the attention of the reader that when political power leadership surpasses ethical leadership, corruption finds a way to evolve. Clearly, the legacy of corruption and poor governance led to the downfall of the economy, exacerbating poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Hence, it is unavoidable to acknowledge that the escalating levels of corruption in the country are directly attributable to the national governing party, as it is the political entity deploying its members to occupy public offices. The cadre deployment policy of the governing party may indeed be the catalyst for political interference in government administration, leading to chaos in government offices and the delivery of public services. This chapter further explored and adopted relevant methodologies, which are elaborated upon below, to achieve its objectives.

### **Methodology**

This conceptual study relies on the use of a literature-based methodology to analyse the battle of leadership and political power in South African public administration. The methodology is characterised by the nature of a broad and horizontal review of secondary data (Selelo, 2021). Therefore, Mamokhere, Mabeba, and Kgobe (2020) indicate that this type of research is also seen as qualitative research. Philosophers frequently use the literature-based, conceptual methodology, which implies the synthesis of earlier studies carried out and explains the current occurrence of specific circumstances (Mamokhere et al., 2022). Through this methodology, the researchers conceptualised, evaluated, and examined the two concepts, namely, ethical leadership and political power in the governance of South Africa. This chapter selectively provided a context, focusing specifically on the South African context and thereby framing discussions around the concepts of ethical leadership and political power.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection involves gathering information to achieve research objectives. In the context of this chapter, secondary data, sourced from books, journal articles, government publications, and reports, were gathered due to the nature of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Wong (2008) describes data analysis in qualitative research as “a process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, observation notes, and other non-textual materials that a researcher accumulates to increase an understanding of a certain phenomenon”. Analysing a literature-based methodology (qualitative data) involves the ability to develop themes and categories to reduce the volume of information to fit in a specific context (Mamokhere et al., 2022). Therefore, content analysis was selected for the examination of qualitative data in the literature review. Content analysis shares considerable similarities with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as employed by Mamokhere et al. (2022) in their article titled “The contemporary challenges municipalities face in effectively implementing municipal service partnerships.” In the context of this chapter’s application, content analysis facilitated the identification of themes and the comprehensive portrayal of these themes, aligning with the study’s objectives. The analysis extensively investigated matters of leadership and political power within public administration.

### **Results and Discussion**

South Africa continues to witness massive corruption and maladministration in the public sector because of the factions of leadership and power. Due to this, there has been an economic downturn with a 34% unemployment rate, increased levels of poverty, and increased inequality. Government administration in South Africa endures pervasive corruption and the abuse of power by public servants. This

has led to unstable and poor governance and service delivery. This chapter overtly suggests that ethical leadership is not centred on acquiring status and displaying arrogance. Instead, it emphasises the importance of discipline, service, and a commitment to serving the people. On the contrary, power and politics are about arrogance, being self-centred, full of ego, and often associated with corruption. The battle of ethical leadership and power is far from over because of the different intentions of individuals who occupy public offices. As long as the governing party's cadre deployment policy dictates the selection and removal of individuals in public offices, the realisation of ethical leadership may continue to be an elusive aspiration.

### **Conclusion**

Through the aforementioned analysis and a comprehensive discussion, it becomes evident that adhering to the fundamental principles of ethical leadership is imperative for ensuring stable government administration. However, political interference is capable of polluting and hindering good governance and administration. In recent years, the government has experienced weak and poor governance due to the ill-discipline of the officialdom, characterised by massive corruption. This has led to service delivery conundrums in most of the rural vicinities. Hence, the recent protests and uprisings around the country were to be expected. These protests are expected to increase if politics and power continue to be the order of the day in running public offices. The chapter concludes that, in the current political landscape and government, political power is gaining prominence at the expense of ethical leadership. Consequently, the recommendations are made to instill the fundamental principles of ethical leadership within the officialdom and foster encouragement in government offices, aiming to enhance good governance and service delivery.

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## CHAPTER 3

# Corruption and economic growth in the emerging markets: empirical evidence from heterogeneous dynamic panel data

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### Introduction

Economic growth is key to reducing socio-economic challenges in society. Examples of these types of issues include poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Over the past two decades, the determinants of economic growth have attracted much attention in both theoretical and empirical research (Petraikos, Arvanitidis & Pavleas, 2007:3). Over time, nations have grown economically at various rates, with some sectors within a country's economy growing faster than others. Nelson and Winter (1974:887) explain that the growth results from an increase in the supply factors of production.

Petraikos and Arvanidis (2008:11) add technology and investment as determinants of growth, drawing from Robert Solow's theory on the neoclassical growth model as well as Romer and Lucas' endogenous growth theory. There are many other determinants of economic growth apart from the aforementioned, such as education and corruption. In his study of education as a determinant of economic growth, Robert Barro looks at education as part of the

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human capital. The term “human capital” refers generally to the acquisition of skills by workers through education and training. Human capital, which also includes health, is realised in the neoclassical model as a causal factor of economic growth (Barro, 1998:9; Iqbal and Zahid, 1998:125). Another determinant of growth is infrastructure. It has been proven that there is a positive relationship between economic growth and better infrastructure (Fedderke and Garlick, 2008:18).

There is no consensus in the literature on whether corruption helps the economy grow or cripples it. It is generally assumed in public discourse that corruption cripples economic growth. However, Mo (2001:66) indicates that some scholars and authors have conscientiously claimed that corruption is desirable for growth. For example, Bardhan (1997) recounted historical episodes from Europe and the USA, highlighting instances in which corruption may have inadvertently promoted development by enabling entrepreneurs to emerge from the ranks of bribe-givers. On the other hand, different scholars indicate that an increase in the presence of corrupt officials leads to an increment in public or government expenditure and rising prices, which ultimately suppress economic growth (Blackburn & Powell, 2011:227; Lin & Monga, 2012 and Christensen, Ojomo & Dillon, 2019). Scholars have long suspected that processes such as democracy and corruption are determinants of economic growth (Mauro, 1995; Mo, 2001; Méon & Sekkat, 2005; Swaleheen, 2011; Lisciandra & Emanuele, 2015; Huang, 2016; Chang & Hao, 2017 and Wang, 2016).

Corruption is defined as the abuse of public office for private or personal gain (Mo, 2001). This could be in terms of status or finances. Corruption includes bribery, facilitation of payments, any type of cartel and collusion used to restrict competition, nepotism, theft, and misappropriation of public resources (Drury et al., 2006; Bardhan, 1997). According to Robinson (1998), corruption has gained significant prominence, especially in developing nations. Despite its intricate nature, corruption can be classified into incidental, institutional, and systematic categories. Derrida (1994), on the

other hand, classifies corruption as large-scale fraud or white-collar crimes, exchange contraventions, and sanction busting. This chapter views corruption as public enemy number one. Contrary to popular views, it can be found in public, private, and non-government organisations.

The chapter would empirically examine the relationship between economic growth and its determinants, mainly focusing on corruption in fourteen emerging economies. The chapter follows a structured format. Section one introduced the topic; Section two delves into theoretical and empirical literature concerning the determinants of economic growth; and Section three provides a succinct overview of corruption's impact on the economy. Section four addresses the methodologies employed, and Section five reports, analyses, and discusses the results. Finally, Section six concludes by offering insights into the implications in terms of policy development.

## **Determinants of Economic Growth: Theoretical and Empirical Literature**

As highlighted in the introduction, there are many variables that determine the level of economic growth in a country. Some of these determinants complement each other, while others are complex. This section will investigate the relationship between economic growth and investment; economic growth and human capital; and the relationship between population growth, health status, and economic growth.

### **Economic growth and investment**

Theoretically, from the neoclassical and endogenous growth model perspectives, investment plays a crucial role in advancing economic growth. These models highlight investment or savings as an important growth determinant in the short run (Petraikos & Arvanidis, 2007:13). The neoclassical and endogenous models identify investment as the most fundamental determinant of economic growth. In the neoclassical model, investment exerts influence

over a transitional period, whereas, in accordance with the endogenous model, the impact is of a more enduring nature. Both investment and savings pertain to the gradual accumulation of capital by individuals over time (Petraikos et al., 2007:7). This aggregation of funds ensures that individuals have money at their disposal to spend or increase their wealth. Another form of investment is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), representing capital flows between distinct countries. It has played a crucial role in internationalising economic activity, and it is one of the primary sources of economic growth (Petraikos et al., 2007:8). A study performed in Pakistan on macroeconomic determinants proves that open foreign trade, which refers to imports, exports, and FDI, would promote a country's economic growth (Iqbal & Zahid, 1998).

Grossman and Helpman (1991:86) have posited that many researchers have attempted to understand the determinants of long-term growth from an investment in human capital and a new technology perspective. Human capital is also classified as the main source of growth in several endogenous growth models as well as the neoclassical growth model. Innovation and research and development (R&D) activities play a major part in economic progress, increasing productivity and economic development. This is made possible by the use of technology, which enables the introduction of new and superior products and processes. The role of technology has been stressed by various endogenous growth models and affirmed by many empirical studies (Petraikos et al., 2007:3). An empirical study by Tolo (2011) identifies agricultural exports, investment, research and development, population growth, and political uncertainty as determinants of growth.

This study was conducted in the Philippines, and novel methods were applied to identify which factors have caused the Philippines' growth rate to lag behind its neighbours. Furthermore, panel regressions were applied and revealed that deficit, inflation, trade openness, and current account balance were other factors that could be classified as significant determinants of growth. A growth index that was constructed

in Tolo's (2011) study confirms that the determinants found in the panel regressions are also keys for both the absolute and relative performance of each emerging market over time. However, the level of human capital was also found to be a significant determinant of growth in any country.

### **Economic growth and human capital**

Considerable focus is consistently directed towards economic policies and macroeconomic conditions when it comes to studying the determinants of economic performance (Kormendi and Meguire, 1985; Fischer, 1993). This is because these policies specify the framework within which economic growth takes place. Economic policies can influence several aspects of an economy, such as investment in human capital and infrastructure and the improvement of political and legal institutions. Macroeconomic conditions are seen as necessary but not sufficient for economic growth (Fischer, 1993). In general, a stable macroeconomic environment may favour growth, especially through the reduction of uncertainty. Whereas macroeconomic instability may cause a negative impact on growth through its effects on productivity and investment, for example, by generating higher risk (Petraikos et al., 2007).

Petraikos and Arvanidis (2008:14) are of the opinion that human capital is the primary source of economic development in several endogenous growth models as well as a key extension of the neoclassical growth model. There is notable evidence that an educated workforce is a key determinant of economic growth (Mankiw et al., 1992). Regarding human capital, Iqbal and Zahid (1998) highlighted that an increment of one percent in the enrolment of the labour force in primary school increases the increase rate in per capita income by 0.34 percent and real GDP by 0.35 percent. This is supported by the idea of Barro (1991) and Becker (1993) who argue that primary school labour-enrolment ratio proxying for the stock of human capital contributes to higher economic growth. According to Barro (1998), education, as a component of human capital, holds considerable significance, given that a

more educated labour force possesses the ability to rapidly use and comprehend foreign technologies. This, in turn, improves productivity, efficiency, and aggregate production.

### **Population growth, health status and economic growth**

Based on the explanation of economic growth as an increase in GDP per capita, Harris (2007) argues that Adam Smith (1723–1790) viewed population growth as a hindrance to economic development. The classical growth theory, which can be traced back to the writings of Smith, argues that economic growth will end because of an increasing population and limited vision. David Ricardo (1772–1823), in his writings about diminishing returns, has since reaffirmed this viewpoint. Classical growth theory posits that temporary increases in real GDP per person would cause a population explosion that would consequently decrease real GDP (Cameron, 2007:1). Smith proposed that population growth is endogenous, meaning it depends on the availability of resources to accommodate the increasing workforce. Smith also believed that the division of labour is determined by the extent of the market, thus resulting in the economies of scale argument. As division of labour increases, output increases, with further division leading to further growth (Helpman, 2004). Based on this, it is understandable why certain scholars have questioned the importance of human capital, with population size used as a determinant of economic growth (Krueger & Lindahl, 2001; Petrakos & Arvanidis, 2008:13).

Doliger (2009:149) highlights, drawing from Jean Bodin's 1576 writings, the assertion that true wealth resides exclusively in people. This submission supports the view that the well-being and good health of people are critical factors for economic growth because a healthy workforce is more productive. Life expectancy is probably the single highest indicator of a nation's health levels. Good health and the country's economic growth and development are intertwined, as bad health and poor nutrition are attributed to low labour productivity (Nafziger, 1990:251). There is a positive relationship between health expenditure and economic



growth, as per Muysken (2003). Focusing on corruption as one of the economic growth determinants and as public health expenditure forms part of public or government spending, Blackburn and Powell (2011) valorise that corruption cripples public finance. This then contributes to poor health facilities and services, which jeopardise the nation's health and life expectancy and, thus, ultimately threaten economic growth.

### **Corruption and its Harm to the Economy**

In global terms, corruption is a bad element that destroys credibility in any political system and thereby increases political risk in the economic system. This has a crippling effect on the determinants of economic growth, such as FDI. Fisman and Svensson (2007:64) state that the issue of corruption has been debated greatly over several years. This debate, as Mo (2001:66) further explains, is caused by a lack of clarity as far as the effects of corruption on economic growth are concerned. On one hand, there are authors who oppose the norm and argue that corruption is desirable for growth. Guillaumeméon and Sekkat (2005) submitted that the most popular justification of the beneficial effects of corruption rests on the so-called “grease the wheels” hypothesis. The argument is that an inefficient bureaucracy constitutes an impediment to investment and that some “speed” or “grease” money may help circumvent such bureaucracy, thereby raising efficiency, hence investment and, eventually, growth. On the other hand, corruption reduces economic growth through a negative influence on investments in human capital. Corruption also lowers the amount and quality of public infrastructure and leads to an increase in government expenditure (Ehrlich & Lui, 2000).

Del Monte and Papagni (2001) argue that an increase in public investment has a positive impact on economic development, while any increase in corruption has the opposite effect. Their work dictates that one standard deviation increase in corruption results in a 0.29 percent diminution in economic growth after two years. According to

Blackburn and Powell (2011), an increase in the presence of corrupt bureaucrats leads to a decline in the amount of public funds available to finance public expenditures. This raises the need to print more money, which then increases inflation and taxes. In the long run, this impacts monetary policy. In the cases where inflation is targeted, as in the case of South Africa, the results will be increased interest rates in an effort to curb rising prices. Other dire consequences are unemployment and poverty, which can also result from corruption when taking the latter observations into consideration (Derrida, 1994; Blackburn & Powell, 2011).

## **Research Methods**

This section deals with the methodology applied in this chapter. The first part looks at sources of data and sample size followed by the research model and, later, the panel unit root test, lag selection and the application of ARDL model for long-run and short-run.

### **Source of data and sample size**

This chapter applies the quantitative approach to investigate mainly the impact of corruption on economic growth in fourteen emerging economies. The sample period consists of 350 annual secondary data observations from fourteen countries for the period 1995–2019. This means that a sample size of 350 (14 x 25) observations is used which is big enough as it is suggested by different studies that results from a sample size equal to or greater than 30 are better than smaller sample size (Keller & Warrack, 2003; Mann, 2004; Niyimbanira, 2013 and Niyimbanira, *et al.*, 2015). There are many emerging markets identified by each group of analysts such as IMF, FTSE, EM Bond index, Dow Jones and Columbia University EMGP, but a sample of fourteen countries, namely Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Greece, Hungary, India, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, and Singapore were used because data were available. The data for four variables was obtained from the OECD (Organisation

for Economic Co-operation and Development) and one variable from Transparency International. In terms of ethics, the chapter is based on quantitative data that is secondary in nature, which means that it was collected by someone other than the current users. In this regard, no potential harm (due to low or no ethical implications) in sample units can be anticipated. The economic theories that underpin this chapter is only utilised as the foundations for verifying the hypotheses by employing econometric methods to accept or reject them.

### **Research model specification**

This chapter uses Heterogeneous Dynamic panel data. A starting point in analysing such data is the estimation of panel regression (Brooks, 2014). This chapter investigates the relationship between corruption and economic growth using econometric techniques. An autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) panel model is used to establish the long- and short-run relationships between economic growth and its determinants in the model. According to Cobb and Douglas (1928), Production function is presented as follows:

$$Q = f(K, L) = AK^{\alpha}L^{\beta} \quad (1)$$

Where:  $Q$  is total production (the monetary value of all goods produced in a year), (usually use GDP);

$A$  is productivity of existing technology (total factor productivity) (technical process, economic system etc.);

$K$  is investment capital input represented by the total investment in fixed assets (the monetary worth of all machinery, equipment, and buildings) and

$L$  is the quantity of the labour input (the total number of person - hours worked in a year).

Parameter  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are the output elasticities to capital and labour, respectively.

Based on equation 1, mathematically, this chapter model is represented in the following format:

$$\text{Economic growth} = f(\text{Corruption, capital, Labour}) \quad (2)$$

where economic growth (EG) is a function of corruption (corr.), capital (K) and labour (L).

For this chapter, the following econometric equation is derived from equation 2:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{1it} + \beta_2 X_{2it} + \beta_3 X_{3it} + \varepsilon_t \quad (3)$$

Hence:

$$EG_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{corr.}_{it} + \beta_2 K_{it} + \beta_3 L_{it} + \varepsilon_t \quad (4)$$

where  $EG_{it}$  = output (the dependent variable, state the measurement either gross output, or % of GDP, or growth rate etc.).  $\text{Corr.}_{it}$  = Corruption perception Index (main explanatory variable of the chapter).  $K_{it}$ ,  $L_{it}$  are capital and labour respectively or control variables (state their individual measurements either gross output, or % of GDP, or growth rate etc.). The generalised ARDL (p, q,...,q) model specification is as follows:

$$y_{it} = \sum_{j=1}^p \delta_j y_{it-j} + \sum_{j=0}^q \beta'_{ij} x_{it-j} + \varphi_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (5)$$

Where  $y_{it}$  is the dependent variable,  $x_{it}$  is a  $k \times 1$  vector that allowed to be purity I(0) or I(1) or cointegrated:  $\delta_{ij}$  is the coefficient of the lagged dependent variable called scalars,  $\beta_{ij}$  are  $k \times 1$  coefficient vector;  $\varphi_i$  is the unit-specific fixed effect,  $i=1, \dots, N$ ,  $t=1, 2, \dots, T$ ;  $p, q$  are optimal lag orders  $\varepsilon_{it}$  is the Error term. To re-parameterized ARDL (p, q,...,q) error correction model is specified as:

$$\Delta y_{it} = \theta_i [y_{it-1} - \lambda' x_{it}] + \sum_{j=1}^{p-1} \xi_{ij} \Delta y_{it-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{q-1} \beta'_{ij} \Delta x_{it-j} + \varphi_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (6)$$

Where:

- $\theta_i = -(1 - \delta_i)$ , group specific speed of adjustment coefficient (is expected to be  $< 0$ )
- $\lambda'$  is the vector of long-run relationships
- $ECT = [y_{it-1} - \lambda' x_{it}]$ , Error correction term

- $\xi_{ij}, \beta'_{ij}$  are the short-run dynamic coefficients

Based on what is described in the model to be estimated and the theories discussed, Table 3.1 presents the data description and priori expected relationships. It is expected that the relationship between capital, labour, and economic growth will be positive; hence, the positive signs. The key explanatory variable in this chapter is expected to be negative. If the corruption perception index increases (low corruption), economic growth will increase. Thus, it is a positive sign; in another sense, the relationship is negative.

### **Panel unit root tests for ARDL model**

Time series may be stationary or non-stationary. Brooks (2014), Gujarati and Porter (2008) axiomatically agree that non-stationary variables can result in spurious or nonsensical regression. This means the results from such regression may show that a relationship between variables does exist when there is none. Therefore, different panel unit root tests are used in this chapter to determine whether variables are stationary or non-stationary. These tests include:

1. Levin, Lin and Chu  $t^*$ ;
2. Im, Pesaran, and Shin  $W$ -stat;
3. ADF-Fisher Chi-square; and
4. PP-Fisher Chi-square.

In addition, Hadri's  $z$ -stat may be used to confirm the outcomes from these other tests. According to Habanabakize and Muzindutsi (2016:678), "the ARDL model is used only if none of the variables under study is  $I(2)$ ." This means that all variables used in this chapter must be either  $I(0)$  or  $I(1)$ ; otherwise, the ARDL should not be used as the right approach (Arshed, 2014; Habanabakize & Muzindutsi, 2016). As exhibited in Table 2, none of the variables was  $I(2)$ ; both labour and corruption are  $I(0)$ , while capital and economic growth are  $I(1)$ .

Before the ARDL model is estimated, it is advisable to conduct lag selection for a number of optimum lags to be used. The

**Table 3.1:** Data description and expected relationships

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Proxies</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Priori expectation</b>
<i>Economic growth</i>	<i>EG</i>	The annual percentage change (increase or decrease) in the real GDP.	Dependent variable
<i>Capital</i>	<i>K</i>	“Gross fixed capital formation (GFCF). The relevant assets relate to assets that are intended for use in the production of other goods and services for a period of more than a year.” OECD	Positive (+)
<i>Labour</i>	<i>L</i>	The labour force participation rate is a measure of an economy’s active workforce. The formula for the number is the sum of all workers who are employed or actively seeking employment divided by the total noninstitutionalised, civilian working-age population.	Positive (+)
<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Corr.</i>	“The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI): index which ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys”	Positive (-) +*

*\*the lower corruption is, the high its index is. Hence, a positive sign though it represents a negative relationship*

**Table 3.2:** Results from Panel unit root test

Variables	Level and difference	LLC	IPS	ADF	Fisher/P	Decision
K	Level	0.0142	0.0014	0.0014	0.0160	I(0)
	Level	0.1190	0.5707	0.8337	0.8794	I(1)
L	1 <sup>st</sup> Difference	0.0209	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
	Level	0.3869	0.0851	0.0819	0.0078	I(1)
Corr.	1 <sup>st</sup> Difference	0.6834	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
	Level	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	I(0)
EG						

**Table 3.3:** Optimal Lags Selection results

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-3221.759	NA	58223.36	22.32355	22.37430	22.34388
1	-1467.249	3448.299	0.346762*	10.29238*	10.54611*	10.39405*
2	-1446.037*	41.10234*	0.334501	10.25631	10.71303	10.43932
3	-1433.280	24.36626	0.342148	10.27875	10.93846	10.54309
4	-1421.725	21.75135	0.352942	10.30951	11.17220	10.65519

\*Indicates lag order selected by the criterion

different information criteria [such as AIC: Akaike information criterion; SBIC: Schwarz-Boyesian information criterion; and HQC (Hannan-Quinn information criterion)] were used to determine the number of lags to include in the model. The rule of thumb is that the smallest lag length is considered. However, a contradictory result may be obtained when selecting the number of lags, but it is up to the researcher to decide which length is suitable for the study based on the model and data. Hence, Table 3.3 shows the results of the lag selection process, and only one lag is used as indicated by the majority criterion (four out of six).

## **Analysis of Results and Discussion**

### **Analysis of long-run and short-run relationships**

The main results from the estimated ARDL model presented in Table 4, indicate that a statistically significant long-run relationship between growth and corruption does exist. It is shown that an increase of one unit in CPI (meaning reduction of corruption) will lead to an increase of 0.97 percent in GDP in emerging countries. This is in line with Mauro (1995) and Ahmad, Ullah and Arfeen (2012), who empirically confirmed that corruption does indeed impact economic growth. Amin, Ahmed and Zaman (2013) argue that corruption is one of the major factors impeding economic development. This implies that corruption keeps disproportionately burdening the poor through misdirecting investment funds, which could have changed the standard of living. In the long-run both capital and labour have positive relationships with growth. Surprisingly, labour was found to be statistically insignificant in both the short- and long-run.

In the short-run the results show that the error correction term is statistically significant, and has the correct sign as per convention, and is less than 1 (0.714001). Engle and Granger (1987) explain that a negative sign signals the correction of divergence occurring in one period during the next. In simpler terms, the Error Correction Term (ECT)



coefficient implies that nearly 71% of disparities between the long-run and short-run are rectified within a one-year timeframe. Furthermore, the findings reveal a statistically significant positive corruption coefficient of 0.413016.

This implies that for the merging countries examined in the study, a one-unit rise in the corruption perception index corresponds to a 0.41% increase in the economic growth rate of GDP. In this instance, the corruption perception index coefficient exhibits a magnitude twice as low in the short run compared to the long run, underscoring that corruption significantly detrimentally impacts a country's political system. In other words, the slow pace of economic growth caused by corruption makes it inimical to societal development. Therefore, the creation of anti-corruption agencies is a vital step and will make them independent from political interference by elites and multi-corporate organisations. In addition, citizens "should be educated about economic consequences of corruption to the society at large" (Ibraheem, Umar & Ajoke, 2013).

**Table 3.4:** Results from the ARDL model

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob*
<b>Long Run Equation</b>				
<b>Corr__</b>	0.975355	0.147034	6.63534	0.0000*
<b>K</b>	0.156828	0.030341	5.168876	0.0000*
<b>L</b>	0.005585	0.009856	0.566657	0.5714
<b>Short Run Equation</b>				
<b>Corr__ (ECT)</b>	-0.714001	0.076396	-9.345990	0.0000*
<b>D(Corr__)</b>	0.413016	0.112053	3.685887	0.0346*
<b>D(K)</b>	0.838532	0.279132	3.004066	0.0029*
<b>D(L)</b>	0.215430	0.363871	0.592052	0.5543

Having presented evidence in favour of "sand the wheels," the hypothesis that corruption affects economic growth in the foreign emerging markets, the focus is placed on the

results of individual countries by analysing the results from cross-sectional short-run coefficients. The results show that the average speed of adjustment returns from short-run to long-run equilibrium. According to Niyimbanira (2013), using the half-life formula of Ayto (1989), which is  $\ln 0.5$  divided by the error correction term, the speed of adjustment for each country is estimated and presented in Table 5. All error correction terms have the correct sign and are statistically significant. The only unusual result is regarding the ECT for South Korea, which has the correct sign but is greater than one. That means that the series used in the model is explosive and overcorrects the disequilibrium.

Consequently, the speed of adjustment for economic performance in South Korea will need about six months to re-adjust to equilibrium. Eight countries have a speed adjustment of less than one year, meaning that it is quick to return to equilibrium. In addition, once equilibrium is disrupted by the independent variables in the model used in the chapter, it will take one year and two months in Hangry, India, and Poland to return to equilibrium. To be more specific, for South Africa, it will take one year and five months, while for Greece, it will take more than two years, and in China it will take more than four years to correct the discrepancies between the long-run and short-run. This means that the influence of the explanatory variables included in the model differs from one country to another. The results give more than enough reasons to declare a war on corruption in emerging markets. Additionally, the findings of the chapter provide empirical support for the theory that corruption harms the economy.

**Table 3.5:** Results from cross-section short-run and the speed of adjustment using the half-life formula

Country	Error Correction term (ECT)	Prob*	Speed of adjustment using half-life formula ( $\ln 0.5/ECT$ )
All Countries	-0.714001	0.0000*	0.97 = Approximately 1 Year

Country	Error Correction term (ECT)	Prob*	Speed of adjustment using half-life formula ( $\ln 0.5/ECT$ )
Argentina	-0.808711	0.0000*	0.9 = 11 Months
Brazil	-0.984276	0.0000*	0.7 = 8 Months
China	-0.143088	0.0007*	4.8 = 4 Years and 10 Months
Colombia	-0.819919	0.0000*	0.8 = 10 Months
Greece	-0.262570	0.0002*	2.6 = 2 years and 7 Months
Hungary	-0.595304	0.0003*	1.2 = 1 year and 2 Months
India	-0.557806	0.0005*	1.2 = 1 year and 2 Months
Mexico	-0.949587	0.0000*	0.7 = 8 Months
Poland	-0.558382	0.0001*	1.2 = 1 year and 2 Months
Russia	-0.801908	0.0001*	0.9 = 11 Months
South Africa	-0.509426	0.0126*	1.4 = 1 Year and 5 Months
South Korea	-1.123410	0.0000*	0.6 = 7 Months
Turkey	-0.918723	0.0000*	0.8 = 10 Months
Singapore	-0.962899	0.0002*	0.7 = 8 Months

\*Statistically significant at 5% (as  $p < 0.05$ )

## Conclusion

This chapter aims to estimate the impact of corruption on the economic growth of the country using heterogeneous dynamic or Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) panel data from 14 emerging markets with data from 1995 to 2019. It is expedient that a country sustains its positive economic growth to achieve other macro-economic objectives. Thus, corruption was used

as one of the estimators to investigate its impact on economic growth. Applying Transparency International's corruption perception index, the chapter establishes a statistically significant inverse correlation between corruption and economic growth, observed consistently in both the short-term and long-term. This means that a unit increase in the corruption perception index increases the growth rate of GDP by 0.97 percentage points in the long-run. In the short-run, the results show that an increase of one unit in the corruption perception index increases the GDP growth rate by approximately 0.41 percentage points.

Therefore, by lowering or eradicating corruption, it is expected that most emerging countries will achieve more in terms of economic growth. To achieve this, governments should facilitate the process by working with all other stakeholders, such as the private sector, media, religious organisations, and other non-profit organisations. Like cancer, corruption should be tackled in all possible ways to cure it. Achieving this goal entails fostering transparency, accountability, and the implementation of good governance principles in all governmental economic decisions. To effectively combat corruption, it is imperative to establish judicial efficiency and independence across all emerging markets examined in this study.

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## CHAPTER 4

# Whistleblowing in South Africa: a vulnerable watchdog

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### Introduction

This chapter focuses on approaches that are required to strengthen whistleblowing and methods to improve legislative measures. Transparency International (2013:4) broadly describes whistleblowing as the exposing or reporting of misconduct, such as corruption, criminal offences, violations of the law, miscarriages of justice, specific threats to public health, safety, or the environment, abuse of power, unauthorised use of public property or funds, outrageous waste or poor management, conflicts of interest, and actions to cover up wrongdoing.

Whistleblowing serves as part of an internal watchdog mechanism meant to promote good governance, maintain the public's confidence in government and public decision-making, and support societal wellbeing and prosperity by ensuring some level of accountability (OECD, 2016:18). Individuals who are outside the traditional employee-employer relationship, such as consultants, contractors, trainees and interns, volunteers, student workers, temporary workers, and former employees, may also blow the whistle regarding wrongdoing.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 advocates the need for peace, justice, and strong institutions.

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The protection of these values is critical worldwide, especially considering the spate of corrupt practices exposed in the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic (Transparency International 2020). Moreover, the South African public sector was already signalling threats of collapse and failures of some of the institutions of government, as illustrated by the state capture commission chaired by Justice Raymond Zondo (BusinessTech 2021; Gumede 2022). The weaknesses of some of the public institutions and infrastructures have also been exposed by the occurrence of the recent floods in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

This chapter engages with literature on the experiences of whistleblowers as employees who expose information or activities within a public, private, or government organisation that is deemed unethical, illegal, illegitimate, immoral, illicit, unsafe, an abuse of taxpayer funds, fraudulent, and corrupt (March 2015). The chapter evaluates how whistleblowing can be enforced, considering the lived experience of the whistleblower. It uses ethical theories to analyse whistleblowing within the confines of the Protected Disclosure Act. It also makes suggestions on how the legislation can be amended to better protect whistleblowers in the midst of the broader need to promote ethical governance, ethical culture, and ethical civil service in the future. First, it discusses how common whistleblowing is and the rules that support it locally and internationally. A theoretical foundation for reviewing the pertinent literature follows this. An ethical examination is undertaken to guide the analysis of the policy. This leads to a conclusion and recommendations.

The qualitative desktop study undertaken in this chapter, thematically analysed literature from published articles, research paper chapters, books, news reviews, official reports, and legislative documents to answer the research questions. Common trends identified from literature were examined in relation to the research objectives to enable a comprehensive answer to the research questions. The study found that the challenge with whistleblowing is not specific to South Africa and that the success of the strategy is determined to a large

extent by the maturity of the administrative processes of a democratic system in contemporary society.

This is in part due to a weak judiciary and other factors that manifest in the lack of adequate protection and remedial measures for whistleblowers. It also exposes the inefficient structures of accountability that perpetuate unethical practices and impunity by the political elites due to lack of strong institutions to deter such crimes. The study recommends a radical legislative reform and a revolutionary amendment to the policy framework whereby the personal protection of prospective whistleblowers is guaranteed with more determined punishment for those involved in corruption to create precedence and serve as deterrence to others.

## **Background**

The South African whistleblowing legislation makes it the responsibility of an active citizen to report fraud, maladministration, and misuse of public funds. Law enforcement agencies are to enable people to pass on relevant and reliable information concerning wrongdoing. The assertion is that anyone can blow the whistle when they suspect, witness, or observe behaviour or actions believed to be illegal or in contravention of the financial management laws of the country and report these suspicions to the relevant law enforcement agencies.

The structure of the South African government is rooted in the constitution, but the failures of some aspects of these structures call for concern. The essential democratic checks and balances necessary for maintaining order, transparency, and accountability are compromised, as instances of misconduct in public offices often go undetected for prolonged periods, enabling collusion among some public officials in criminal activities and corruption. The South African Protected Disclosures Act (No. 26 of 2000) is among the legislative frameworks that institute mechanisms to safeguard employees in both public and private sectors, providing protection against professional repercussions when disclosing

evidence of unethical or corrupt conduct by their employers or colleagues. The ethical merit of this endeavour is that the whistleblower passes information on wrongdoing while acting in the best interest of the public (March 2015). Despite the parts of legislation that were ostensibly necessary to safeguard them and their families, whistleblowers in South Africa are not protected. The existing constitutional framework is evaluated in this chapter, amidst the seeming pervasive complicity in wrongdoing and a conspiracy of silence in the face of unethical behaviour.

Whistle Blowers South Africa is a powerful, cost-effective intelligence-gathering subscription service that has carried out various surveys on fraud and corruption undertaken both internationally and in South Africa with startling results. However, both the South African public and private sectors have often been reluctant to introduce and implement proactive anti-crime measures. Instead, virtually all statistics of fraud and corruption in South Africa and investigations undertaken are reactive. The findings of a business crime survey conducted in South Africa as part of an international survey involving nine other countries concluded that fraud and corruption are serious crimes that affect the profit margins of businesses and the ability of the public sector to deliver the services required by the people of South Africa. This has detrimental effects on economic growth, investment, and development in South Africa. The table provided below encapsulates the correlation between an organisation’s size and its susceptibility to the risk of crime and criminal activities.

**Table 4.1:** Crime risk by organisation size:

Type Of Crime	Number Of Employees		
	1 – 10	11 – 49	50+
Employee theft (%)	10.1	26.1	63.8
Employee fraud (%)	9.8	19.6	70.6
Fraud by outsiders (%)	24.6	24.0	51.4
Bribery and corruption (%)	14.7	20.0	65.3

The above table indicates that the greater the staff complement in an organisation, the greater the risk of crime within that organisation. In addition, most organisations do not regularly review their control environment and are dependent largely on audits and consultants to identify weaknesses within the organisation. This occurs often too late to take remedial action. Management has historically failed to utilise the most effective resource within their organisation, i.e., their own employees, to identify any irregularities, reduce the susceptibility to the risk of fraud and theft within the organisation, and maintain a standard of ethical business practices (Whistleblowing – South Africa, August 2011). This exposes the potential risk of whistleblowing within organisations. What follows is a theoretical perspective on understanding whistleblowing as the basis of analysis.

### **The Social Justice Theory**

The social justice theory constituted the overall framing of the study within the interpretive paradigm (Powell 2011). It provided the basis for a critical interrogation of the challenges faced by whistleblowers in South Africa. The literature on local experiences of whistleblowing was thematically compared to international examples and analysed using tenets from Immanuel Kant's ethical theory of duty, the utilitarian ethical theory, and John Rawls theory of justice.

According to the Corporate Finance Institute (2023), human rights constitute the most important principles and are an essential component of society and the concept of social justice. Human rights are fundamental to societies that respect individuals' civil, economic, political, cultural, and legal rights. Governments, other organisations, and individuals must be held accountable if these rights are not upheld. The importance of these rights to societies is emphasised by their international recognition and protection through institutions like the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Human Rights Council. Justice is a multi-faceted concept and a cardinal virtue of rational beings in their relationships with

others. It is the foundation of the legal system and the pivotal point from which judgements are formed about the ways in which society functions. Justice is sometimes simply defined as “giving each their due”.

Pritchett et al. (2021) states that the social justice theory is based “on the belief that human life is to be universally cherished and valued”. Social justice can be envisioned as the manifestation of justice achievable when societal structures enable every individual to obtain their equitable portion. This principle extends beyond distributive and procedural justice, encompassing retributive and restorative justice as well. The framework of social justice theory supports insightful discussions on the challenges faced by whistleblowers, who frequently confront social isolation and discrimination in their efforts to safeguard the social order.

Lerner (2003) suggested that people have a need to believe in a just world and that the belief in a just world (BJW) is a manifestation of the justice motive. He argued that people make sense of their experiences by believing that everyone gets what they deserve and deserves what they get. Believing that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people implies a sense of control. Believers in justice can expect positive outcomes as a result of decent behaviour and anticipate delayed gratification for their investments. Believing in justice provides a basis for personal contracts that warrant rewards for compliance with social norms and expectations. The outcomes and agreement between the individual and the institutions have an impact on the belief in justice. However, if the leadership is not motivated to produce the positive rewards that promote ethical organisations, they will ignore the protection of whistleblowers. This presents a nexus between justice and ethics.

Ethics explores the nature of moral virtue and evaluates human beings and their actions. It enables the study of morality through a rational, secular outlook grounded in notions of human well-being. Modern ethics has developed two competing traditions that focus on determining the ethical



character of actions. It also emphasises that the consequences of an action determine whether it is right or wrong. This chapter is based on the second and opposing perspective. It was proposed by the thoughts of Immanuel Kant, who is often quoted as saying, “Do the right thing, because it’s right” (Smith, 2005). Kant emphasised that thoughts without contents are empty, and intuitions without concepts are blind (Kant, 1781). Kant’s ethical philosophy is based on a set of universal moral principles that apply to all human beings (Kant, 1788; 1797). Kant argued, to be moral, rational people would act in such a way that the maxim of their actions could be made universal law (Kant, 1785). According to Rauscher (2022), as an ethical person, one should “live your life as though your every act were to become a universal law.”

John Rawls’ (1971) theory of justice balances utilitarian ethics and Kantian ethics, emphasising fairness while also respecting individual autonomy. The rule of law should protect individuals’ fundamental liberties from oppression (Davies, 2018). Rawls presents a normative framework for establishing a just social structure and key institutions (political, economic, legal, and social). These institutions are crucial in managing the allocation of goods and social burdens among contemporaries who are members of a certain society and hence, in defining their life prospects. Chapter 9 of the South African constitution, commonly referred to as the institutions preserving democracy, has the responsibility of promoting social justice.

Whistleblowing raises questions of ethical dilemmas in the workplace. People who risk their social lives in the face of societal challenges that threaten core values and the prosperity of a community deserve protection. Their noble and bold attempt at being ethical and compliant with legislation lends itself to the Kantian ethical theory, the utilitarian theory, and John Rawls’ justice as rights for analysis. These theories offer a framework for the policy analysis and recommendations presented in this chapter. The subsequent section delves into the international experiences of whistleblowers, offering a

comparative perspective on the discourse surrounding the experiences of South Africans.

## **International Perspectives of Whistleblowers**

Many countries around the world have adopted whistleblowing mechanisms using diverse approaches to strengthen public accountability and ensure strong institutional and governance norms (Dasgupta & Kesharwani, 2010). Nevertheless, not all of these countries have regulations that protect whistleblowers. Some of the national whistleblowing mechanisms considered in this chapter include approaches used by Fiji, Japan, the United States of America, Nigeria, and the Republic of Korea. The most important question about the various national approaches is who can blow the whistle.

Many countries limit the eligibility for blowing the whistle to those currently employed within an organisation. South Korean citizens submitted 61,000 reports of alleged corruption between 2002 and 2020. A total of 1,782 corruption cases have been opened, 4,452 people have been prosecuted, and 2,029 people have been disciplined. Since the amendments to the whistleblower law in 2011, citizens have sent 33,000 reports regarding public health problems, unsafe food and unlicensed medical products, public safety issues including faulty construction and inadequate fire fighting facilities, the environment, consumer protection, and unfair competition. Half of these reports were forwarded to investigators, leading to 1,874 prosecutions and 2,053 fines (Mark Worth, 2020).

Mark Worth remarks that many whistleblower reward programmes exist even outside legal and anti-corruption circles. American laws reward people who report tax evasion, foreign bribery, and various financial and environmental offences with monetary compensation. The United States Securities and Exchange Act (SEC) considers its whistleblower programme highly successful. Whistleblower tips have resulted to financial remedies exceeding \$2 billion, with over \$500 million awarded to whistleblowers in the past decade.

Furthermore, corporate whistleblowers wrongfully discharged are entitled to double back pay (Schweller, 2020).

Initially directed at large businesses to instill compliance-focused principles among managerial ranks, Japan's Whistleblower Protection Act of 2006 underwent subsequent amendments to extend its coverage to safeguard the rights of whistleblowers across all businesses. It also permitted whistleblower disclosures when "a reportable fact is considered to have occurred or is about to occur." The amendments relaxed the requirements for reporting to the news media (Schweller, 2020). However, it still failed to address retaliation concerns. The Japanese Whistleblower Protection Act expands both the definition of 'whistleblower' and the scope of reportable facts to include retired workers, temporary workers, and officers.

Meanwhile, reportable facts covered under the Act now include "not only criminal acts subject to criminal punishment, but also acts subject to administrative penalties" (Schweller, 2020). Like the United States, Japan's reward system has been quite successful in motivating people to report misconduct, prosecuting criminals, and recovering squandered funds (Mark Worth, 2020). Despite amendments to the Japanese Whistleblower Protection Act, it is perceived as lacking compared to robust whistleblower legislation in other countries. This deficiency arises from the failure to introduce criminal penalties for companies retaliating against whistleblowers. Furthermore, whistleblowers demonstrating in court that they were terminated for whistleblowing are only entitled to reinstatement.

In the Republic of South Korea, an anti-corruption law was amended in 2019 to allow citizens to use "proxy" lawyers to file reports on their behalf. This served to shield the identities of the whistleblowers while the government took care of legal fees. The amendments increased the penalties for certain violations; for instance, improperly revealing a whistleblower's identity is now punishable by up to five years in prison or a \$40,000 fine. Retaliation is now punishable by

up to one year in prison or an \$8,000 fine. South Korea has two highly successful reward programmes for tax whistleblowers. These paid 51 billion KRW (about \$44 million) in more than 2,000 cases from 2010 to 2017 (Mark Worth, 2020). Whistleblowers have been directly responsible for bringing in 314 billion KRW (\$265 million) in benefits to Korean society. That would be enough to cover year scholarships for 85,000 students to attend the University of Seoul.

Since 2008, the Republic of Korea, especially the Korean Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, has paid 26.5 billion KRW (Korean Won) – \$22 million – to people who reported corruption, public safety violations, unsafe consumer products, and environmental harm. Among these 7,103 cases, people received \$425,000 for helping South Korean authorities recover \$4.4 million from a crooked hospital. One person earned \$100,000 for helping authorities recoup \$480,000 from a crooked research organisation. Another person was paid \$17,000 for exposing a crooked defence contractor. Since 2008, 685 people have asked the Commission for employment, physical protection, and other types of protections. This was granted to 210 people, including an employee who reported a company's fraudulent claim for public subsidies, and an employee who reported the inappropriate euthanising of abandoned animals (Mark Worth 2020).

OAL (2021) claims that despite the lack of specific legislation on whistleblowing in Nigeria, numerous government parastatals and bodies have successfully implemented a number of guidelines across a variety of sectors. This includes the civil service, public departments, private sector banking and capital markets, and the pensions industry. Since its adoption in 2016, the Nigerian government's whistleblowing programme has recovered N594.09 billion by 2019. It is set to combat corruption and other financial crimes, such as Treasury Single Account (TSA); elimination of ghost workers syndrome; staff collecting double salaries in more than one organisation, ministries, departments, or agencies (MDAs); and retirees without proper records but still collecting salaries (Okunade 2019).

The Fiji Board registered 628 whistleblowing cases between 2017 and 2019. The Board has paid just over a million dollars for 32 cases that qualified for rewards payments (FRCS, 2020). Furthermore, the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) board has approved a payment of \$250,000 to a whistleblower whose information led to the successful recovery of some \$8 million dollars in taxes and penalties for tax evasion (Fiji Revenue & Customs Service, 2022). Fiji undertook a macro-level intervention by incorporating mandatory ethics and governance courses in Fiji's universities into whistleblowing legislation. This allows for a proactive approach to addressing the issue at its roots. All students in higher education institutions must enroll in modules on ethics and governance as integral components of their degree programs and qualifications (White & Mua, 2022). Over 40,000 students have completed mandatory courses in ethics and governance across Fiji's three universities within a 15-year period.

These international examples offer crucial lessons to enhance the South African implementation of whistleblowing legislation. Subsequently, the following section portrays the landscape of whistleblowing in South Africa before deriving insights from international experiences.

## **Whistleblowing in South Africa**

Corruption Watch, a South African non-profit organisation founded in 2012 that aims to expose and combat corrupt activities in both the public and private sectors, receives a number of whistleblowing reports from citizens. During the 10<sup>th</sup> year of its existence, it received 36,224 reports. In 2021 the highest number of reports were recorded, with 3248 in total. Maladministration claimed the lead with 18%, trailed by procurement corruption and abuse of authority by accounting officers, both registering at 16%, and fraud at 14%. When scrutinising corruption hotspots, policing emerged as the highest percentage with 10% of all reports, succeeded by schools at 5.8%. Amidst the COVID-19 period, 6% of

corruption cases were reported, housing accounted for 3.1%, and health-related cases stood at 2.7%.

Section 3 of the Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000 protects whistleblowers against 'occupational detriment' by employers. This employer-employee relationship is the only labour relations remedy that whistleblowers have. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) only reimburses a whistleblower for lost income, and the sum is relatively small. This is against Transparency International's prescription that whistleblowers must be compensated (Justice Share, 2022). An independent non-state agency such as Corruption Watch extends its role beyond merely advocating compensation for whistleblowers by, actively pursuing the prosecution of individuals reported for whistleblowing crimes. Drawing insights from global practices, South Africa may enhance its effectiveness by introducing financial compensation for whistleblowers.

### **Some Limitations**

While decisions to blow the whistle may be based on a strong desire for justice, whistleblowers often become isolated and vulnerable. According to Devine and Maassarani (2011:256), whistleblower protection laws are becoming more popular, but their rights have been largely theoretical and not practical thus counterproductive in many cases. Employees have often risked retaliation, believing they were protected when, in reality, there was no realistic chance of retaining their jobs.

The PDA does not provide protection to whistleblowers who reveal information about national security or state secrets. The Protection of Access to Information Act 26 of 2000 (PIA) restricts the revelation of specific information relating to state secrets unless it is authorised and lawful in the interests of the Republic, or it is the whistleblower's obligation to expose the information. There are no provisions in the PIA regarding whistleblower protection. Over five years have elapsed since Parliament approved the Protection of State Information Bill, set to revoke the PIA; however, its final approval and

implementation as law are still pending. President Ramaphosa invited Parliament to revisit the Bill in June 2020. No changes have been made.

In most cases, the experience of whistleblowers indicates that they are not safe, and the law fails to protect them from discriminatory actions after they have disclosed workplace unethical conduct to a competent authority in good faith and on reasonable grounds (OECD, 2016:18; OECD, 2009). This is in contravention of Article 32 of the 2004 United Nations Convention on Corruption, which guarantees the protection of witnesses, experts, and victims. Article 33 of the UN, ensuring the protection of individuals reporting through whistleblowing, is also being infringed upon. The contravention of Article 5(5&6) of the African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption of 2003 occurs when employees are not afforded protection. The next section provides some examples and consequences of whistleblowing in South Africa.

### Challenges Experienced by Whistle Blowers and its Legislations

According to Transparency International (2013:3), some of the high personal risks often faced by whistleblowers include being fired, sued, blacklisted, arrested, threatened, or, in extreme cases, assaulted or killed. To set the stage for this section, the names, incidents, and lessons learned of certain whistleblowers in South Africa, along with the consequences of their actions, are detailed in the table below.

**Table 4.2:** Names, incidents, and lessons learned of certain whistleblowers in South Africa

<b>Name</b>	<b>Incident</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Babita Deokaran	Witness to an investigation on alleged fraud.	No protection/assassination

<b>Name</b>	<b>Incident</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Paul Theron	Disclosed poor state of healthcare system.	Dismissed
Moses Phakwe	Exposed corruption in the municipality.	Assassinated
Mike Tshishonga	Uncovered incidences of corruption and nepotism.	Suspended
Xola Bansi	Corruption in relation to two tenders	Gunned down
Roberta Nation	Fraudulent activities made in relation to claims.	Dismissed

(Adapted from “Heroes under Fire – Open Democracy Advice Centre – ODAC)

People like Dr. Paul Theron, Mike Tshishonga, and most recently Babita Deokaran attempted to raise alarm about irregularities by exposing corruption within the Gauteng Health Department. Babita Deokaran’s death was directly traceable to her decision to blow the whistle. The experiences of all these noble citizens suggest that the whistleblowing environment is precarious and fails to encourage people to come forward, as there is no protection. Corporate hierarchies frequently use intimidation and fear to convince whistleblowers that the power of the organisation is greater than the power of the individual, even when the individual knows the truth. Often, corrupt organisational leadership tends to scapegoat the whistleblowers or alleged “troublemakers” to keep the majority silent (Devine & Maassarani, 2011:19).

Devine and Maassarani (2011) highlight a few of the retaliation strategies used by management against whistleblowers. Spotlighting the whistleblower instead of the wrongdoing is one of the tactics used. This is when the focus is placed on everything about the whistleblowers, including their motives, credibility, and professional competence, instead of the alleged misconduct. A related tactic builds a damaging record against the whistleblower. A corrupt



organisational leadership spends years manufacturing an official personnel record to brand a whistleblower as a chronic “problem employee” who has refused to improve. The agenda is to convey the perception that the employee in question does nothing right. Closely tied to this is a strategy that sets the whistleblowers up for failure by putting them under an unmanageable workload and then firing or demoting them for poor performance.

Some perceived whistleblowers are threatened with warnings, short reprisals such as reprimands with an explicit threat of job termination, or other severe punishments to deter disclosures. A fifth tactic used is to publicly humiliate the whistleblower with isolation by transferring them to another area of operation. The isolation blocks the employee’s access to information and severs their contact with other concerned employees. The aim is to pressurise the whistleblower to be compliant or to resign voluntarily. Closely related to this is the sixth tactic, involving the direct elimination of whistleblowers’ positions through a deceptive restructuring, aimed at abolishing their existing roles and substituting them with compliant new hires.

In South Africa there have been cases of whistleblowers or their family members being physically attacked and the news has been replete with whistleblowers who were murdered. This retaliatory tactic is applied when internal organisational tactics are not feasible. In cases where they are not murdered, paralysing their careers becomes the objective. These employees are typically given negative references when the need arises, denied well-deserved promotions, or transferred to the least appealing branches or positions. Some whistleblowers get blacklisted and unfairly dismissed with a settlement. This gives the impression that they are unmanageable employees. This damaged reputation interferes with their professional careers and their capacity to secure other jobs in other organisations.

A formalised conflict of interest policy is sometimes also implemented to ensure that only internal employees

can investigate any issues that arise within the organisation, resulting in the dismissal of all issues raised by whistleblowers. Sometimes, expertise and authority are separated, resulting in a situation in which corporate loyalists make all major decisions, including technical judgement calls, with only a limited advisory role for experts. Whistleblowers can be silenced by repressive non-disclosure agreements as a job requirement or by excessively labelling information as “proprietary” or “classified” with government contractors. Otherwise, the case is turned into a ‘Study it to Death’ in where a toothless, never-ending investigation is launched to give the appearance of a reactive response while leaving the allegations of wrongdoing unresolved.

Multiple strategies are followed to manage whistleblowers in organisations. The ‘Keep Them Ignorant’ strategy is sometimes used to keep high-level decisions on a need-to-know basis. Thus, employees who are not involved in decision-making processes are kept in the dark about corporate decisions. At times, ‘Prevent the Development of a Written Record’ is used to ensure that unethical instructions are given verbally in order to deny whistleblowers any written record of transactions as evidence to prove their claim. After all is said and done, one of the most popular tactics is the ‘Scapegoat the Small Fry’ strategy which ensures that all high-level employees are shielded from wrongdoing while lower-level employees are blamed and sacrificed when things go wrong.

Stronger institutions can influence the amendment of legislation to better protect whistleblowers and their families and improve public governance. A report on News24 (30 August 2021) cites President Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa, echoing the need for the state to strengthen whistleblower protection following the murder of Gauteng Health Department official Babita Deokaran. Deokaran was shot outside her home in Mondeor, Johannesburg. She died later that day in the hospital. This was in connection with her being a witness in an investigation into alleged fraud relating to a R300 million tender for personal protective equipment (PPE). The President described the incidence as a “reminder

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of the high stakes” involved in rooting out corruption. He acknowledged the dire need to protect whistleblowers from such tragedies in the future stating that:

“Regardless of the circumstances behind this tragedy, Deokaran was a hero and a patriot. As are the legions of whistleblowers that, at great risk to themselves, help to unearth instances of misdeeds, maladministration, cronyism, and theft” (News24 30 August 2021).

The President’s acknowledgement that whistleblowers help expose “instances of misdeeds, maladministration, cronyism, and theft” at great risk to themselves signals the tragic state of the situation and its frustration with democratic polity. The notion of holding individuals accountable, a practice that should ideally be a routine aspect of life, is deemed as dangerous within a democratic state. Arguably, it is easier and safer to be corrupt in society than it is to call people out for corruption. There also appears to be a more persuasive deterrent to blowing the whistle than there is to committing the crime. Yet the institutions of justice are available and resourced by the government to prevent the former and ensure the latter.

Moreover, the assertion that whistleblowers are “heroes” of our democracy who raised the alarm against unethical acts and practices in government and organisations also suggests that it is a rare act that should only be attempted by a select few with superhuman abilities. The implication of this narrative by the number one citizen of South Africa, if representative of the common rhetoric on the subject, also reflects the social assumption carried on the subject. This signals that if whistleblowers are “heroes”, then there is no motivation for normalising whistleblowing.

Heroism is a special skill only possessed by superhumans who are aware that a death sentence awaits them or are undeterred by martyrdom. Such a social perspective is incompatible with the social justice or Rawlsian school of thought, as it excuses the failure of the structures of

government while deifying the problem. It justifies the failure of society to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens in the person of whistleblowers from a social justice perspective. It raises serious questions against the institutions of justice that are meant to protect the whistleblowers and prevent the consequence of societal collapse for allowing unethical and chaotic behaviours to reign supreme (BusinessTech, 2021; Gumede, 2022).

According to the ideas of Immanuel Kant, condoning the excesses of the wrongdoers and failing to protect law-abiding citizens cannot be a universal law. The fact that it continues to persist and tends to increase raises a question about why an acceptable criminal practice is growing in boldness and whether the institutions of justice are accepting defeat. Urgent and decisive intervention is necessary to curb the negative experiences of whistleblowers from becoming more threatening than the deterring might of the institutions of justice. People should not dread blowing the whistle but be encouraged to contribute towards the wellbeing of society. The next section focuses on the measures required to improve the institutional environment to protect whistleblowers.

### **Recommendations: Improving Existing Systems and Creating Stronger Institutions**

The obvious and logical response to the foregoing concerns is to improve existing systems and create stronger institutions. The defining feature that separates a group of people co-existing from a state of chaos is the presence of some structures of leadership to protect their shared values. The state, as a more sophisticated structure of society, claims to have established institutions, sovereignty and recognised political leadership with defined institutions to ensure law and order. However, the situation pertaining to whistleblowers analysed so far, raises serious questions about the strength of these state institutions to ensure social justice (Devine & Maassarani, 2011).

People of good conscience find themselves continuously in difficult positions whenever confronted with a situation that calls for whistleblowing. They have to gamble between their job and life on the one hand and reporting deeds of misconduct through whistleblowing on the other. Either way, they experience pressure to compromise their well-being or conscience because the state structures are not optimally designed and enforced to address these concerns. Devine and Maassarani (2011) highlighted a number of retaliation tactics used against whistleblowers. These tactics ranged from spotlighting the whistleblowers instead of the wrongdoing by questioning their motives, credibility, and professional competence instead of the alleged misconduct. Clearly, this is not a safe environment, and the onus is on the institutions of the state to provide a safe environment for this democratic responsibility. Transparency International (2013:3) also cited the high personal risks often faced by whistleblowers, including being fired, sued, blacklisted, arrested, threatened, or, in extreme cases, assaulted or killed.

## **Conclusion**

Although the South African policy framework subscribes to global values for mitigating corrupt practices through the Protected Disclosures Act (No. 26 of 2000) of South Africa, amongst others, South Africa has recorded more negative experiences of whistleblowers than the contribution of whistleblowing towards good governance and accountability. The act of whistleblowers sharing information about misconduct, especially in the best interest of the public, becomes crucial during times when the public sector has indicated potential threats of collapse and failure of some of its institutions, as illustrated by the State Capture Commission and the Auditor-General's Annual Reports (BusinessTech, 2021; Gumede, 2022). Some high-ranking public officials and influential business people collude in crime and corruption. Thus, the legislation that was ostensibly necessary to safeguard whistleblowers and their families still leaves some of them unprotected in South Africa.

This chapter has evaluated the experiences of whistleblowers in South Africa to interrogate and understand the limitations of the policy. The chapter investigated literature regarding the experiences of whistleblowers as employees who expose information on unethical, illegal, illegitimate, immoral, illicit, unsafe, fraudulent, and corrupt activities or indicates the abuse of taxpayer funds within public, private, or government organisations (March 2015). The assessment of the Protected Disclosure Act and associated legislation aimed to identify areas of shortcomings and propose amendments that would enhance the protection of whistleblowers. This effort aligns with the overarching goal of fostering ethical governance, cultivating a culture based on integrity and ethics, and fortifying the ethical civil service for the future.

A qualitative desktop study thematically analysed literature from published articles, research papers, books, news reviews, blogs, official reports, and legislative documents to answer the research question. Some international practices of whistleblowing were compared to the situation in South Africa. John Rawls' theory of justice with its colloquia, Kantian ethics, and utilitarianism within a critical social justice theory approach and public policy analysis techniques were applied to analyse literature on the dearth of whistleblowing as a means to combat corruption and unethical conduct. These provided guidance on how the South African policy on whistleblowing could be amended.

The study found that the challenges with whistleblowing are not specific to South Africa. The situation in South Africa is aggravated by the fact that those in the upper echelon of society are among those indicted for whistleblowing, according to the State Capture Commission report. Among those who ought to ensure the effective implementation of the policy are those indicted through whistleblowing. This implies a weak judiciary system related to the low conviction rate for perpetrators and the lack of adequate protection and remedial measures for whistleblowers. It also exposes the inefficient structures of accountability that perpetuate unethical

practices and impunity by the elites in all sectors of society due to a lack of strong institutions to deter such crimes.

This highlights key aspects to consider in the examination of the whistleblowing policy in South Africa, extending beyond the mere disclosure of misconduct. It underscores the significance of also prioritising the well-being of the whistleblower, acknowledging the potential risks associated with fulfilling their moral duty in blowing the whistle. The assertion is that if a watchdog loses its teeth and fails to fulfill its purpose, then it is time to either train the dog or change it. Ethics education is imperative across all educational levels to bring about a transformation in societal norms and perspectives on wrongdoing, particularly among individuals in positions of authority.

Those who take the bold steps to blow the whistle should enjoy maximum anonymity and protection; they should be celebrated and encouraged. Failure to celebrate the work of whistleblowers makes it a dangerous endeavour – a suicide mission. Upon investigation, cases reported through whistleblowing should receive the full force of the law, and the outcome must be publicised. As long as there are no swift and determinate repercussions for criminals, those who blow the whistle will continue to be vulnerable, made victims and scapegoats. If the current state of affairs persists, individuals may be disinclined to blow the whistle, as maintaining silence about wrongdoing may seem more advantageous.

Corruption and criminal activities become normalised, and a possible outcome is that more people would seek ingenious ways to defraud the system than there would be people willing to report it. That would be a point of no return. Furthermore, the policy clauses that withhold certain compensation for whistleblowers leave them vulnerable and devoid of support when faced with the retaliatory tactics outlined in the chapter. This discourages people of good conscience from blowing the whistle when confronted with the dilemma that warrants whistleblowing. Unless prompt and decisive actions are taken to rectify the loopholes in the policy,

the situation will endure and have damaging consequences that will detrimentally impact the country.

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## CHAPTER 5

# Audit outcomes and the state of service delivery as indicators of the quality of governance: the case of Nelson Mandela metropolitan municipality

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### **Introduction**

The transformation from the apartheid era to democracy allowed the South African government to rectify the imbalances of the past through legislation in anticipation of having the basic needs of South African citizens addressed. Municipalities are audited every financial year from 1 July to 30 June to ensure that state resources are being used in accordance with South African legislation. The Auditor-General, appointed in accordance with Chapter 9 of the Constitution, oversees mandatory audits, and their team is tasked with providing an audit opinion upon the completion of the process. Municipalities should aim to achieve a financially unqualified audit opinion without any findings, commonly referred to as a clean audit outcome. The Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA) audits a municipality's financial statements and performance reports according to predetermined objectives and its compliance with legislation. Audits are designed to ascertain whether municipalities are actively pursuing good governance, delivering services effectively, and fulfilling the criteria for obtaining a clean audit outcome.

In this research article, the qualitative research method is used. Setia (2017:367) views qualitative research as assisting researchers in obtaining a detailed understanding of a topic rather than generalisations. The document analysis is used as a data collection technique, and the desktop analysis is utilised to analyse the audit outcomes and the state of service delivery in the Nelson Mandela Municipality, as well as the relationship of these two variables to the quality of governance within this municipality from the 2015/2016 to 2019/2020 financial years. The concepts of governance, service delivery, and audit are discussed first. This is followed by a discussion of theories pertaining to governance and service delivery in municipalities, accompanied by an exploration of the narratives surrounding audit, governance, and service delivery within the context of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

## **The Concepts of Governance, Service Delivery and Audit**

The South African legislation on the local sphere of government is intended to fast-track service delivery and to promote a positive relationship between the community and public officials (Mofolo & Smith, 2009:430). Service delivery is the core purpose or business of municipalities. In the 2010 State of the Nation address, Former President Jacob Zuma emphasised the imperative for government officials to increase their efforts in enhancing the delivery of essential services such as housing, water, sanitation, electricity, waste management, and roads. (Mle & Maclean, 2011:1370). Furthermore, good governance guarantees the manifestation of efficiency, integrity, honesty, accountability, and transparency in government leadership. This commitment fosters effective service delivery and sustainable community development.

### **Governance**

Motubatse, Ngwakwe and Sebola (2017:93) explain governance as upholding political and administrative authority “as it is exercised in the management of a country’s affairs”.

Cloete and Auriacombe (2007:195) perceive governance as a “system of values, policies, and institutions” used to manage a municipality’s economic, political, and social affairs with the assistance of the community. Moreover, Motubatse et al. (2017: 91, 93) view public institutions as being defined by the term “governance”, which is an “autonomous self-governing network” using scarce resources for service delivery according to proper internal control systems. Van der Nest, Thornhill and De Jager (2018:545) define governance as involving strict measures to control state resources, maintain democracy, and benefit all citizens.

Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020:1) maintain that governance is a process of safeguarding state resources entrusted by South African citizens to local government, which should be held accountable when it fails to deliver services to the people. Govender and Reddy (2019: 2) describe governance as a municipality’s responsibility to ensure that the human rights of citizens are not violated and service delivery is efficient and effective. Munzhedzi and Makwembere (2019:667) perceive governance as bringing about change and balance in public institutions and communities. Cloete and Auriacombe (2007:195) observe that governance in municipalities is supposed to involve trust and responsiveness between the municipality and community members, thereby embodying democratic values, which should determine policy objectives for sustainable community development.

### **Service delivery**

Van Schalkwyk (2008:264) refers to service delivery in terms of basic services, such as the provision of water, health care, and security. Pauw, Van der Linde, Fourie and Visser (2015:159) explain service delivery as an act of developing and maintaining products and services to meet a community’s basic needs. This shows that service delivery is a means through which basic services are rendered to the inhabitants and their communities. Mofolo and Smith (2009:428) explain that the Constitution of South Africa of 1996 clearly states that the purpose of a local government is to provide services

to the citizens. Hence service delivery is the Constitutional mandate of local government. Khalo (2013:580) explains that the success of South Africa's government depends on the trust of the public. The public expects it "to serve their needs and interests with fairness and manage public resources in a fair and reliable manner through the system of service delivery". The concepts of delivery of services and financial management are interlinked. Services cannot be delivered if funds are not procured and properly managed (Ngwakwe, 2012:313).

Ndevu and Muller (2018:182) view local government as a "grass-roots government sphere" that works directly with the citizens of South Africa. Mbewu and Barac (2017:16) assert that the function of the local sphere of government is to provide the community with basic services in a sustainable manner while promoting socioeconomic development and encouraging community members to interact with local officials to make them aware of their needs. In this regard, the role of public participation in local government affairs should not be underestimated because it contributes towards facilitating effective service delivery. Masenya and Molepo (2020:413) explain that the main function of local government is to develop and reshape communities to be a "democratic, integrated and non-racial society", thereby erasing the imbalances of the past. The importance of a municipality is to ensure efficiency in its financial and performance systems, thereby making good use of the revenue that it generates for effective service delivery to address poverty and socioeconomic development (Masenya & Molepo, 2020:414; Sibanda, 2017:314).

### **Factors influencing service delivery**

Ndevu and Muller (2018:185,190) indicate factors that affect service delivery, such as community needs, expectations, and demands; the knowledge and skills of councillors and officials; and ethics and integrity. The next section provides an elaboration of these factors.



*Community needs, expectations and demands*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, enshrines the requirements of the community. Article 21(2) of the UDHR states, “Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his or her country” (United Nations, 2015:42). In addition, Article 25(1) states the following:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living, adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control (United Nations, 2015:52).

Ngatse-Ipangu and Dassah (2019:4) describe a community as a cluster of people who share the same values: “identity, neighbourhood and environment”. Craythorne (2006:313) points out that it is the municipality’s duty to promote a culture of governance to ensure service delivery that meets the community’s needs, expectations, and demands. Chapter 2 of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights, which clearly states the “rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom” (Craythorne, 2006:313). The Bill of Rights is the foundation for community members to expect and demand that their basic needs are satisfied and that their living standards improve.

Maxegwana, Theron and Draai (2015:77) maintain that it is the municipality’s duty to provide services to the community directly or indirectly through service providers, as determined by sections 152(2) and 153(a) of the Constitution, which state that local government must promote socioeconomic development (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Dollery (2003:83) contends that the community will only be satisfied with the government when the municipality meets its needs, demands, and expectations by ensuring the “appropriateness of services and the effectiveness of service

delivery”. According to Ndevu and Muller (2018:185), failure to meet the community’s expectations and demands for promised sanitation, water, electricity, and housing results in unmanageable service delivery protests.

*Knowledge and skills of councillors and officials*

Councillors are elected in municipalities to fulfill the needs of the communities by “providing services equitably, effectively and sustainably”. They need to work hand-in-hand with municipal officials and are expected at all times to “act in the best interest of the community people” and promote good governance, as stated in Chapter 12, Schedules 1 and 2 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. Ngwakwe (2012:314) reveals that councillors and municipal officials lack financial skills and do not understand the concept of financial accountability. This leads to their inability to guarantee efficient service delivery, a factor directly associated with financial considerations.

Mello (2018:3) asserts that councillors and municipal officials should at least be literate, although Craythorne (2006:71) points out that to be elected as a councillor; an individual only needs to be willing and available to stand as a candidate. A candidate must be a South African citizen, over the age of 18 and on the voter’s roll. Although many would think that the minimum educational requirement should be a grade 12 certificate, the Constitution does not support this (Craythorne, 2006:71).

*Ethics and integrity*

Ethics come from the Greek term “ethikos” and the Latin word “ethica”, which mean customs and morals (Sibanda, 2017:321). Councillors and municipal officials are expected to have ethics when fulfilling their mandates by providing services to communities in “good faith and honestly” as stated in Chapter 12 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. This is in line with Martin Luther King, Jr.’s statement: “The time is always right to do what is right” (Sibanda, 2017:321).

Pauw *et al.* (2017:295) define ethics as principles, rules, and moral values that allow an individual to distinguish good from bad conduct. Van der Waldt (2016:40) views ethics as giving direction to officials' actions. Ethics also involves public officials and political office-bearers adhering to legislation and knowing that they are not above the law. The Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution, established fundamental rights and obliges local government role players to act morally and to treat neighbours fairly and with dignity. Khalo (2013:581) points out that the word "integrity" originates from the Latin word "integrita", which means honesty or purity. Therefore, Khalo (2013:581) views integrity as "fairness, honesty and truthfulness". Integrity is about having values and standards as well as avoiding wrongdoing.

Ngwakwe (2012: 315) identifies political godfatherism, inadequate supply chain management, and poor financial management as constraints to ethical conduct. Khalo (2013:581) observes that when citizens elect political office-bearers to fulfill their needs, they entrust them with state resources. Chapter 10 of the Constitution states that all municipalities must promote and maintain a high standard of professional ethics and integrity. However, South Africa is faced with the inability of public officials to keep the trust of the public because of a lack of ethics and integrity.

### *Auditing*

In the context of the study, auditing is an independent, objective activity that examines and evaluates municipal activities with a view to recommending ways for a municipality to function more effectively and efficiently. Craythorne (1997:370) maintains that an audit conducted by the Auditor General of South Africa in municipalities aims to discover whether payments and receipts are lawfully recorded and to understand how money is spent or how assets are acquired and sold. The purpose of auditing is to assess a municipality's governance and accountability, essential elements for achieving its fundamental goal (Mpehle & Qwabe, 2008:260).

This goal is to provide the community with efficient and effective service delivery (Sibanda, 2017:314).

Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020:3) emphasise that auditing, recognised as a “cornerstone of good public sector governance,” establishes control amid the expanding size of municipalities, rising community expectations, and escalating responsibilities of municipal officials. It presents honest, unfiltered information about how public resources are being utilised, thereby encouraging municipalities to be more responsible, have integrity, improve their functioning, and inspire trust between citizens and municipal officials (Matlala & Uwizeyimana, 2020:3). According to AGSA (2018:17), the auditing of municipalities enhances various aspects of governance, including the community’s trust, accountability, transparency, integrity, and the efficient management and utilization of financial resources. This, in turn, serves to eradicate corruption and address issues of poor performance within municipalities. Matlala and Uwizeyimana (2020:3) explain that auditing in municipalities provides oversight, insight, and foresight.

There are two types of audits: mandatory and discretionary audits. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word “mandatory” as being required by law or a mandate and being compulsory (Hornby, 2015:895). Discretionary audits are those that the AGSA may perform at its discretion or according to its judgement and do not involve issuing an audit outcome (Lennox & Pittman, 2011:1656). AGSA (2017:8) clarifies that auditing in municipalities encompasses three aspects, with no specific order of execution. The first aspect is the *auditing of financial statements*; the second is the *auditing of performance reports*; and the third is the *auditing of compliance with legislation* that mandates satisfactory financial and performance management, good governance, accountability, transparency, and stewardship (Matlala & Uwizeyimana, 2020:3). The Auditor-General is expected to outline the five possible audit outcomes as explained below:

## Chapter 5

### 1. *Financially unqualified audit opinion with no findings (clean audit outcome):*

This indicates that a municipality has produced financial statements that are free from material misstatements, have no errors or omissions, and are credible as well as reliable (AGSA, 2017:80). Furthermore, this signifies the utility and reliability of the financial statements, affirming that the municipality's financial records adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) and are accurately presented due to sound financial management (Matebula, 2016:217).

### 2. *Financially unqualified opinion with findings:*

This audit outcome reveals that a municipality has produced financial statements with no material misstatements but has not aligned its performance to the predetermined objectives to which it has committed in its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) (AGSA, 2017:80). Jackson and Stent (2016: 187) elaborate on this by stating that there are shortcomings in financial statements, although not material or pervasive.

### 3. *Qualified audit opinion:*

This occurs when a municipality has submitted financial statements in compliance with the timeframes and due dates stated in the legislation and various regulations. However, it has not produced credible and reliable financial statements, which in fact contain misstatements and fail to disclose important material (AGSA, 2017:80). Jackson and Stent (2016:189) suggest that this audit opinion is usually given when the auditor notices that the municipality has not followed appropriate accounting policies and legislation, such as the Financial Management Act 56 of 2003.

### 4. *Adverse opinion with findings:*

This occurs when the financial statements contain many material misstatements that contradict almost all the amounts and disclosures (AGSA, 2017:81). Jackson and Stent

(2016:189) contend that this audit outcome indicates that the financial statements and performance report are inadequate, misleading, irrelevant, and incomplete. In other words, the financial statements and accounting records do not match bank transactions.

5. *Disclaimer of audit opinion:*

Indicates that a municipality is not fulfilling its mandate, which means that the auditee did not provide sufficient, documented evidence that could warrant any audit opinion. This implies a lack of concern from municipal officials for the well-being of citizens, resulting in an inability to furnish information regarding service delivery, which may not have transpired (AGSA, 2018). AGSA (2018) and Mathebula (2016:216) assert that this represents the most unfavourable audit outcome, revealing a municipality with minimal disclosures in its financial statements, inadequate financial records, and limited proof of proper utilisation of public funds or compliance with pertinent legislation.

Matebula (2016:217) maintains that all South African municipalities should aim to obtain a financially unqualified audit opinion with no findings, which, according to Mbewu and Barac (2017:15), has been encouraged by the Operation Clean Audit (OPCA) campaign launched in 2009 by the former Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Sicelo Shiceka. A clean audit result would signify that the primary objective of the campaign was to enhance service delivery and ensure the prudent utilization of state resources. Achieving this would hinge on the collective commitment of all municipal officials and political office-bearers to champion community welfare and collaborate effectively (Marota, 2016:22). As Marianne Williamson says, “Each of us has a unique part to play in the healing of the world” (Williamson, 2012:191).

## **Theories Relating to Governance and Service Delivery in Municipalities**

Thornhill and Cloete (2014:57) observe that theories are developed to “find solutions to problems that have been encountered”. Van der Waldt (2017:187) explains a theory as a system of analysing data and interpreting it for the advancement of society. The public value and stewardship theories that are relevant to governance, service delivery, and audit are discussed below.

### **Public value theory**

Public value theory can be clearly explained when the terms “value” and “public” are distinctly defined. The first implies worth, and the second refers to the community or society. Thus, public value refers to what is worthy for the community as opposed to the individual, which indicates that the theory focuses on the long-term needs of society (Benington & Moore, 2007:9). Fukumoto and Bozeman (2019:636) describe public value theory in terms of three fundamental concepts. The first concept involves the delivery of benefits to citizens. The second concept underscores the state’s responsibility to safeguard the rights of citizens and society, along with citizens’ mutual obligation to protect one another. The third concept pertains to the principles guiding public officials and political office bearers towards the correct course of action (Fukumoto & Bozeman, 2019:636).

Stoker (2006:52,56) claims that the public value theory signals the importance of governance in municipalities by leaders of various departments who play key roles in ensuring the well-being of citizens, democracy, and human rights. According to Stoker (2006:56), “Public value theory presents a new paradigm and reform narrative,” signalling that accountable governance and both effective and equitable service delivery contribute value to the lives of the public, addressing needs previously unmet in South Africa (Benington & Moore, 2007:11). Benington and Moore (2007:13,15) articulate that, for communities, public value resides in

functional streetlights, adequate housing, and efficient water and sewerage systems. Municipalities are expected to furnish these necessities, in addition to the essential services offered by the national and provincial spheres of government, such as education and health, contributing to the improvement of citizens' lives and fulfillment of their needs.

### **The stewardship theory**

Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson (1997:24) assert that the foundation of stewardship theory is rooted in psychological and sociological research. This research focuses on public managers perceived as stewards, individuals entrusted with responsibly overseeing the resources, and departments under their charge. In stewardship theory, managers, acting as stewards, find intrinsic motivation in pursuing goals aligned with the mission statement of the governing political party within a municipality, prioritising these objectives over seeking extrinsic rewards for personal gain (Pastoriza & Arino, 2008:5). Stewardship theory advocates that municipal managers can derive fulfillment from the practice of good governance and the assurance of effective service delivery (Pastoriza & Arino, 2008:5).

Stewardship encapsulates “principles of social responsibility”, involving regular communication between municipal officials and political office bearers with community members to ensure that their needs are continually addressed (Mothubatse *et al.*, 2017:95). Jarbandham (2014:50,51) defines stewardship as public officials choosing to put citizens first by delivering services to them instead of serving their own interests. Pastoriza and Arino (2008:5) argue that stewardship is about upholding governance structures mandated to deliver services. Instilling stewardship as a value in municipal managers would result in a department devoid of issues, where team members collaborate cohesively to collectively fulfill the community's needs in adherence to democratic values. Stewardship is intricately linked to good governance, involving the collaborative efforts of public officials and political office bearers. They work together to implement administrative



and financial policies, ensuring the responsible management of public assets to guarantee that communities receive the essential resources they require (Jarbandham, 2014:56).

### **Methodological Standard**

Ullrich *et al.* (2020: 2) explain that the research methodology enables the researcher to develop confidence about the research that is conducted. Ullrich *et al.* (2020:2) emphasise that a qualitative research methodology offers researchers a diverse range of methods. The study focuses on the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, encompassing 1,959 km<sup>2</sup>, which includes surrounding agricultural areas. The document analysis of the study is aimed at answering the question: What is wrong with NMBMM audit outcomes that affect the state of delivery of services as well as the quality of governance? Therefore, the document analysis involved investigating the municipality's governance indicators as revealed by audit reports on its financial statements, performance against predetermined objectives, and compliance with legislation. The data, gathered through document analysis and desktop research, employed key documents, including the consolidated general report on the local government audit outcomes spanning from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020. Additionally, the Report of the Auditor-General to the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature and the Council on the NMBMM and its municipal entity from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020 was utilised.

### **Audit Outcomes and the State of Service Delivery in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (2015/2016-2019/2020)**

For the past seven consecutive financial years (2012/2013 to 2019/2020), the AGSA's reports have shown that the NMBMM has received qualified audit opinions. The attainment of clean audits by the NMBMM in its pursuit of delivering quality service to communities and promoting good governance relies on evaluating four key elements. This evaluation is

conducted through an analysis of the Consolidated General Reports on the Local Government Audit Outcomes and Reports of the Auditor-General submitted to the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature and the council on the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality and its municipal entity for the financial period spanning from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020.

### **Fair presentation of financial statements**

NMBMM's financial statements for the periods 2015/2016 and 2019/2020 were neither reliable nor credible because it did not fairly present the municipality's financial position. The statements exhibited bias, lacked prudence, and did not conform to the applicable South African standards outlined in GRAP (NMBMM, 2016-2020). Poor accounting practices had a negative influence on the economic decisions of the municipality. During the financial years 2015/2016 and 2019/2020, NMBMM failed to record its daily, weekly, and monthly transactions of the municipality, and its financial record-keeping was regressing. The weak processing, reconciling, and control were due to the lack of information technology (IT) systems, which had already been reported by the Auditor-General but were never checked by the municipality (NMBMM, 2018). The implementation of robust financial control systems is imperative for the NMBMM to ensure monthly preparation of financial statements by municipal officials. This practice is crucial for promptly identifying and rectifying any discrepancies. To enhance its system capabilities, the NMBMM should consider outsourcing an IT technician who can effectively fix and upgrade the existing system.

### **NMBMM's performance management**

The NMBMM did not keep proper records and submit quality performance reports for the period 2015/2016 to 2019/2020. The performance report for 2017/2018 did not contain documentation relating to the time of its response to emergencies, such as electrical outages, owing to its inadequate record-keeping (AGSA, 2018:84). Unreliable,

untrustworthy, and ineffectual performance reports prove that communities have not received the services that they were promised and that municipal leaders lack commitment to ensure that the needs of the communities are met.

The NMBMM has faced challenges in achieving the objectives outlined in its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budget. Despite showing improvement in 2016/2017, the municipality experienced regression and continued to struggle in delivering services effectively (NMBMM, 2017). The Auditor-General's report highlighted that the NMBMM fell short of meeting 8% of its targets but reported a discrepancy of only 6.6%, indicating a nuanced difference. Notably, the response time for NMBMM's traffic and fire services varied between 7 minutes and 29 seconds to 12 minutes and 16 seconds for emergencies, whereas the municipality's performance report mentioned a planned response time of 15 minutes (NMBMM, 2018).

Furthermore, the municipality faced delays in various projects and services. Building plan applications took 7.16 days to be processed instead of the targeted 3 days, with only 25% meeting the intended timeframe. Progress on infrastructure projects such as the Coegakop Water Treatment Plant and Cape Recife Wastewater Works upgrade fell significantly below the planned completion percentages. Water and sewerage connection targets were also not fully met, with a notable shortfall in borehole drilling and sewer pipeline installation. The initial goal of 1468 water connections was reduced to 979 completed connections, and a planned 1498 sewerage connections dropped to 979 installations. Additionally, the targeted boreholes were not drilled, and the planned 3 km of sewer pipelines dwindled to a mere 0.6 km, representing a 5% revised target instead of the intended 100% (NMBMM, 2016; AGSA, 2017:85).

It is of vital importance that the NMBMM set realistic objectives and goals, especially when it relates to meeting the basic needs of communities. Training should be available to enable the performance evaluation of the implementation

of planned service delivery projects. This evaluation is crucial for identifying challenges that can be addressed. Performance management must remain connected to the needs of communities, ensuring sustained efficiency, effectiveness, and economic viability.

### **NMBMM compliance to key legislation**

NMBMM struggled to comply with key legislation, as is evident in the audit reports. On December 19, 2018, the municipality paid 10.1 million for the cleaning of stormwater drains; however, the anticipated service was not rendered. Moreover, the municipality failed to investigate or even control the approval, authorization and payment of funds, which indicated non-compliance with Section 65(2)(a) of the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 (NMBMM, 2020). To proactively manage this issue, it is essential to present all the pivotal legislation in poster format and exhibit it in every department of the municipality. This ensures visibility to all municipal officials, fostering awareness of their responsibilities and emphasising the importance of adhering to the law. Implementing a system of rewards for compliance and penalties for non-compliance can further reinforce adherence to legal standards.

### **Criteria for governance**

The NMBMM risk management was inadequate because it did not produce daily, weekly, and monthly financial and performance reports (NMBMM, 2020). The ineffectiveness of its audit committee and internal audit functions stemmed from the failure of municipal leadership to respond to recommendations issued by the Auditor-General. This lack of responsiveness hindered the resolution of issues related to unsatisfactory financial statements, performance reports, and non-compliance with laws and regulations (NMBMM, 2016). The average tenure for NMBMM municipal managers was only 15 months, the chief financial officer served for 92 months, and the majority of supply chain managers held their positions for 46 months.

The instability of key positions in NMBMM was caused mostly by political infighting that had a negative impact on the municipality control systems (AGSA, 2018:95-97). The failure of municipal governance is due to the unwillingness of municipal officials to apply these criteria, a poor understanding of legislation, and a refusal to implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General. Based on its audit findings from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020, NMBMM is experiencing a decline rather than showing improvement in both governance and service delivery. It is crucial for NMBMM to implement robust internal controls fostering a zero-tolerance culture regarding municipal management. NMBMM leaders should actively recruit capable individuals who can uphold democratic values, safeguard state resources, and commit to serving full terms in key positions.

**Factors which contributed to NMBMM not obtaining clean audit outcomes (2015/2016-2019/2020)**

The following factors contributed to NMBMM not obtaining clean audit outcomes from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020:

*Material losses*

Material losses refer to physical deficits or damages, exemplified in a municipal context as the loss of resources such as water or electricity. The NMBMM incurred R170 million (2015/2016), R169.7 million (2016/2017), R162.9 million (2017/2018), R161.5 million (2018/2019), and 237.1 million (2019/2020) in water loss over the past years. The water loss is due to a non-technical loss of 39.1% due to theft; water taken illegally from fire hydrants; meter inaccuracy; ageing water meters and infrastructure; and illegal connections.

In addition, NMBMM incurred R291 million (2015/2016), R326.2 million (2016/2017), R339.5 million (2017/2018), R484.2 million (2018/2019) and R558.6 million (2019/2020) in electricity losses. NMBMM lost electricity through electricity theft; citizens who are not billed for electricity; seeing to ageing electricity infrastructure; and meter tampering and

illegal connections (NMBMM, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020). To curb material losses, NMBMM must deploy prepaid water systems to mitigate the substantial water losses. Additionally, the municipality should conduct regular monthly maintenance checks on the community's power station, inspecting household switchboards to detect and rectify any potential illegal connections. This proactive approach should aim to significantly reduce the incidence of material losses.

*Fruitless and wasteful expenditure*

NMBMM lost R57.8 million (2015/2016), R110.1 million (2016/2017), R2.7 million (2017/2018) and R90.9 million (2019/2020) on fruitless and wasteful expenditure. Fruitless and wasteful expenditure can be explained as spending that could be avoided. NMBMM paid for flights to training programmes that municipal officials did not attend (NMBMM, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020). The municipal officials need to be held accountable for the expenses that have been incurred for them, and before training plans are implemented, municipal officials need to sign agreements that commit them to the training programme expenses should they fail to attend.

*Unauthorised expenditure*

The NMBMM incurred R52 million (2015/2016), R431.30 million (2016/2017), R260.20 million (2017/2018) and R30.10 million (2019/2020) in unauthorised expenditure due to awarding contracts to service providers that did not qualify. The municipal leaders need to scrutinise the service providers' documents and references and ensure that they understand the contractual agreement. The NMBMM needs to ensure that the service provider has fulfilled the given task before paying the full amount. The municipality's legal team must look into the service providers who don't deliver and report them to the SAPS.

*Irregular expenditure*

In 2016/2017, NMBMM had the highest irregular expenditure of all the South African municipalities. The NMBMM lost

R1286,1 million (2015/2016), R8361 million (2016/2017), R3053.4 million (2017/2018) and R1372.2 million (2019/2020) due to the unauthorised utilisation of municipal money. This does not comply with legislation, municipal policies, or bylaws (NMBMM, 2016–2020). The municipality’s irregular expenditure affected the following projects: wastewater treatment works (especially the Fishwater Flats wastewater treatment works), voltage network upgrade, and sludge stabilisation (AGSA, 2018:58). The NMBMM officials that fail to utilise state resources in an efficient, effective, and economical manner need to face disciplinary action and be held fully accountable for those expenses. The municipal leaders need to evaluate, monitor, and ensure that state resources are utilised in a cost-effective manner and not for personal gain.

However, NMBMM’s failure to secure a clean audit outcome can be attributed to a multitude of contributing factors. The aforementioned issues persistently resurface in audit reports, underscoring the municipality’s ongoing inability to effectively address them.

### **Audit, Governance and Service Delivery Findings in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (2015/2016–2019/2020)**

“The Constitution has been in effect for almost three decades, but the country is still faced with community dissatisfaction and far too many service delivery protests” (Reddy, 2016:3).

Mathebula (2016:214) elucidates that the municipal auditing process, as outlined, seeks to delineate strategies for municipalities to achieve a clean audit outcome by promoting good governance. Such an approach not only ensures effective and efficient service delivery but also underscores the pivotal role of audits in enhancing overall municipal performance. Mbewu and Barac (2017:15) point out that good governance in the local sphere of government will combat inefficiency and corruption. An audit might strengthen governance in

municipalities because it might identify misstatements and shortcomings in the financial statements and performance due to, for example, staff shortages, a lack of accounting competencies, and inadequate control of state resources for service delivery to the communities.

Mbewu and Barac (2017:15) explain that the absence of audits in municipalities ultimately leads to inefficacious control systems, misconduct, and poor governance remaining undetected. Mbewu and Barac (2017:16), Mofolo (2020:95), and Ntshakala and Nzimakwe (2017:71) stress the importance of auditing in municipalities for enhancing their governance structures and service delivery, which will result in clean audit outcomes. However, the NMBMM did not receive clean audit outcomes because it continuously failed to provide the Auditor-General with evidence that explained the high rate of the unauthorised, irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditure. In addition, they did not comply with the legislation on financial management and service delivery (AGSA, 2017:45).

The auditing of NMBMM indicated that it had not been promoting good governance and service delivery and the municipality did not follow the AGSA's recommendations. NMBMM must adhere to AGSA's guidelines, enhancing both governance and financial performance to effectively meet its service delivery objectives in accordance with legislation. This commitment is crucial for generating financial statements devoid of misstatements or findings, ultimately paving the way for achieving clean audit outcomes (Matlala & Uwizeyimana, 2020:2). Mbewu and Barac (2017:15) maintain that a municipality that has good governance can obtain clean audit outcomes because everything would be in order. In other words, the municipality's control systems, service delivery management, governance indicators, and financial management would ensure that it receives a clean audit outcome.

Motubatse et al. (2017:92) emphasise that good governance, successful service delivery, and clean audit



outcomes reveal that a municipality has implemented government policies and its IDP. Marota (2016:22) expresses confidence that municipalities can secure clean audit outcomes by urging public officials and political office bearers to go the extra mile in combating corruption, fostering good governance, ensuring proper financial management, and guaranteeing the full implementation of service delivery projects. Reddy (2016:1) views the local sphere of government as pivotal to democracy because it is closest to the people to whom it is mandated to deliver services to by using public resources responsibly. Reddy (2016:7) advocates that good governance, effective service delivery, and clean audit outcomes are marred by the constant infighting between political parties and the non-performance of municipal officials.

NMBMM officials are always cautioned by the Auditor General of South Africa about a lack of oversight and governance in the administrative system, which cripples its ability to deliver services to the community (NMBMM, 2018). The NMBMM lacks leadership that is committed to effective governance, which is evident in its audit outcomes. The municipality has many incomplete projects, such as the Neave Street Multi-purpose and Recreational Park upgrade for the communities of Shauderville and Korsten; the new swimming pool for New Brighton; the Helenvale safety and peace through urban upgrading (SPUU) projects; and the Ellis Street housing rectification. These projects were not supervised, and they lacked maintenance, which resulted in a delay in service delivery (NMBMM, 2018). The absence of accountability in NMBMM adversely affects citizens' lives, as, for some, essential services remain undelivered (Boso, 2019:2). In addition, the inability of municipal officials to collect debt from Port Elizabeth residents results in insufficient municipal-generated revenue (Boso, 2019:2).

The leadership, senior management, and officials of NMBMM fail to develop, implement, and manage effective internal control systems that could promptly detect wrongdoing and proactively avert potential issues. The

municipality struggles with the challenge of numerous key positions remaining vacant, causing a lag in the operation of the overall system. Furthermore, a lack of improvements and discipline results in instability in political and public leadership (Boso, 2019:2). Public officials lack the necessary skills and competencies, especially in keeping financial records, which leads to an over-reliance on consultants. This can have a negative impact on the municipality's financial planning, record-keeping, and reporting (Boso, 2019:2). The failure of reviewing and monitoring processes means that municipal officials are not held accountable for poor performance.

NMBMM leaders deliberately ignore their duties and violate the legislation without having to suffer the consequences for their actions (Boso, 2019:2). Effective governance would ensure that the municipality produces quality financial and performance reports, complies with legislation, promotes appropriate behaviour in its officials, and delivers services to the community in accordance with its administrative role (AGSA, 2018:71). Motubatse et al. (2017:91) argue that municipalities that strive to promote good governance ultimately eliminate corruption, advocate ethics at all times, provide guidance in the right direction, and improve transparency and community participation, which lead to sound financial structures that obtain clean audit outcomes. Kroukamp (2012:103) asserts that one type of governance exercises control over local government officials and state resources used to deliver services to the community fairly, without bias, and quickly, thereby avoiding service delivery protests.

Nealer and Raga (2007:172,181) emphasise the significance of achieving a clean audit outcome at the conclusion of each financial year. They elaborate that such an outcome not only acts as a foundation for improving local government but also facilitates the provision of services to meet the daily needs of the people, addresses any shortcomings in service delivery, and contributes to the development of the country's infrastructure. Marota (2016:22) maintains that there is absolutely no reason why

NMBMM cannot obtain clean audit outcomes if it meets good governance and service delivery targets by using public funds in compliance with the relevant legislation. As the largest of two category A municipalities in the province of the Eastern Cape, NMBMM should lead by example and set the standards for other municipalities. It is necessary that the NMBMM obtains a clean audit opinion to improve its governance and service delivery.

## **Recommendations and Conclusion**

The NMBMM must rigorously enforce control, particularly over crucial resources like water and electricity, while diligently working to fulfill the community's needs, expectations, and demands. This entails addressing criminal activities such as meter tampering and illegal connections, as well as rectifying existing infrastructure issues related to water and electricity. They should strive to promote transparency and accountability and set realistic objectives, service standards, and timelines that stipulate the start and end date for the delivery of services. The municipality should additionally formulate a comprehensive daily, weekly, and monthly service delivery plan, systematically reviewing completed tasks and outstanding ones. This thorough approach ensures the realisation of objectives outlined in the IDP. It is advisable to enhance the knowledge and skills of municipal officials and political officeholders by providing training that focuses on their expected roles, particularly within the policy framework and theoretical understanding. Furthermore, it is suggested that fostering an environment that encourages whistleblowers within the municipality and the media is crucial. This proactive approach aims to expose any misuse of position or state resources by municipal officials and political office bearers, serving as a deterrent against future misconduct.

The NMBMM municipality should create platforms such as conferences and monthly performance meetings to address its shortcomings and inspire municipal officials to improve

and obtain opinions on how to improve the current situation. The municipality needs to finalise all the irregular, fruitless, wasteful, and unauthorised expenditure investigations on a yearly basis to combat misconduct and emphasise unethical actions that lead to unfavourable consequences. It is important that the municipality consider systems that will be able to trace all external suppliers before awarding tenders and they should be able to check if the suppliers have the relevant documents and references.

Further recommendations include that the NMBMM should establish an effective audit committee that conducts departmental audits of financial and performance management on a three-month basis to ensure that services promised to citizens are delivered; state resources are utilised effectively, efficiently, and economically; and misconduct and non-compliance with accounting principles, legislation, and predetermined objectives are identified immediately. Additionally, it is imperative to establish a monitoring and evaluation committee, operating in accordance with the Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation Framework for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of 2012. This committee will be tasked with overseeing the utilisation of municipal resources, tracking the advancement of projects outlined in the IDP, and ensuring compliance with regulations. The aim is to provide insights and recommendations for the way forward. The municipality should enhance internal controls by adopting Ncgobo and Malefane's (2017:17, 77, 78) five components, encompassing an ethical and disciplined control environment, risk assessment, preventative, detective, and corrective control activities, information sharing and communication, and monitoring of activities. This proactive approach aims to ensure good governance, effective, efficient, and economical service delivery, ultimately contributing to achieving clean audit outcomes.

The general aim of the study was to investigate, explain, and analyse how audit outcomes and the state of service delivery as indicators of the quality of governance in the case of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality can be enhanced.

Therefore, in conclusion, it is the duty of the NMBMM municipality officials and political office bearers to strive to improve and ensure that “towards the 30 years of democratic public administration” there are no service delivery protests, all municipalities obtain clean audit outcomes, and that good governance is upheld and encouraged.

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**SECTION B:**  
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT  
PRACTICES



## CHAPTER 6

# Innovative recruitment and selection processes: a key factor for leveraging public sector performance with reference to Eastern Cape Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

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### Introduction

Public services around the globe consider the development of new ideas and innovations for improved organisational performance paramount and inevitable (Moussa, McMurray & Muenjohn, 2018). Powerful forces like globalisation, economic competition that cuts across national borders, social and political upheavals, technological change, threats of terrorism, and a rapidly changing labour marketplace put enormous burdens on the public service to recruit and retain staff with knowledge and innovation skills (Avigna & Hays, 2004). In an increasingly competitive market, the public sector will have to explore enhanced and innovative recruitment and selection approaches and technologies. This is attributed to the intense global competition and rapid technological advancement during the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Hence, creating a more innovative public service organisation is critical

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for ensuring the effective performance of contemporary governments (Daglio, Gerson & Kitchen, 2015:12).

Most organisations, including some government departments, especially in Western Europe, have long appreciated and used e-recruitment (Puls, Video, 2017). On these grounds, there has been a growing interest in the pursuit of innovation in the public service, particularly in the Western world (OECD, 2017). However, in South Africa, it is not clear if the notion of innovative public service recruitment is a concept whose utility for improving public sector performance is appreciated (OECD, 2017). The contention of this chapter is that South Africa can vastly improve its recruitment process and, therefore, its public sector performance if it adopts the innovative approaches proposed here. Currently, there is underutilisation of these tools in government, despite their ubiquity in the OECD member countries. It is against this background that the study sought to establish how the creation of innovative recruitment and selection approaches would leverage the performance within the South African public sector in general and Eastern Cape Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (ECCOGTA) in particular.

This study, based on ECCOGTA as a unit of analysis, is of immense significance because it was envisaged to influence the development of a culture of continuous innovation and improvement in the quality of recruitment and selection. Again, the study could catalyse the capabilities of the unit of analysis and the public sector in general to constantly undertake reviews to either modify the existing processes and systems or undertake reviews to either modify the existing processes and systems or undertake innovative measures that introduce new recruitment and selection processes, structures, and systems to improve performance. One of the pillars of the recent National Framework Towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector (The NSG, 2023) is the tightening of pre-entry, recruitment, and selection requirements that will inform meritocratic appointments. While the framework puts more emphasis on the training of candidates to be appointed, it is mostly silent about the quality of officials to form



interview panels and the infusion of innovative methods and technology to circumvent the often-human element involved in selecting and appointing qualified candidates.

The chapter shares a study undertaken to develop a conceptual model for promoting innovation in the recruitment and selection processes for the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (ECCOGTA). The model is not restricted solely to ECCOGTA; it has the potential to be embraced by the entire South African public sector. This adoption extends beyond benefiting organisations in enhancing their performance, as the model also holds the capability to enhance the performance and productivity of staff.

## **Literature Review**

A literature review (Rowley & Slacke, 2004) investigates and summarises the existing literature in a subject field. As Rowley and Slacke (2004) state, a range of information sources, such as published peer-reviewed journal articles and books are used to inform the research question and design. Considering the study's nature and the specific problem under investigation within a government department (ECCOGTA), as emphasised by Knopf (2006), the scarcity of scholarly literature addressing the problem prompted the selection of predominantly official documents for review.

## **Recruitment and selection in the context of the ECCOGTA**

Recruitment and selection play a pivotal role in ensuring the effectiveness of the country's national strategies, such as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 of South Africa. The NDP is an umbrella tool that is part of the strategy that will lead to a situation where the citizens of South Africa will "live in a country which they have remade" (National Planning Commission (NPC), 2013).

In the public service, recruitment and selection practices are decentralised to individual government departments. These practices must be implemented within the framework

of applicable norms and standards based on the applicable legislation and regulated by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA, 2008). One of the important principles underlying recruitment and selection relates to the development of policy guidelines to give effect to national objectives and principles. The ECCOGTA adheres strictly to this principle, with the purpose to regulate recruitment processes and provide guidance and procedures on the recruitment of suitably qualified candidates in compliance with provisions of the South African employment law (ECCOGTA Recruitment Policy, 2017).

The Department's Recruitment, Selection and Onboarding Policy (RSOP, 2017/18) emphasises a number of inherent principles that are outlined in the Toolkit for Recruitment and Selection recommended by the Public Service Commission. These principles are:

1. The recruitment and selection process of the Department is a tool to attract and acquire superior competencies from inside and outside of the Public Service.
2. The authority to appoint employees resides with the Executive Authority of the Department or any delegated official in terms of Section 9 of the Public Service Act 1994 (as amended).
3. The recruitment process shall be handled with the purpose of acquiring the best competencies for the benefit of the Department and shall be consistent with the values of the Department.
4. The Department is an affirmative action employer and all advertisements for placement in the newspapers must indicate specific Employment Equity (EE) targets in line with the departmental EE Plan.
5. The recruitment and selection shall be conducted in an open, fair and transparent manner.
6. The recruitment process shall be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders.
7. All role-players are bound by this policy and shall adhere to all provisions of this policy.

8. This policy replaces any other departmental regulations on recruitment in the Department prior to the approval of this policy to the extent that such a departmental regulation is in conflict with this policy (The Department's Recruitment, Selection and Onboarding Policy (RSOP, 2017/18).

To have a better understanding of the concept of innovative recruitment and selection in the context of the ECCOGTA, it is imperative to grasp the environment in which the department is operating. Institutionally, the nerve centre for recruitment, the Human Resource Directorate, is located within the Chief Directorate: Corporate Services. Its main purpose is to render human resource management and administrative services and ensure compliance with recruitment and selection policies (ECCOGTA, 2018). Before exploring how the ECCOGTA conducts its recruitment and selection approaches, it is necessary to understand the strategic drive and principles pertaining to recruitment and selection in the public service.

The ECCOGTA recruitment and selection philosophy is in line with the basic values and principles of public administration, where public administration should be governed by the democratic values enshrined in Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This includes the principle of broad representation of the South African people, with employment and human resource management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation (The NSG, 2020; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). In order to identify any possible innovative recruitment and selection initiatives, or lack thereof, and the extent of technology utilisation by the ECCOGTA, it is fitting that the discussion distinguishes between social and technological innovation.

### **The role of innovation**

According to Howaldt, Domanski and Kaletka (2016), the notion of innovation has for many years been viewed from

the technological innovation paradigm relating to products and processes that were regarded as almost the only hope for societal or organisational development. Innovation research has long raised questions about whether the technology-oriented innovation paradigm that was shaped by industrial society is not becoming increasingly dysfunctional. In the recruitment and selection space, innovation has always been seen through the lens of technology (Howaldt *et al.*, 2016), and this view is shared by Sellers (2014), who calls technology-based recruitment automated recruitment.

Technology is not always efficacious in managing people issues (Sellers, 2014). As such, in terms of technology-based recruitment and selection, the ECCOGTA is still modest. For example, it advertises positions on its website, but positions are processed manually by expecting candidates to fill out the Z83 application forms (job application forms used by government departments in selecting a candidate for an advertised post) prescribed in the public service (DPSA, 2003). On the contrary, Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz (2015) argue for a fundamental shift in the innovation paradigm towards social innovations, which are considered 'new ideas, services, and models that simultaneously meet social needs and create new collaborations and better solutions. In addition, the view held by Kaederabkova and Moghadam-Saman (2013) is that social innovations meet urgent social needs and, at the same time, create social interactions. As is known, innovation in recruitment and selection processes in the public service is not different from other sectors. As in every other sector, it often occurs as a pressing need to deliver improved services to citizens with increasingly higher expectations.

Thus, following the mission of the ECCOGTA as an organisation focused on citizens' priorities and delivering quality services that are both consistent and sustainable, there is no doubt that innovative recruitment and selection measures would enhance the quality of public service to the citizens of the province. The ECCOGTA, as reflected in its recruitment, selection, and onboarding policies, has not given much attention to technological innovation. However, it can

be regarded as subscribing to social innovation (Makgopela, 2023). The departmental executive authority has identified an unprecedented opportunity, through recruitment and selection approaches, to improve the lives of staff members by effectively supporting them through appropriate training and development services (ECCOGTA Recruitment Policy, 2017).

As part of its recruitment approach, the ECCOGTA has incorporated behavioural testing into selection processes and developed a culture of periodically training recruiting managers in these techniques (ECCOGTA Recruitment Policy, 2017). Notably, there is literature to the effect that innovative recruitment and selection is based not only on selecting the right skill but also on the right balance of skills, competencies, and diversity of gender, ethnicity, age, experience, and educational background (OECD, 2017). To this effect, the ECCOGTA believes in diversity and its recruitment and selection are therefore conducted in an open, fair, and transparent manner with an advertised post that does not unfairly discriminate against or prohibit any suitably qualified person or employee from applying (ECCOGTA Recruitment Policy, 2017).

As Makgopela (2023) has argued elsewhere, the ECCOGTA lacks technological innovation in recruitment and selection. However, many of the recruitment and selection approaches practiced subscribe to social innovation, which is a new paradigm of adding value to resolving societal problems. As such, there is a need for more systematic research and evaluation on both the central and local levels to enhance bottom-up innovation rather than centralised innovation activities (Tucker, 2014).. Furthermore, the ageing and experienced human resources and consideration of people with disabilities are some of the challenges faced when procuring quality and effective workers in a region such as the Eastern Cape Province where there is an oversupply of unskilled workers (Louw, 2013).

## Methods and Data Collection

The study employed a mixed methods approach, a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches. It was anticipated that a mixed method design would strengthen the findings of the study and provide adequate validation by means of both deductive and inductive research methods (Burns & Bush, 2013). The mixed methods approach was considered the optimal and effective means to investigate the perspectives, experiences, and comprehension of public servants regarding the presence or absence of innovative recruitment and selection approaches. This is not posited as an absolute truth but rather as an endeavour to gather insights into innovative efforts, especially within the framework of the ECCOGTA.

For this specific study, a combination of sampling techniques was used, namely cluster, convenience, and quota sampling. These are all aligned with the mixed method research approach. Firstly, employees of the ECCOGTA were clustered according to salary levels in the public service and the three different clusters were executive management, senior management/directors, and deputy directors. Secondly, the respondents earmarked for interviews represented each of these clusters, and lastly, in line with quota sampling, the researcher had to ensure that the chosen sample had a fair knowledge and understanding, and recollection of the process followed when they were recruited into the organisation. One other distinct characteristic was their ability to comprehend the notion of innovation in recruitment as defined and explained in the request for participation in the research survey.

The primary data was collected using questionnaires and open-ended interview questions. Furthermore, document analysis and literature reviews as secondary instruments of data collection were used. The questionnaire was translated into an online survey using the open-source survey tool, LimeSurvey (<https://www.limesurvey.org>). Ultimately, a survey link was created to enable respondents to complete the

survey online, and it was forwarded electronically to potential respondents.

## **Discussion of Results**

The following nine themes were identified from the responses gathered during the survey and interview schedules. Ultimately, the researcher identified convergence or similar patterns of ideas related to each other from these generated themes.

### **Understanding of the notion of innovation in the public service**

The understanding and definitions of innovation presented in the existing scientific literature (Dziallasa & Blind, 2019) vary greatly from one another, and therefore their use in the study warrant clarification. Therefore, the examination of the perceived understanding of the notion of innovation through the analysis of the index score revealed relative differences in perception (Dziallas & Blind, 2019). From the study conducted on innovative recruitment and selection processes with reference to the ECCOGTA, it emerged that within the organisation, innovation is something that can be understood in many different ways (Makgopela, 2023).

On the contrary, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines public sector innovation as “finding new means or the novelty to achieve public ends and create public value for individuals and society” (OECD, 2017:14). Furthermore, innovation is defined as the development and implementation by a public service organisation of a new idea to create or improve public value and change its relationships with all the partners in the ecosystem (Chen, Walker & Sawhney, 2015). Therefore, innovation is also about the creation, improvement, and development of new ideas that will bring improvements, better organisational performance, and add value to the delivery of public services.

The fundamental question that arises is, ‘How can an organisation, which fails to reach a consensus on the

definition of an innovative organisation and the concept of innovation, effectively promote innovative recruitment and selection processes?’

Insights derived from the ECCOGTA study indicate that innovative recruitment and selection processes must transcend the conventional approaches employed in traditional public service. Instead, they should catalyse positive organisational change by ensuring the recruitment and selection of the most qualified candidates. It suffices to say that, from a performance management perspective, a shared understanding of the meaning of innovation will align all officials within the organisation and encourage them to embrace innovative practices.

### **ECCOGTA recruitment tools/strategies or approaches**

Traditional recruitment and selection tools or approaches mainly used by the ECCOGTA are those provided for in the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) (2021); which are local, provincial, and national newspapers; and the ECCOGTA’s departmental website (Makgopela, 2023). These avenues are, in essence, largely formal and traditional (Nikolau, 2014). Conversely, the adoption of innovative or unconventional recruitment by organisations entails the use of recruitment and selection tools like social media, artificial intelligence, virtual reality or predictive recruitment and gamification.

Consequently, technology-based recruitment approaches such as social media (Makgopela, 2023) are perceived to be both novel and useful because they can be used by public service as an effective recruitment tool. While technology might bring innovation to the employee recruitment space, Sanchez, Navarro and Losada (2019:3) argue that “innovative recruitment and selection is not just about technology but a new way and process to approach candidates and to adapt to their behaviour”. Furthermore, Slavic, Bjekic, and Berber (2017) assert that innovative recruitment and selection involve a process



where organisations proactively seek and identify potential candidates, with effective communication, collaboration, or interaction between parties being a key facilitating factor.

### **Identification, definition and prioritisation of innovative recruitment and selection initiatives in the ECCOGTA**

The study conducted on innovative recruitment and selection initiatives in the ECCOGTA revealed that there appears to be no identification or prioritisation of innovative recruitment and selection initiatives within the Department (Makgopela, 2023). Notably, selection decisions are only useful if there is a solid pool of high-quality candidates entering the system (Cable & Turban, 2001; Ryan & Delany, 2010). Unfortunately, in general, job candidates with innovation skills and knowledge may be particularly rare, and if there are, they may be less interested in joining the public sector (Torr, 2008). Thus, the recruitment of innovative employees in any organisation stands as an important factor not only for hiring but also for retaining the same talents.

The key question is (Hunter, Cushenbery & Friedrich, 2012): what do innovative employees want, and how are these qualities promoted in order to improve effective recruitment and selection of these employees? To increase innovative performance in work settings, most scholars (Hunter *et al.*, 2012) agree that organisations, such as the ECCOGTA need both an environment that is supportive of innovation and employees with high levels of creative potential. It therefore suffices to state that there was no innovation strategy in the ECCOGTA, because it can be construed that organisations with innovation strategies are more likely to be innovative on a number of indicators, including recruitment and selection, than those without innovation strategies. Consequently, the elements of organisational life that appeal to an innovative and technologically advanced workforce encompass, yet are not confined to, fostering a culture supportive of risk-taking, embracing a diversity of expertise, and prioritising long-term strategy and innovation (Dziallas & Blind, 2019; Hunter *et al.*, 2012).

### **Linkages between innovative recruitment and selection processes and organisational performance**

Organisations that have embraced innovation as a business strategy, be it in their recruitment and selection approaches or business overall, are likely to perform much better than those that have not done so (Gamage, 2014). Available evidence indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between innovative recruitment and selection and the performance of the organisation (Hamza et al, 2021; Matolo, Iravo, & Waititu, 2019; Gamage, 2014).

From the study on innovative recruitment and selection initiatives in the ECCOGTA, the dominant perception was that the organisation was sometimes seen by citizens as being responsive to their needs, while the minimal perception was that the organisation always responded to citizens' needs. It must, however, be emphasised that these are mere participants' perceptions and not based on or backed by any research evidence. Nevertheless, an organisation like Google succeeded, in large part, by attracting high-level talents, that is, talent that was drawn to the wide variety of content expertise (Hunter et al., 2012).

Looking at the relationship between innovative recruitment and selection and organisational performance, the study at the ECCOGTA (Makgopela, 2023) indicated that applying innovative recruitment strategies would afford the organisation an opportunity to even attract those candidates who would not have been able to see the advertisement or were not interested in the position. In this context, the pivotal nature of a direct connection between innovative recruitment and selection and organisational performance cannot be overstated.

This aligns with Gamage's (2014) assertion that the initiation of organisational success or failure hinges on innovative recruitment and selection, considering that organisational performance is intricately linked to the individuals hired, and the criteria employed in recruitment and selection play a facilitating role in this dynamic. In this

regard, a direct relationship between innovative recruitment and selection and organisational performance becomes critical, and this is in line with the assertion by Gamage (2014) that innovative recruitment and selection is the beginning to either the success or failure of organisations as organisations' performance depends on the people employed and the recruitment and selection criteria will facilitate this. Thus, organisations without a direct relationship between innovative recruitment and selection and organisational performance fail to have the right people with the right skills at the right time and in the right positions (Makgopela, 2023).

It emerged from the study at the ECCOGTA on innovative recruitment and selection initiatives that employ virtual platforms within the public service, such as posting vacancies for positions on platforms and websites like INFO Desk.co.za and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) website as per government policy guidelines when recruiting employees, affords government departments the opportunity to have a wider pool of job applicants (Makgopela, 2023). It can be derived that innovative approaches to recruitment and selection of employees might bring about the appointment of people with the required skills, knowledge, and competencies, which are likely to lead to organisational performance improvements. Therefore, the emphasis on recruitment of the best candidates is in line with the government's quest to build a meritocratic state where economic goods and political power are vested in people on the basis of talent, qualification and achievement rather than wealth or social class (Andrews, 2013).

### **Investments in innovation activities and the recruitment and selection of employees**

One of the key indicators of an organisation having an innovative strategy as part of the overall strategy is a dedicated budget (Makgopela, 2023). As noted by Vigoda-Gadot, Shoham, Schwabsky and Ruvio (2008), budget cuts or poor allocation of funds can be considered as one of the barriers to innovation in the public service. Overall, innovation

funds or budgets do provide organisations opportunities to innovate (OECD, 2017). It appears that when organisations have innovation strategies this could be due to innovation being part of the organisational strategy through the national innovation agenda. Regarding the ECCOGTA, the perception of investments in innovation activities (Makgopela, 2023) suggests a dedicated budget allocation for fostering innovation. This allocation encompasses staff training, procurement of new equipment and tools, research for innovation, and the engagement of external experts to mentor and coach staff actively engaged in innovation.

### **The role of leadership in the creation of an innovation culture**

According to the OECD (2017), leaders drive organisations, set goals, mobilise, allocate resources, and have the power to influence organisational structures and select innovative employees. Thus, without the support and commitment of top leadership, successful innovation is unlikely. In the case of the ECCOGTA, senior leadership, in this case executive leadership and senior management, were expected to create an enabling organisational environment for innovation and provide support to staff and teamwork (Makgopela, 2023).

The ECCOGTA's survey results showed that the senior managers believed that they were driving the innovation agenda through communication with staff and engagement in innovation activities, while the deputy directors indicated that they expected senior management to drive innovation (Makgopela, 2023). It may be concluded that senior management and deputy directors had a common view on who should lead the organisational innovation agenda. While both believed it was the domain of senior management, they were uncertain on whether or not it was done.

Building the culture of innovative enthusiasm within an organisation certainly takes time, but once it is established, culture can be an attractive recruitment tool for innovative talents (Hunter et al., 2012). Hence, it is sufficient to state

that fostering an innovation culture appears more achievable within departments or organisations where both line officials and management exhibit enthusiasm for new developments, ideas, and innovative service delivery approaches. In this regard, employees who try to do their work in a novel way get support from organisational leadership (Makgopela, 2023). As Hunter et al. (2012:13) wrote, “innovative individuals know that the more they become entrenched in one content area, the more they lose their ability to see original connections across content areas”. Thus, the desire for new experiences and information is nicely illustrated by Google, which often brings in experts from largely disparate content areas simply to expose their employees to new ways of thinking (Vise & Malseed, 2005).

On the contrary, in the case of the ECCOGTA, the study findings revealed that management in particular seldom seems to be excited about new developments or thinking in the area of innovative recruitment and selection approaches (Makgopela, 2023). Indeed, this corroborates the perception that leadership, as alluded to, must show stability in guiding innovation within organisations like the ECCOGTA. Creative individuals want to try new and different things, and if their most original ideas are stifled before they can be adequately explored, they will simply find another organisation that allows them that level of exploration (Berkun, 2007).

Along these lines, recruitment teams should keep in mind that innovative employees often want to test their ideas quickly and should stress the opportunities for rapid exploration in their marketing materials (Hunter et al., 2012). This is not to say that they want to succeed quickly, but that innovative talent is keenly aware of the frustrations inherent to innovation (Hunt et al., 2012). As such, organisations that embrace cross-collaboration and sharing both within and outside the organisation will be attractive to creative employees rather than those that do not allow employees to fail in trying to implement new or innovative ideas (Dziallas & Blind, 2019; Hunter et al., 2012). In this regard, Wang, Rode, Shi, Luo and Chen (2013) argue that innovation within the

public service will be flawed if there is no leadership to balance its efficiency.

### **The culture of innovation initiatives within the organisation**

Organisational culture can be thought of as the unspoken rules and values that exist in the heads and hearts of all those who are part of the organisation (Makgopela, 2023). Further, as Makgopela (2023) states, it can only be sensed and is not written down in organisational policies, regulations, or even employees' handbooks. "An innovation-oriented organisational culture would mean that employees see themselves as potential innovators and expect that the time and effort they devote to innovation-oriented activities would be valued and rewarded" (OECD, 2017:61). In such an organisation, employees would expect to be given space and tools to come up with new ideas that would be taken seriously (Makgopela, 2023).

Generally, the survey results on innovative recruitment and selection initiatives at the ECCOGTA showed that there was no culture of innovation initiatives within the organisation (Makgopela, 2023). According to Makgopela (2023), this situation appears to be linked to diminished collaboration and trust, along with a fear of making mistakes. These cultural elements functioned as barriers, demotivating public servants with a need to innovate. It is worth noting that the cultural elements acting as barriers to public servants' innovation were, in a way, reinforced by other previously mentioned factors, such as resource availability and the intricate legal and regulatory environment of public service (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2008; Beneito, 2003). Resources in this sense refer to employees, technology, tangible assets (e.g., machinery, tools, and materials), and time spent with innovation (Beneito, 2003). All these are inputs related to the financial situation of a business, which organisations must invest in when intending to successfully create a culture of innovation for recruitment and selection initiatives.

### **Strategies to cultivate the culture of innovation within organisations with reference to the ECCOGTA**

Organisational culture can be an enabling or limiting factor in the context of innovation implementation (Makgopela, 2023). As such, the human resource management (HRM) tools used in recruitment and selection need to be aligned with the existing organisational culture to be effective. The selection of strategies to cultivate the culture of innovation within organisations therefore requires careful consideration of organisational goals as well as a strong commitment by organisational leaders to continually integrate efforts among these groups of employees (Hunter et al., 2012). Also, these strategies employed to cultivate the culture of innovation within organisations require a work culture built on trust where people are able to share ideas, support each other and have a common understanding of the set of skills, knowledge and competencies required when recruiting employees (Makgopela, 2023). As the desire for innovative talent grows, however, this approach may increase in use and popularity within organisations (Hunter et al., 2012).

With regard to the research study on innovative recruitment and selection initiatives at the ECCOGTA, it is worth noting that a wide range of intriguing recommendations or suggestions were made. Those recommendations include, but are not limited to, organisations having a focused leadership that places emphasis on innovation; more training on the concept of innovation; the provision of timely feedback to junior staff on the work that they do; the implementation of innovative employee recruitment and selection in accordance to good national and international standards to target educated and competent people; embracing the philosophy of meritocracy' making resources and funding for innovation available; as well as the use of group or team-based innovation incentives and rewards (Makgopela, 2023). These were some of the strategies (Makgopela, 2023) mentioned as applicable to accentuate the culture of innovation within public service departments like the ECCOGTA.

According to Hunter et al. (2012), one of the strategies that organisational decision-makers can use to attract innovative talent is to provide elevated levels of autonomy on high-profile projects. In short, leaders should be aware that innovative employees may possess heightened sensitivity to micromanagement, making increased levels of autonomy a sought-after asset for fostering an innovative workforce. Other strategies that leaders and managers may effectively use to cultivate a culture of innovation within organisations are support for risk-taking, encouragement of diversity of expertise, and public recognition of innovative efforts by leaders in their organisations (Hunter et al., 2019). In fact, rewarding innovative attempts can convey the sentiment that innovation and creativity are important and valued aspects (Mumford & Hunter, 2005). Thus, extrinsic recognition is an important factor in facilitating a climate that is attractive to individuals who want to engage in innovative work (Hunter et al. 2012).

One point that should also be borne in mind is that pay is not a singular driving mechanism for attracting innovative talent (Hunter et al., 2019). Therefore, Amabile and Mueller (2008) argue that an excessive focus on external rewards, such as monetary compensation, can impede innovation. They contend that recruiting employees motivated by factors beyond monetary gains is crucial, as an exclusive emphasis on financial incentives may undermine long-term innovation and innovative performance. This suggests that the relationship between innovative recruitment and selection approaches and organisational performance is mitigated by organisational development practices that support innovation use (Makgopela, 2023). Essentially, the fundamental strategies for cultivating a culture of innovation within organisations involve leadership that prioritises innovation; fostering collaboration between government departments and external innovation bodies; promoting a culture of innovation among both staff and management; and advocating for the effective management of knowledge within the department.



**Identified diffusion tools or methods that are critical aspects of inter-organisational connectedness and are enablers of innovation in the ECCOGTA**

The diffusion of innovation can be viewed as the process that occurs as people adopt a new idea, product, service, practice, philosophy, or even an initiative that has to be implemented and have a positive impact on reaching the goals of the organisation (Lundblad, 2003). Against this background, the existence of tools and methods, which are important aspects of internal connectedness, can be a game changer in encouraging innovation within the organisation.

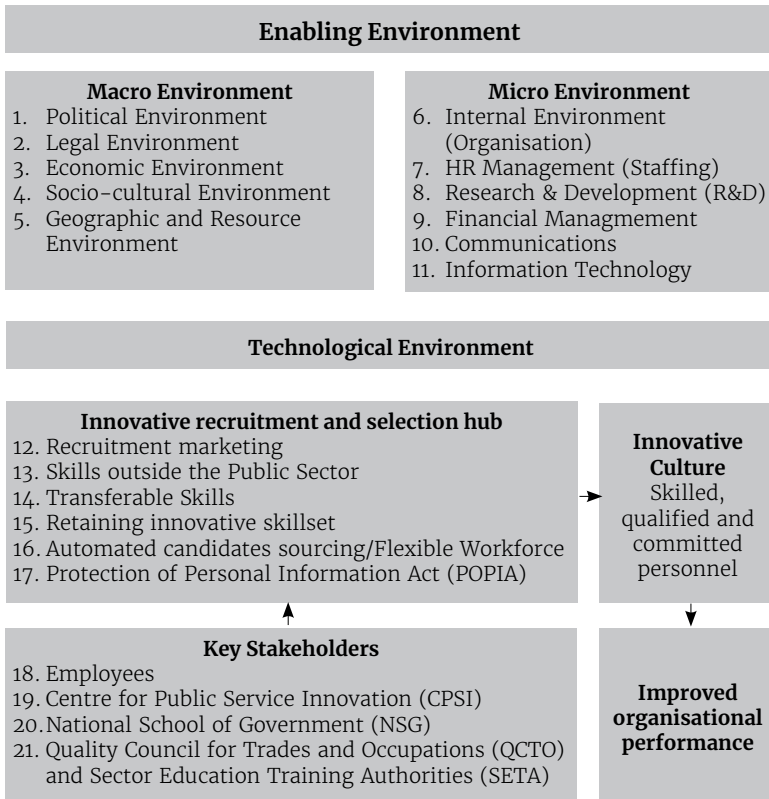
In the case of ECCOGTA, the intranet, emails, newsletters, internal events like symposiums for innovation hosted by the department, and forums formed to discuss specific organisational issues like those driving the transformation agenda are the most tools listed as enablers of innovation. According to the study conducted by Mamane on tools for effective internal communications, the intranet and emails were also perceived by employees as having a short time and distance coverage and therefore more likely to foster a culture of communication than tools like events and forums that seldom took place (Mamane, 2013). In turn, this corroborates the survey results of the study conducted on innovative recruitment and selection initiatives at the ECCOGTA. As already mentioned organisations that embrace cross-collaboration and sharing both within and outside the organisation will be attractive to innovative employees (Hunter et al., 2012). Thus, internal connectedness is important because most ideas sourced both internally and externally can be communicated, and the sharing of ideas can also be improved within the organisation (Makgopela, 2023).

ECCOGTA, for instance, has the capability to tap into best practices sourced from external entities or fellow public service departments such as the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) and DPSA, both key players in driving innovation within South Africa's public service landscape. Consequently, individuals or organisations exposed to such

innovations – particularly those perceived to offer tangible benefits such as financial gains, time savings, reduced resource expenditure, enhanced effectiveness, simplicity, or ease of implementation – are inclined to adopt them, contingent upon the visibility of resulting outcomes (Dearing and Cox, 2018). It could be concluded that external connectedness is important to support innovation because the majority of ideas were sourced externally. However, there was no evidence to support this assertion. Ultimately, the research findings and literature review informed an innovative conceptual framework illustrated in the figure below, which could potentially act as a catalyst in illustrating the causal relationship between innovative recruitment and selection methods and enhanced organisational performance within the public sector.

This model is a by-product of the literature review and theoretical research, and thus empirical evaluation may be essential to monitor and assess the potential, practical application of the model. As such, the constructs emanating from research findings served as the building blocks for the development of an innovative conceptual framework. These constructs – the macro-, micro-, and technological environments, along with key stakeholders – were pinpointed as enabling factors facilitating the development of innovative recruitment and selection processes.

In terms of the proposed model for innovative recruitment and selection approaches, the appointment of a skilled, qualified, and committed workforce is possible, and innovation can be introduced and sustained in the public sector. As a result, a skilled, qualified, and committed workforce is identified as one of the critical success factors that may lead to improved and sustainable organisational performance. Thus, the innovative culture embedded within the organisation, which will be embraced by available skilled and qualified employees, will ultimately contribute to improved organisational performance.



**Figure 6.1:** A Model for innovative recruitment and selection to improve organisational performance

Therefore, the constructs that emanated from research findings and served as the building blocks for an innovative conceptual framework developed are the macro-micro-environmental factors and include an innovative recruitment hub, key stakeholders, and innovative, skilled, qualified, and committed personnel. It is envisaged that with the appropriate implementation of the proposed model, organisational performance relating to innovative recruitment and selection within the ECCOGTA and other government departments can be realised.

## Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to identify any possible innovative selection and recruitment initiatives or lack thereof in the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (ECCOGTA) and develop an innovative conceptual framework that depicts a causal relationship between innovative recruitment and selection approaches and improved organisational performance across the public sector.

The study embraced pragmatism as a research paradigm utilising a mixed-methodological design for the purpose of strengthening the research findings and for the provision of adequate validation by means of both deductive and inductive research methods. The study adopted the use of interviews and questionnaires as methods of collecting data. A semi-structured face-to-face interview schedule was used. To obtain the relevant data, non-probability sampling entailing the application of judgemental sampling was used to draw and interview personnel at the ECCOGTA offices.

The key findings of the study indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between innovative recruitment and selection and the performance of organisations. In addition, innovative recruitment and selection have a positive effect on customer satisfaction. The study makes some recommendations that since the proposed framework was premised on research conducted at the ECCOGTA, a provincial government. Thus, the proposed model for innovative recruitment and selection developed from the findings of the study by Makgopela (2023) is perceived as a significant contribution to the discipline of public management and it is suggested for adoption by public sector organisations in South Africa and abroad. It is envisaged that the model would be beneficial to explore the linkages between innovative recruitment and selection of appointed staff and their influence and effectiveness in terms of employee and organisational performance.

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## CHAPTER 7

# Transformational leadership and employee attitudes in a public sector context: the role of trust in management and employee core self-evaluation

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### **Contextualising Leadership as an Aspect of Ongoing Reforms in Public Administration**

The evolution of workplace dynamics requires that organisations grasp the organisational elements capable of energising and fostering positive outcomes among their members, shifting away from the conventional static hierarchy of formal roles and spans of control (Ferguson, Ronayne & Rybacki, 2014). Organisations need to envisage the characteristics that lead to efficacious management of the environment and stimulate employees to act independently and shape their environment and careers. Effective leadership is critical for organisational growth and stability (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011).

Good leadership contributes to the efficient provision of goods and services, higher levels of satisfaction among personnel, and a sense of direction and vision (Van Wart, 2003). However, leadership in the public sector faces the effects of changing contexts characterised by system flaws, stereotypes, a decline in confidence in government, and increased perceptions of inefficiency and ineffectiveness (Van Wart, 2013). These challenges do not absolve leaders in the

public sector from executing organisational goals. Therefore, different leadership styles have been employed to improve the performance of public sector organisations. In particular, transformational leadership has predominantly been utilized and explored as the optimal leadership approach, invaluable for empowering firms to achieve sustainable competitiveness, while also serving as a mechanism for fostering positive employee well-being (Ramsey et al, 2017; Arnold, 2017).

While evidence supports the existing relationship between transformational leadership and employee work attitudes, the query arises regarding the circumstances under which this interaction occurs and how organisations can leverage this relationship. This study argues that trust in management as a mediator and core self-evaluation as a moderator are of particular interest in expanding the understanding of these relationships. The study first contributes to the existing literature by utilising the Job Demands-Resource Theory to establish the relationship between transformational leadership and employee work attitudes. Secondly, the study employs the Conservation of Resource Theory to determine the mediating role of trust in management and the moderating role of core self-evaluation in the established relationships between transformational leadership and employee work attitudes.

### **Revisiting the Application of the Job Demands-Resource and Conservation of Resource Theories in the Public Sector**

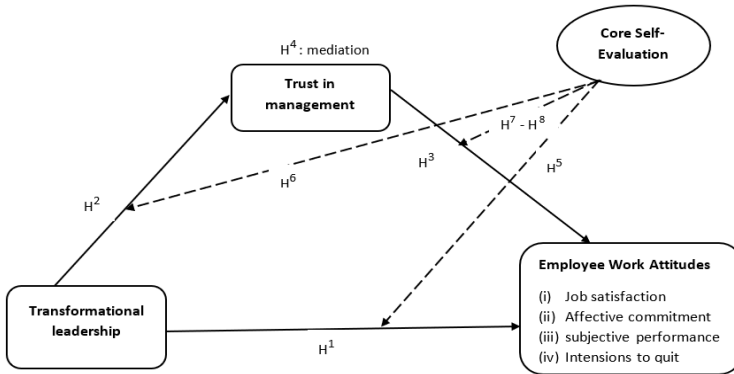
Leaders influence the working environment of their employees. According to the principles of the Job Demands-Resource Theory (JD-R), working conditions consist of two broad categories. The two categories are named as job demands and job resources distinctively related to specific work outcomes (Demerouti, et al, 2001). Independent psychological processes are developed based on the two categories that constitute job strain due to job demands or motivation processes related to job resources (Bakker & Demerouti,

2014). Job resources relate to organisational aspects of the job that are instrumental to achieving work goals, stimulating personal growth, and reducing sustained pressure from the job demands, leading to a motivational process. In this study, the prevalence of transformational leadership is considered a job resource for public sector employees. In line with the motivational process of the theory, the perceived presence of job resources will stimulate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in employees, which in turn fosters positive work-related attitudinal outcomes.

In organisational research, boundary conditions are critical for assessing the generality of a theory across contexts by expanding the understanding of how and when the predicted relationships occur (Busse, Kach & Wagner, 2017). In line with this notion, the conservation of resource theory is adopted as the theoretical underpinning for explaining the mechanism through which the perceived prevalence of transformational leadership in organisations influences employee work attitudes. COR theory states that people are naturally inclined to obtain, retain, and protect what they value. Therefore, the things people value are referred to as “resources” (Hobfoll & Schumm, 2002). Hobfoll (1998) names the four basic categories of resources: conditions, personal characteristics, energies, and objects.

In line with the principles of COR theory, this study considers trust in management as a salient “psychological condition” mediating the relationship between transformational leadership and employee attitudinal outcomes. In relation to a positive organisational environment, the second tenet of COR theory posits that individuals invest in resources to protect, gain, or limit the loss of resources (Hobfoll & Schumm, 2009). Since trust is, a psychological condition that can develop within the workplace, the perceived presence of this psychological condition prompts the employees to want to protect or gain it. COR positions trust in management as a mediator and a condition that connects transformational leadership to employee work attitudes.

COR theory further proposes that individuals value personal resources. This study recommends core self-evaluation as a personal characteristic and a moderating variable that individuals possess at different levels. The theory holds that resources are critical determinants of an individual’s appraisal of events and predict how individuals cope with situations (Hobfoll & Schumm, 2002). When applied to this study, the first collar of COR suggests that individuals with ample resources will have more opportunities for resource gain. In contrast, those with little or lacking resources will be more vulnerable. This study proposes that core self-evaluation might play a moderating role in strengthening or weakening the influence of perceived transformational leadership in relation to employee work attitudes through trust in the manager, the mediator in the model.



**Figure 7.1:** Proposed study model

### Assessing Transformational Leadership and Attitudinal Work Outcomes

Transformational leadership is an approach wherein leaders and followers collaboratively cultivate heightened motivation, aiming to achieve organisational goals (Ghasabeh, Soosay & Reaiche, 2015). This leadership style focuses on the follower’s sense of self-worth and commitment to a shared vision as the

means to achieve organisational performance (Bass & Riggio, 2005). Transformational leadership is advocated as ideal for the effective management of global markets, including corporations and cultural or political organisations (Ghasabeh, Soosay & Reaiche, 2015).

### **The six key behaviours associated with transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership is also considered a multidimensional approach manifested by six key behaviours, namely inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualised support, high-performance expectations, idealised influence, and fostering goal acceptance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990).

- *Inspirational motivation* refers to behaviours associated with articulating a vision and inspiring followers through the communication of high expectations (Ramsey, 2017). Through this characteristic, the leader discerns new opportunities that resonate with followers and articulates the conviction that organisational goals are achievable.
- *Intellectual stimulation* denotes a leader's behaviour that stimulates followers to think creatively. It also motivates followers to take calculated risks associated with formulating innovative strategies and applying new perspectives to problem-solving (Sharif, 2019).
- *Individualised support* is exhibited through fostering a one-to-one relationship with followers, understanding each follower's professional and personal needs, and showing respect for their feelings and opinions (Mencl, Wefald & van Ittersum, 2016). Through this behaviour, a leader promotes a conducive work environment with access to mentoring and coaching.
- *High-performance expectations* encompass providing clarity relating to the level of excellence expected in task executions and equipping the followers with the necessary knowledge and skills required to attain high performance (Khalili, 2016).

- *Idealised influence* is associated with setting good, exemplary standards for followers to imitate. This characteristic depicts a leader as a role model, displaying conviction and deep personal values that appeal to followers' emotional levels (Judge, Piccolo & Ilies, 2004).
- *Fostering goal acceptance* relates to behaviours associated with promoting cooperation and teamwork amongst the followers and encouraging healthy partnerships between co-workers and the organisation's stakeholders.

### **The four critical work attitudes that influence transformational leadership**

A typical transformational leader inspires and empowers others to perform beyond what they ordinarily thought possible. This leader takes an interest in individual needs and personal development and sets an example as a role model for excellence and high performance (Reid, 2020). Transformational leadership has been implemented in various contexts and organisational settings, demonstrating its relevance to employee attitudinal outcomes. This study considered four critical work attitudes utilised to explore the influence of transformational leadership in the public sector context, namely job satisfaction, affective commitment, subjective performance, and turnover intentions.

*Job satisfaction* broadly refers to the employees' perceptual or emotional reaction resulting from the affective evaluation of one's job (Judge et al, 2002; Ravari et al, 2012). Employees' job satisfaction is influenced by various elements, such as environmental, socio-cultural, and situational factors (Van Ham, Verhoeven, Groenier, Groothoff & De Haan 2006). One of the situational factors linked to job satisfaction is transformational leadership. Prior literature has established a positive relationship between the dimensions of transformational leadership and job satisfaction (Puni et al , 2018; Siswanto & Yuliana, 2022).

*Affective commitment* relates to the individual's emotional attachment, involvement, and identification



with the organisation. This psychological mindset compels individuals to certain actions and behaviours as an expression of the attachment they experience (Merritt, 2012). Affective commitment is one of the constructs important in defining the relationship between a person and an organisation. It is also an essential factor in explaining individual behaviour in an organisation (Juaneda-Ayensa, Clavel San Emeterio & Gonzales-Menorca, 2017). When linked to transformational leadership, empirical studies found that transformational leadership promotes and stimulates affective commitment (Ribeiro, Yücel & Gomes, 2018; Park et al, 2021).

Employee job performance is critical to attaining organisational goals. In particular, *in-role job performance* refers to employees' actions and behaviours that fulfil the requirements of the individual's job description activities necessary for effective and efficient organisational functioning (Williams & Anderson, 1991; Motowidlo, 2003). Extant literature has established the positive links between transformational leadership and employee in-role performance (Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2020; Han & Oh, 2020). Therefore, in the presence of positive influence from the leader who influences employees to exceed their performance expectations, employees are motivated to exhibit high levels of task performance.

*Turnover intentions* are defined as employees' withdrawal inclination and attempt to leave their current workplace voluntarily (Takase, 2010; Simon, Müller & Hasselhorn, 2010). The literature outlines some pull factors drawing the employee away from the job, including factors such as being headhunted, perceived better options and a good work environment in future employment (Hom et al, 2017). Turnover intention is an important behavioural interest to many organisations since it is linked to employees' actual turnover action (Cohen, Blake & Goodman, 2016). Therefore, an organisation's ability to predict factors that contribute to employees' turnover intentions is salient because the actual turnover of critical and talented staff members is costly to companies. These costs encompass hiring new staff, training replacements, boosting

staff morale, and sustaining productivity levels, alongside maintaining organisational stability following the departure of well-trained and experienced personnel (Shaw 2011). On the basis of the job demands resource theory's motivation process, the perceived prevalence of the transformational leadership style within the organisation is envisaged to lead to lower levels of turnover intentions amongst employees. Past studies reported that higher levels of transformational leadership decreased turnover intentions (Gyensare et al, 2017).

### **The Mediating Influence of Trust in Management**

Trust relates to a discretionary relationship between two parties (Jøsang, Keser & Dimitrakos, 2005). Trust within the organisation is important for advantageous employer-employee relations that promote organisational goals. Trust in management denotes intra-organisational phenomena that relate to a psychological state prompted by the willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of the other party based on positive expectations of their conduct and behaviour (Rousseau et al, 1998; Tzafirir & Dolan, 2004). According to the theory of conservation of resources, people who have a lot of resources are more likely to take advantage of or look for chances to get more resources (Hobfoll & Schumm, 2009).

This study suggests that trust in management plays a role in the connection between transformational leadership and how employees feel about their jobs. The expected prevalence of transformational leadership within the organisation is expected to foster increased trust in management. This, in turn, correlates with improved attitudinal outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance, and affective commitment, while also reducing turnover intentions. Consequently, trust in management serves as a mediator variable, elucidating how transformational leadership shapes employee work attitudes.

Past research has reported the results of trust as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and various work outcomes. For instance, Cai, Loon & Wong (2018) found that trust in management mediated

the relations between leadership styles and acceptance of the change in organisations. The study targeted hospitality and tourism employees. Yuan et al (2021) reported trust in management as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment. The review of the literature shows fewer studies have tested trust as a mediator between transformational leadership and a variety of attitudinal work outcomes; hence, the current study intends to shed light on how transformational leadership influences employees' work attitudes of job satisfaction, affective commitment, in-role performance, and turnover intentions. Therefore, the study suggests that the intervention of trust in management is what ultimately promotes positive attitudes and behaviours among employees and reduces negative attitudes, which might lead to negative intentions and behaviours.

### **The Moderated Mediating Effects of Core Self-Evaluation**

Research in positive organisational scholarship has established that despite working in the same organisation and sharing the same working conditions, employees differ considerably in how they feel about their work and behave in the workplace (Mäkikangas et al, 2013). This notion has initiated investigations into the individual differences that influence employees' work attitudinal outcomes and behaviours. Core self-evaluation is a fundamental personality trait that generally reflects individuals' self-appraisal, ability to manage situations, and orientation toward the future concerning their functioning within their environment and life circumstances (Judge et al, 2003; Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge & Scott, 2009).

This second-order dispositional trait is considered a latent construct involving self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (Gardner & Pierce, 2010). *Self-esteem* depicts an individual's appraisal of self-worth, abilities, and self-acceptance. *Generalised self-efficacy* refers

to one's ability to cope and perform in varying situations. *Locus of control* relates to an individual's belief that they can have control over events in their lives rather than attributing their behaviour's consequences to external forces. *Emotional stability* refers to one's inclination to have a strong mental capacity to feel calm and secure, especially when dealing with challenging situations (Judge et al, 2012).

Individuals with higher levels of core self-evaluation have a stable and more consistent way of dealing with reality and circumstances. They consider themselves adaptable, assertive and confident in their abilities and competencies (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). The levels of an individual's core self-evaluation may clarify the circumstances under which transformational leadership influences employee attitudes both directly and indirectly through trust in management as a mediator. Previous research has reported the moderating role of core self-evaluation in various studies. For instance, Baral & Bhargava (2011) reported that core self-evaluation slightly moderated the relationship between predictors of work-family and enrichment. The core self-evaluation partial moderation effect was established in the relationship between authentic leadership and organisational behaviour (Joo & Jo, 2017). Therefore, regarding boundary conditions, we argue that core self-evaluation is a personal resource that strengthens the positive effect of transformational leadership on employee work attitudes.

## **Methodological Approach**

The study adopted a positivist paradigm. Using the cross-sectional time horizon, the study applied a correlational design. Correlational design refers to a type of research strategy designed to discover relationships between two or more variables (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). The data was collected from a convenience sample of 290 public service employees from Lesotho governmental ministries. The non-probability convenience sampling strategy offers advantages, given its dependence on the accessibility of chosen

organisations and the willingness of respondents to participate in the survey (Stockemer, Stockemer & Glaeser, 2019). The descriptive statistics show that the sample consisted of 160 (55.2%) female and 130 (44.8%) male respondents. In total, 48.3% of the respondents were aged between 36 and 45 years, while 27.2% were between 25 and 35 years of age. About 20% of the respondents were older than 45 years, while the rest were younger than 25 years. Prior to the commencement of data collection, the study obtained ethical clearance for the minimum risk category. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants through the human resources department as gatekeeper for the organisation. Permission to use data for research purposes was requested and obtained from the government ministries and the participants.

## Measures

The standardised measures from the literature were utilised:

- *Transformational Leadership* ( $\alpha = 0.96$ ) was evaluated using the twenty eight-item Survey of Transformational Leader Behaviour (TLB) scale developed by Podsakoff et al., (1990). Example statement: “My manager has a clear understanding of where we are going”.
- *Job Satisfaction* ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ) was evaluated using a five-item scale originally developed by Andrews and Withey (1976) and used by Rentsch and Steel (1992). Example question: “How do you feel about the work you do on your job – the work itself?”
- *Affective Commitment* ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ) was assessed using the six-item scale originally developed by Meyer et al. (1998). Example statement: “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation”.
- *In-Role Performance* ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ) was measured by Williams and Anderson’s (1991) seven-item scale to measure subjective performance. An example item reads: “I adequately completed assigned duties.”
- *Intentions to quit* ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) were evaluated with the four-item scale originally developed by Veldhoven and Meijman

(1994) and reported and used by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). Example question: “I intend to change jobs in the coming year”).

- *Trust in Management* ( $\alpha = 0.58$ ) was measured by a ten-item scale originally developed by Mayer and Davis (1999) and used by Chao *et al.*, (2004). Example statement: “I am confident that top managers can make right decisions”.
- *Core self-evaluation* ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ) was measured using a twelve-item direct measure scale developed by Judge *et al.*, (2003). Example statement: “I am confident I get the success I deserve in life”.

## Data Analysis

The collected data were processed with the statistical packages for social science (SPSS) version 27 (IBM, 2022). The statistical analysis for this study included descriptive statistics, reliability and correlation statistics, and a simple mediation model analysis. Pearson’s correlation analysis was conducted to determine the type and nature of relationships between transformation, trust in the manager, and employee attitudes (affective commitment, job satisfaction, performance, and intention to quit). Effect sizes set a confidence level at 95%,  $p < 0.05$  was considered significant. Effect sizes with 0.1 indicated a small effect, 0.3 a medium effect, and 0.5 a large effect (Steyn, 2002). The minimum criterion for practical significance was a medium effect of 0.30 (Cohen, 1988). For internal consistency, the study conducted a reliability test using Cronbach’s alpha.

To assess the reliability of the instrument, higher coefficients indicate better reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017) was utilised for simple mediation modelling with the Jamovi open-access software (Version 2.2.5.0). Mediation was established with the indirect effect using a percentile bootstrap estimation approach with 5 000 samples (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The bootstrap analysis found an indirect effect to be significant if both the lower-level confidence interval (LLCI) and the upper-level

confidence interval (ULCI) did not include zero (Zhao, Lynch & Chen, 2010). A complimentary mediation result could only be determined when the mediated and direct effects existed, pointing in the same direction (Zhao et al., 2010).

## Main Findings from the Empirical Data

### Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics and the reliabilities of all the scales used in the study are presented in Table 7.1 below.

**Table 7.1:** Descriptive statistics

	Alpha	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Transform- ational leadership	0.96	4.09	1.41	0.18	0.72
2. Vision articulation	0.93	4.26	1.70	-0.14	-1.01
3. Role modelling	0.94	4.09	1.91	-0.15	-1.15
4. Goal acceptance	0.96	4.21	1.83	-0.10	-1.01
5. Performance expectations	0.85	4.30	1.58	-0.20	-0.68
6. Individual consideration	0.62	3.87	1.14	0.02	0.96
7. Intellectual stimulation	0.92	3.83	1.64	-0.04	-0.93
8. Core self evaluation	0.90	3.01	0.88	-0.25	-0.25
9. Trust in the manager	0.58	4.00	0.75	0.69	0.46
10. Organisation commitment	0.88	3.36	0.90	-0.46	0.00

	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
11. Job satisfaction	0.71	3.31	0.68	-0.34	-0.02
12. Performance	0.80	3.99	0.56	-0.87	2.66
13. Intentions to quit	0.94	3.51	1.17	-0.40	-0.72

Inspection of Table 7.1 indicated that all scales were reliable and internally consistent because they yielded Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values because the scales used in the study exceeded the required .70 cut-off value. Table 7.1 also suggests that all the variables used in this study were scored above the midpoint of the scale, suggesting agreement with or experiencing the construct. Table 7.3 also indicates that the data for all scales used were normally distributed given the guidelines of 2.00 for skewness (Finch, West & MacKinnon, 1997).) and 4.00 for kurtosis (Wright & Herrington 2011).

### **Correlational analysis**

This study was also interested in determining the relationships between the variables used in this study (transformational leadership, trust in the manager, core self-evaluation, affective organisational commitment, job satisfaction, subjective performance and intentions to quit). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 7.2.

Inspection of Table 7.2 suggests that all sub-scales of transformational leadership were closely related to one another with large effect ( $r = 0.90$ ). The aggregated transformational leadership demonstrated a noticeable positive medium effect with work attitudes including trust in management ( $r = 0.47$ ), affective commitment ( $r = 0.46$ ) and inverse negative medium effect with turnover intentions ( $r = -0.35$ ) which indicated that employees who perceive high prevalence of transformational leadership would likely be associated with lower levels of turnover intentions. The analysis also shows that trust in management depicts positive medium effect correlation. For example, the employee work



**Table 7.2:** Correlation analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Transformational	—											
2. Vision Articulation	0.90	—										
3. Role modelling	0.90	0.83	—									
4. Goal acceptance	0.92	0.82	0.85	—								
5. Perf. Expectations	0.85	0.67	0.68	0.71	—							
6. Ind. Consideration	0.68	0.51	0.48	0.52	0.59	—						
7. Intel. Stimulation	0.86	0.73	0.69	0.74	0.71	0.56	—					
8. Trust: managers	0.47	0.48	0.44	0.45	0.35	0.27	0.40	—				
9. CSE	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.09	—			
10. Commitment	0.46	0.49	0.42	0.45	0.33	0.20	0.42	0.47	0.12	—		
11. Job satisfaction	0.46	0.45	0.40	0.42	0.38	0.23	0.43	0.42	0.08	0.64	—	
12. Performance	-0.05	-0.03	-0.08	-0.07	0.02	-0.05	-0.02	-0.10	0.24	-0.05	0.14	—
13. Intentions to quit	-0.35	-0.39	-0.34	-0.35	-0.26	-0.06	-0.34	-0.31	-0.02	-0.59	-0.47	0.09

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level. / \* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Results were interpreted as: 0.01= small effect, 0.3 = medium effect, 0.5 = large effect (Steyn, 1999).

attitude including effective commitment ( $r = 0.47$ ), and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.42$ ). Trust had an inverse relationship with turnover intentions demonstrating the negative effect ( $r = -0.31$ ).

### **Testing the mediation models**

The hypothesised models predominantly consist of mediation models wherein the prevalence of transformational leadership within an organisation influences perceptions of trust in the manager, subsequently impacting various employee work attitudes, including organisational commitment, job satisfaction, subjective performance experiences, and intentions to quit. Although we started with this more parsimonious model, there are no theoretical reasons to exclude partial mediation. We performed a closer examination of the direct and indirect effects as well as confidence intervals to evaluate their relative sizes. We computed the significance of mediation effects by using the bootstrap procedure (95% normal Confidence Interval (CI) using 1000 samples) as implemented in the Jamovi free access software (version). The results of the mediation analysis can be found in Table 3.

A closer inspection of Table 7.3 revealed that there was a *full mediation* in one of the models with organisational commitment DV with the *near statistically significant indirect effects (.09)*, even though the confidence intervals did not include zero. However, the mediating effects of trust in the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, subjective experience of performance, and intentions to quit could not be confirmed in this study. Full mediation, in this case, implies that the mediator (trust in the manager) fully explains the association between transformational leadership and intentions to quit.

### **Testing the moderated mediations (conditional process) models**

This study also aimed at determining the conditional process where core self-evaluation could serve as a moderator in any



of the three paths (a, b, and c') in any of the mediation models tested above. In these models, transformational leadership served as a predictor of employee attitudes (organisation commitment, job satisfaction, subjective experience of performance, and intentions to quit) through a mediatory core self-evaluation. The mediating model with job satisfaction, subjective experience of performance, and intentions to quit were excluded from any other analysis because the mediating role of core self-evaluation could not be confirmed in this mediation analysis.

In conditional process analysis using the Jamovi software, the first analysis was focused on whether the moderator actually has a moderating effect on the components of the mediated effects. In order to do this, the moderation effects (interactions) were explored. A closer examination of the direct and indirect effects as well as confidence intervals to evaluate their relative sizes were examined. The significance of mediation effects by using the bootstrap procedure [95% normal Confidence Interval (CI) using 1000 samples] as implemented in the Jamovi free access software (version) were computed. The results of the moderated mediation analysis indicated organisational commitment. The focus was first on the moderated mediation model with organisational commitment as the dependent variable under different conditions of CSE (Mean - 1 SD, mean, and Mean + 1 SD) to determine when moderated mediation effects could be expected. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 4:

A closer inspection of Table 7.4 suggests that the indirect effects of the low levels of the CSE group [IE=0.0384, CI=(0.00828, 0.0684), beta=0.0616, z=2.50, p=0.012] yielded a significant effect, and the confidence intervals did not include zero. This means that the conditional mediation effects are due to the fact that when trust influences commitment; its effects do depend on low CSE. Table 7.4 also suggests that the indirect effects of the medium levels of the CSE group [IE=0.0831, CI=(0.04666, 0.1196), beta=0.1317, z=4.47, p<0.001] yielded a significant effect, and the confidence intervals did not include zero with a larger effect (compared to the previous condition).

Table 7.4: Conditional Process with Commitment as DV

Moderator levels		95% C.I. (a)							
CSE	Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	$\beta$	z	p
Mean -1SD	Indirect	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Trust $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.0384	0.0153	0.00828	0.0684	0.0616	2.50	0.012
Mean -1SD	Component	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Trust	0.2371	0.0473	0.14437	0.3298	0.3784	5.01	< .001
Mean -1SD		Trust $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.1618	0.0561	0.05181	0.2718	0.1627	2.88	0.004
Mean -1SD	Direct	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.1965	0.0471	0.10411	0.2888	0.3154	4.17	< .001
Mean -1SD	Total	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.2357	0.0483	0.14106	0.3304	0.3712	4.88	< .001
Mean	Indirect	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Trust $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.0831	0.0186	0.04666	0.1196	0.1317	4.47	< .001
Mean	Component	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Trust	0.2839	0.0328	0.21957	0.3482	0.4532	8.65	< .001

Moderator levels		95% C.I. (a)								
CSE	Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	$\beta$	z	p	
Mean		Trust $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.2928	0.0561	0.18281	0.4028	0.2905	5.22	< .001	
Mean	Direct	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.1894	0.0353	0.12027	0.2585	0.3000	5.37	< .001	
Mean	Total	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.2795	0.0335	0.21375	0.3452	0.4400	8.34	< .001	
Mean+1-SD	Indirect	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Trust $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.1402	0.0248	0.09157	0.1888	0.2138	5.65	< .001	
Mean+1-SD	Component	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Trust	0.3307	0.0388	0.25470	0.4067	0.5279	8.53	< .001	
Mean+1-SD		Trust $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.4238	0.0561	0.31381	0.5338	0.4050	7.55	< .001	
Mean+1-SD	Direct	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.1823	0.0415	0.10107	0.2636	0.2781	4.40	< .001	
Mean+1-SD	Total	Trans $\Rightarrow$ Commitment	0.3232	0.0396	0.24552	0.4008	0.5088	8.16	< .001	

Note: Confidence intervals computed with method: Bootstrap (normal) / Note. Betas are completely standardised effect sizes.

This means that the conditional mediation effects are due to the fact that when trust influences commitment; its effects do depend on medium CSE. In addition, it was noted that the indirect effects of the high levels of the CSE group [IE=0.1402, CI= (0.09157, 0.1888), beta=0.2138, z=5.65, p<0.001] yielded a significant effect, and the confidence intervals did not include zero with a larger effect (compared to the previous condition). This means that the conditional mediation effects are due to the fact that when trust influences commitment; its effects depend on levels of CSE. Thus, for low, medium, and high CSE; levels of CSE have a strong influence on commitment, and this effect is partially due to the mediating effects of trust.

### **Insights and Highlights of the Findings**

The first objective was to determine the direct effects between transformational leadership and employee work attitudes encompassing job satisfaction, affective commitment, in-role job performance, and turnover intentions. The results of the correlation analysis indicate that the perceived prevalence of transformational leadership fosters positive work attitudes such as job satisfaction and affective commitment, while also reducing employee turnover intentions. The results also confirmed a positive relationship between transformational leadership and trust in management.

The disparities in certain associations indicate that employees differ in their perception of observed levels of transformational leadership and the actual influence they feel, shaping their attitudes. Prior research has similarly substantiated these findings, demonstrating direct effects, such as a positive relationship with job satisfaction (Puni, Mohammed & Asamoah, 2018). Other studies have established a positive association with affective commitment (Park et al, 2021). In the current study, association with in-role performance did not yield significant results. Similar findings were reported by Indrayanto, Burgess & Dayaram (2014). Our finding differed from other studies; for example Bartram & Casimir (2007) reported significant positive association with

in-role performance. The negative association with turnover intentions was supported (Gyensare et al, 2017).

The second objective investigated the mediating role of trust in management in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee work attitudes. The results of the mediation analysis suggest the existence of one full mediation model, with affective organisational commitment as a dependent variable while the mediation role of trust in the leader as an independent variable could not be confirmed in the relations between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, subjective experience of performance, and intentions to quit.

In this context, full mediations imply that two employees who deviate by one standard deviation in their levels of transformational leadership are projected to deviate by 0.176 standard deviations in their organisational commitment, indicating that individuals with stronger transformational leadership tend to report higher levels of organisational commitment. The individual with an additional standard deviation in transformational leadership is anticipated to exhibit a 0.063 standard deviation increase in organisational commitment, owing to the constructive impact of transformational leadership on trust in the leader, consequently fostering higher levels of organisational commitment. Holding constant trust in the leader, an employee with one standard deviation higher in transformational leadership is estimated to be 0.010 standard deviations higher in organisational commitment. This study could not confirm the mediating role of trust in the leader in the relationship between transformational leadership and in-role performance.

Employees who perceive the prevalence of transformational leadership as a job resource at their disposition, will trust their managers more. In turn, they will be more committed, satisfied with their jobs, and less inclined to think about quitting their jobs. Independent of this process, considering the direct effects, employees who



believe they are exposed to transformational leadership as a resource availability will also be more committed to their jobs. The support for trust in management as a mediator between transformational leadership and various work attitudes was established in the empirical literature. For example, a study among civil servants in Hong Kong, depicted trust in management as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and acceptance of change (Cai, Loon & Wong, 2018). Trust also reported a partial mediation between transformational leadership and organisational identification, as well as continuous improvement efforts (Khattak, Zolin & Muhammad, 2020). In addition, the mediation role of trust in management was also reported in the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational commitment (Yuan et al, 2021).

This study also aimed at determining the conditional process where core self-evaluation could serve as a moderator in any of the three paths (a, b, and c), in any of the mediation models tested above. In these models, transformational leadership served as a predictor of employee attitudes (organisation commitment) through a mediator, namely, trust in the manager. The mediating model that used job satisfaction, subjective experience of performance, and intentions to quit as dependent variables (DV), was not used in any other analysis because trust in the manager could not be proven to play a role in this mediation analysis. The results of the moderated mediation analysis suggested that CSE does seem to moderate the path from trust to commitment because of a near significant marginal value ( $p=0.096$ ), even though the confidence interval included zero.

This means that the conditional mediation is perhaps due to the fact that when trust influences commitment; its effects depend on CSE levels (conditions). This model is sometimes called moderated mediation because the interaction follows the mediator in the mediation pathway. It was observed that the indirect effects of the low, medium, and high levels of the SCE group did yield a significant effect, and the confidence intervals did not include zero for all three conditions of CSE

(mean, +1 SD and -1 SD). This means that the conditional mediation effects are due to the fact that when trust influences commitment; its effects depend on levels of CSE. Thus, for medium and high CSE, transformational leadership has an effect on commitment. This effect is partially due to the mediating effects of trust in the relationship between transformational leadership and affective commitment.

### **Practical Applications to the Public Sector Organisations**

Pertaining to managerial and practical implications, the study findings reveal that organisations should strive to provide a work environment that promotes transformational leadership behaviours. The findings from the mediation path show that when employees perceive high levels of transformational leadership within the organisation, it increases their levels of trust in management and enhances positive work attitudes while diminishing negative attitudes. Public sector organisations, in particular, should provide training support for the leaders that can stimulate their cognitive realisation of the behaviours needed to portray transformational leadership in organisations. Organisations should also include metrics for transformational leadership when designing performance evaluations to encourage the continuous development of this attribute. The study also identified trust in management as a condition-oriented resource that facilitates the interaction between transformational leadership and some work attitudes. Therefore, to further advance the atmosphere and culture of trust in organisations, managers should lead by example and engage in behaviours that promote trust relationships.

The study additionally delineated that moderate and high levels of core self-evaluation moderate interactions, resulting in stronger associations for employees exhibiting this personality trait. For managers, these findings position individual differences and personality characteristics as enablers for transformational leadership to influence employee attitudes. Based on these findings, recruitment and

selection strategies can be tailored to prioritise employees with the required levels of core self-evaluation to join the organisation. Organisations can further conduct periodic evaluations of existing employees' levels of core self-evaluation. They can then offer training and coaching aimed at continuously developing and nurturing this valuable personal resource.

The study context also contributes to the significance of this study. The conceptual model was tested in Lesotho, a developing African country. The results of the existing empirical studies mainly emerged from Western and Asian countries. Therefore, establishing findings from an African country enriches the generalisability of the constructs determining the interactions between organisational factors and employee behaviours within the public sector work context.

### **Lessons and Recommendations for Future Improvements**

The study incurred a few limitations despite the manifested key contributions and recommendations. Firstly, the time horizon of the study was cross-sectional, which only permits the simultaneous measurement of variables at one stage. Future studies can employ a longitudinal time horizon to determine the causal relationships and various points in time. Methodologically, the study adopted a quantitative approach. The approach prevents the exploration of rich, in-depth narratives and expressions that can be obtained through a qualitative approach.

Future studies can employ a combination of both approaches for more comprehensive findings. The current research has also investigated the phenomenon at an individual level of analysis, and other studies can consider the investigation at the team and organisational level. Data was collected from the self-report questionnaires, which can lead to common source bias. Future studies can address this limitation by incorporating other data sources such as

company records and observations. Although the study's recommendations would be more applicable to the contextual setting of the study (Lesotho public sector), the model of the study can be tested in other cultural and contextual settings, especially in other developing African countries.

## **Conclusion**

This study has developed and proposed a model that would serve as a guide for public sector organisations in identifying the organisational factors or job resources and individual employee differences that are critical for nurturing desirable employee work attitudes, which in turn have the potential to influence employees' behaviours and actions in the workplace. The need to contribute to ongoing reforms to professionalise the public sector and establish the factors that can stimulate positive attitudes and behaviours among public sector employees has motivated the investigation in this study. Organisational research continues to find a better understanding of why employees conduct themselves differently while working within the same environment and working conditions.

The key finding of this study revealed that within the tested model, the medium- and high -level groups of employees with CSE yielded a significant effect. This implies that the conditional moderated mediation effects are due to the fact that when trust influences work attitudes and specifically affective commitment, its effects depend on levels of CSE. These results contribute to the existing research exploring organisational factors and boundary conditions influencing employee work attitudes. The results also provide insights for decision-making processes and strategies aimed at enhancing the optimal utilisation of human capital in public sector organisations.

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## CHAPTER 8

# Leadership as governance practice in post-colonial Africa: post- independence flaws, formative theoretical fault lines, and the need for ‘African wisdom’

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### **Introduction**

Reforms in public administration cannot be realised until the leadership is reconsidered in both theory and practice, particularly in Africa. Effective leadership is one of the integral components of good governance. In instances where scant development occurs in African states, leaders are usually the primary subjects of blame. This is the story of post-colonial Africa, where development has been a pipedream in most countries, making the continent susceptible to neo-colonisation (Langan, 2018). Post-independent heads of state in Africa face the daunting challenge of championing development from a blank or Western/Eurocentric template. Consequently, African heads of state fail in their leadership, especially because their philosophies and leadership styles are either incompatible with the demands and expectations of their offices or constituencies, or they become covetous and are derailed from the mandate that placed them at the helm of their states (Muvingi, 2008).

This chapter on the literature review explores leadership theories and philosophies adopted by some post-independence African heads of state. Classical theories of

leadership are teased out in order to sketch a framework from which leadership and governance can be viewed. The conceptual framework explores the rich African heritage of leadership, emphasising key value systems as foundational elements of what is termed the *African wisdom* of leadership and governance. This African wisdom serves as a potential solution for addressing collective continental development challenges and positions Africa as a beacon of pride within the global community. The study offers overarching recommendations for embracing African value systems and adopting *ubuntu*-informed leadership, aiming to foster collective developmental gains across the continent.

## Background

Granted that leadership and governance are not identical, there is not so much difference between them, especially in their practice and application in public sector organisations (Naidoo, 2004; Siswana, 2007; Lord, Martin, Atkinson, and Mitchell, 2009). This is mainly because leadership is executed within a particular governance framework (Nzimakwe, 2014; Onolememe, 2015). Kantharia (2011) posits that leadership is a social influence process wherein team leaders provide support, guidance, and motivation for others to take initiatives and accomplish them towards achieving team objectives while incurring chances of risk and success for the team. Leadership is executed in social institutions such as households, organisations (government departments, companies, and entities), and continents (countries, regions, and international institutions across micro, meso, and macro scales). Therefore, leadership is quintessential for effectiveness and efficiency in the functioning of social institutions. Poor leadership may, *inter alia*, account somewhat for the poverty that is predominant in Africa (Muvingi, 2008; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014; Gumede, 2017; Khasoane, 2019). While it is acknowledged that the current *status quo* on the continent may be an offshoot of defective leadership, it is also *fait accompli* that defective leadership and weak governance systems on the continent can be traced back to imperial and colonial



epochs (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). There is a view that the dire situation in which the continent finds itself in terms of socio-economic status is exacerbated by the Western world, which continues to exploit African resources and mock the continent for its underdevelopment (Rodney, 1973). Masango (2012: 1) argues that:

“the Western world has always viewed the African continent as plagued by corruption; dictatorship; military coups; rebellious leaders; greed; misuse of power, and incompetent, politically unstable leaders – in effect, suspicious leaders who undermine their own democracies”.

On the basis of this view, this chapter seeks to canvass for a pressing need for an improved leadership and governance system in Africa in order to eradicate the prevailing negative conditions on the continent and to showcase an African peculiar system and leadership philosophy/model that can be useful to the human race. Leadership involves examining circumstances and applying germane strategic approaches to respond to those circumstances (Goleman, 2000). It is also argued that effective leadership involves the execution of several approaches as dictated by a myriad of circumstances (Goleman, 2000). On this basis and at the core of this literature analysis, *African Wisdom* is discussed as a *sine qua non* (an essential condition) for effective leadership and good governance in Africa. The concept of *African Wisdom* will be given much attention and be canvassed as an apex need for collective development in Africa.

### **Leadership and Governance Challenges in Africa**

Underdevelopment in Africa is blamed on poor leadership by some of the post-independence heads of state. This sentiment is shared among most African scholars (Achebe, 1993; Iheriohanma and Oguoma, 2010; Nnadozie, 2010; Mbandlwa, 2020). Some post-independent African heads of state were forced through structural adjustment programmes (SAP) to adopt some classical leadership theories that were antithetical

to the development of the continent. This, of course, was a result of the verminous effects of centuries of imperialism and colonialism (Botha, 2012). Evidence of this was the adoption of classic leadership philosophies and theories that created self-serving heads of state with less regard for citizens and their developmental needs, which is an inherent limitation of those theories. The limitation with some classical theories of leadership that were adopted in Africa is that they do not theorise leadership inclusively in the way that contemporary or modern leadership theories do, which attempt to consider followership and the relationship between leaders and followers in the domain (Tiftik, Tiftik, and Saglam, 2015; Essa and Alattari, 2019). Examples of these theories include the Great Man Theory and the Trait Theory, which are the main classical leadership theories adopted in Africa (Harrison, 2018). The adoption of classical leadership theories provided some justification for other African leaders who viewed and conducted themselves as super-humans who are far above everyone and deserving a better life at the expense of the people they lead (Poncian and Mgya, 2015).

Case studies of some post-independence African leaders by Rodney (1973), Muvingi (2008), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Khasoane (2019) expose traits of dictatorship, greed, egoism, and self-centeredness. Undoubtedly, such traits are inimical to the African value systems of solidarity and collective development. This notwithstanding, African heads of state become epitomes of such leadership traits to the detriment of their own people who had already endured bitter years of colonialism, imperialism, and oppression from European institutionalised bigotry. The traits of dictatorship, greed, egoism and self-centredness are based on the classical theories of leadership that will be critically expounded in the section below.

## **Theoretical Perspectives and Literature Analysis on Leadership**

This section comprises theoretical perspectives on leadership and a literature discussion focusing on the concepts of Africanism and leadership.

### **Theoretical perspectives on leadership**

In the narrative that follows, some of the leadership theories are discussed alongside some of the critiques that are noted in the literature. Without necessarily attempting to discuss all of them in detail, it is safe to utilise the approach by Bolden and Kirk (2009) to highlight some of their clusters as essentialist, constructionist, critical, and relational theories.

#### *Essentialist theories of leadership*

The essentialist leadership theories consist of the behavioural model, the trait model, and the Great Man Model, among others, which are designated as traditional or classical theories of leadership (Bolden and Kirk, 2009). The essentialist cluster of theories places less consideration on followers while placing more regard on leaders. They are not consummate for sustainable development in a society. This is probably the reason for scant development in some African countries because post-independence heads of state in Africa have adopted essentialist leadership theories (Dartey-Baah, 2011). This is because this cluster of theories subscribes to the notion of an essential difference between leaders and the people they lead. As such, on the basis of innate qualities and exposition of certain behavioural traits, when one is merited to be in leadership, attention is given to that particular person (Van Zyl, Pietersen, Dalglish, Du Plessis, Lues, Ngunjiri, & Kablan, 2015). Owing to this, it is argued that the essentialist theories have an objectivist viewpoint on leadership (Bolden and Kirk, 2009).

The essentialist cluster of theories is defective in that they focus on the leader and neglect those that are led. The mutually reinforcing relationship required between leaders

and followers is essential for achieving team goals. This necessitated the need for modern and contemporary theories that are more inclusive (Dartey-Baah, 2011). For example, the Great Man Theory is undermined by its inability to see the leadership role for organisational coherence and stability (Harrison, 2018). The Trait Theory is criticised because “there is no evidence to prove that leaders who possess all the identified traits mentioned...will be effective” in leadership roles (Harrison, 2018: 20). Behavioural theories are criticised for their inability to proportionate contingencies that are context-dependent and circumstantial in line with leadership. Granted, essential theories are criticised as limited, and, therefore, not very useful for sustainable and collective development (Harrison, 2018).

#### *Constructionist theories of leadership*

Constructionist theories focus on the leadership approach in order to construct collective meanings for people towards understanding their situations (Sanchez, Ospina, Salgado, 2020). Johnston (2016) argues that this cluster of leadership theories integrates approaches to leadership in terms of development, effectiveness, and evaluation in order to determine if they produce the desired results. She also argues that constructionist theories have shown integration among various leadership styles, interdisciplinary approaches to leadership analysis, and inventive approaches to analysing leadership (Johnston, 2016). Constructionist theories involve three elements in their make-up, namely: social constructionism (fluidity, dynamism, and social arrangements); discourse (language resources); and the systemic thinking approach (rational, connectedness, and interaction) (Austin 2012).

In his 2000 study, Campbell outlined several key components within constructionist theories and suggests that adopting a systems thinking approach in leadership offers a framework for understanding the intricate interplay among diverse social phenomena within a society. He adds that “it is the way of thinking that gives practitioners the tools

to observe the connectedness of people, things, and ideas: everything connects to everything else” (Campbell, 2000:7). Austin (2012:14) indicates that language and communication integrate discourse in leadership. This is the case because discourse is a language that is utilised for communicative purposes, and it is realised in organised texts “interactively, linguistically and cognitively”. Systemic constructionist theories of leadership are anchored upon three theoretical questions, which are “How is leadership performed?”; “What counts as leadership?”; and “What are the consequences of particular leadership constructions?” (Barge and Fairhurst, 2008: 230-231). Constructionist theories of leadership are criticised for their “failure to distinguish content from process” (Stam, 2001:293). This makes them fallible as leadership theories, necessitating contingent modern theories of leadership.

#### *Critical theories of leadership*

Critical theories offer a sceptical viewpoint on leadership, thereby exposing crucial dynamics of power and politics in organisations (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). They stem from critical leadership studies (CLS) related to a variety of perspectives with a purpose to critique power relations and identity constructions upon which dynamics of leadership are reproduced, transformed, and rationalised (Chandler & Kirsch, 2018). Critical theorists do not only identify bad practices in leadership, but also create and support ethical leadership frameworks in order for leaders to practice them for success in their roles (Western, 2008). Critical theories of leadership can be applied to determine applicable styles for different situations. Research in critical theory is essentially focused on the manner in which followers can emancipate themselves from being controlled and dependent on their leaders, and how unconventional approaches can be developed (Bolden & Kirk, 2009; Chandler & Kirsch, 2018; Kolasi, 2019).

Alvesson and Spicer (2012) support critical theories on leadership in view of the role they play in the social context. They argue that there is a need to develop “strong critiques

of leadership ideology as a general source of domination” and to “counteract problematic authority relations but also cultivate responsibility and acknowledge asymmetries between people in terms of experiences, skills and other relevant characteristics” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Critical theories downplay hegemonic perceptions that undermine the notion that leaders take decisions while followers simply implement those decisions without questioning anything (Collinson, 2011).

*Relational theories of leadership*

Leadership from the relational theoretical perspective does not necessarily rest within leaders, but rather within a relationship that exists within a team (Bolden and Kirk, 2009). This cluster of theories covers a range of theories that “focus on identifying attributes of individuals as they engage in interpersonal relationships and a relational perspective that views leadership as a process of social construction through which certain understandings of leadership come about...” (Uhl-Bien, 2006: 654). Theories such as the Leader-Member Exchange Theory, Servant Leadership, and Transformational Leadership theories are examples of relational theories (Locke, 1996). Relational theories encompass both the leadership and followership aspects as main ingredients for effective leadership. Some of the basic traits of novel transformational leadership and servant leadership theories are aspects that are common in African value systems, which are what strengthens the relationship between modern theories of leadership and African wisdom (Brubaker, 2012; Nzimakwe, 2014).

Komives, Lucas and McMahan (2006) opine that elements such as inclusiveness, empowerment, ethics, purpose, and process orientation are fundamental to the relational theories of leadership, which provide a framework to study leadership as a process of “social influence through which emergent coordination and change are produced” while addressing “relationships both as an outcome” and “a context for action” (Uhl-Bien, 2006:654). This cluster of theories transcends mutual relationships between leaders and their

followers, and considers leadership inclusively, regardless of context. Hunt and Dodge (2000) indicate that relational theories are dynamic systems that embed environmental, leadership and organisational arrangements. Notwithstanding the benefits and advantages associated with the holistic and subject-inclusive character of relational theories, these theories are subject to criticism. For example, Hunt and Dodge (2000) as well as Uhl-Bien (2006) note criticisms that are levelled against the relational theories regarding their generic approach to analysis, which neglects specifics on leadership matters. Owing to these criticisms, these theories may not always be an ideal approach for analysing leadership.

After laying the theoretical foundation for leadership within this chapter, the following section delves into observed practices of several leadership styles witnessed by various heads of state in the post-independent era. To illuminate these lived experiences, the chapter also examines the heritage of African leadership.

### **Literature Discussion on Africanism and Leadership**

Concerning the literature on Africanism and leadership, there is ample room for discussion as both are broad subjects comprising various constituent elements. However, for the purposes of this chapter, discussion is limited to: (i) African leadership heritage; (ii) the need for African wisdom and practices in governance; and (iii) African wisdom beyond continental borders.

#### *The African leadership Heritage*

An authority in political sociology, Walter Rodney, argues that Africa was underdeveloped by Europe (Rodney, 1973). Based on this argument, the prevalent underdevelopment in Africa can be attributed to deliberate acts of exploitation, domination, and cultural imposition, all intrinsic components of colonialism and imperialism (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012). In order to conduct a balanced analysis of the African leadership heritage, it is always expedient to consider the pre-colonial

and pre-imperial epochs as a starting point. This is the case because it is generally acknowledged among Africans that colonialism and imperialism impaired leadership in Africa, among other things, and as a result, economic, social, and political aspects of African governance have been paralysed (Oliver and Oliver, 2017).

In his *magnum opus*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1963) details the negative effects of colonialism and imperialism. Horvath (1972: 46) posits, “colonialism is a form of domination and control of people over territories and behaviour of others”. Ciaffa (2008) associates’ colonialism with exploitation, domination, and cultural imposition by foreign authorities that physically settle in a particular area. Imperialism is defined as an ultimate form of capitalism with the intention to dominate, plunder resources, conscription, and slave trade in a particular area without necessarily settling in that area (Resistance Marxist Library, 1999: 92). Imperialism and colonialism are almost similar. Colonialism involves settling in the area of the colonised, whereas imperialism is about dominating from outside without settling in the area (Horvath, 1972; Reddy, 2015; Kumar, 2021).

The pre-colonial era in Africa can be marked as the period that was characterised by activities such as European adventure in Africa for research and trans-continental movements in search of raw materials, among other things. This was followed by the imperial and colonial eras, although history literature provides different dates for the exact starting period of imperialism and colonialism in Africa. Hence, Stuchtey (2011) argues that imperialism and colonialism were already practiced in other areas from the late 1400s onward. Stuchtey (2011) adds that activities between Europe and Africa were already taking place even before the period when imperialism and colonialism were institutionalised. During this period, the activities occurring between the two continents are regarded as the initial stages leading toward imperialism and colonialism in Africa.



## Chapter 8

The Industrial Revolution in the 1800s forced European countries to seek supplemental raw materials on other continents (Satterweight, McGranahan, and Tacoli, 2010; Ocheni and Nkwanko, 2012; McGranahan and Sattrerwaite, 2014). This created Europe's interest in Africa. At that time, Europe was pioneering industrial capitalism, and as such, demands for more resources and raw materials increased exponentially (Chinweizu, 1979). It seems European leaders acknowledged the necessity of fully capturing Africa to assert complete control over the continent and claim ownership of its wealth of resources. The abundant natural resources and raw materials in Africa have always been a source of envy, particularly for European countries.

The United Nations (2015) acknowledged that "Africa is self-confident in its identity, heritage, culture and shared values and as a strong, united and influential partner on the global stage making its contribution to peace, human progress, peaceful co-existence and welfare" (United Nations, 2015: 2). Idang (2015) contends that Africa boasts a rich heritage characterised by talent, art, literature, diverse cultures, and enduring values, among other pillars of continental pride. The history of leadership in Africa is characterised by distinct contributions, which created different kinds of leaders in the continent whose attributes, traits, personalities, and leadership methodologies were different (Masango, 2002).

Regardless of the grubby identity associated with some of the post-independence African leaders and their crooked leadership styles, as exposed by Van Wyk (2007), Africa still prides itself in good heritage of African leadership. In this instance, attention is given to African leaders who made an indelible mark by upholding excellent and exemplar leadership. Without trying to discuss all African leaders who led with excellence and their contributions to the leadership heritage in their sequence of eras, a few of them whose names will always dominate in African leadership literature can be mentioned. Among them are leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, and Julius Nyerere.

The former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah's philosophy was that of African identity and consciousness (Dodoo, 2012). Patrice Lumumba believed in unity and gender activism (Bouwer, 2010). Thomas Sankara believed in African renaissance (Leshoele, 2019). Julius Nyerere was known for the philosophy of *ujamaa*, which is a Swahili word for extended family or brotherhood, which stands for socialism and communalism as an African political ideology. The former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda's name is associated with humanism (Van Wyk, 2007). In South Africa, Nelson Mandela's leadership was that of unity, reconciliation and nation-building (Meiring, 2002).

The former South African President Thabo Mbeki advocated for an African Renaissance, which was meant to revive art and literature in Africa for self-awareness. Gamal Nasser of Egypt stood for African-Arab socialism (Van Wyk, 2007). Linking to Kaunda's leadership philosophy, among others, Africa has a fundamental value system that is associated with the African leadership heritage known as *ubuntu* (a Nguni word for humanness). Mbigi (1997: 1) defines the concept of *Ubuntu* as "a concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings; it is the embodiment of South African culture and lifestyle". It is an African home-brewed philosophy that guides the manner in which Africans conduct themselves and interact with other people on the grounds of solidarity (Ngubane & Makua, 2021). Common aspects across leadership philosophies or styles among the mentioned African leaders are fraternity, love, solidarity, ethics, care, and interdependence among people as embedded in the spirit of *ubuntu*. These leadership value systems are essential for Africa's collective development and success, constituting the foundational building blocks of African wisdom crucial for effective governance within African governments. Subsequently, the discussion delves into the necessity of African wisdom in governance, exploring its significance in depth.

*The need for African wisdom and practices in governance*

African wisdom is based on various aspects of Africanism, which are described as subscriptions, beliefs and practices that distinctly reflect the continent's way of life (Idang, 2015). Over the centuries, African value systems have been applied mostly at the micro level of social institutions (families and households), and the result of this has been the establishment of strong and intact African family structures (Mafumbate, 2019). While African families may be strong and well-established, the same cannot be said for African countries and their governments. Governments in Africa are plighted with corruption, nepotism, ineffectiveness, and self-serving public servants, all of which are aspects of defective governance (Masango, 2002). This is clear when one looks at poor audit performances and outcomes, among other governance yardsticks.

Diedericks (2017) cites one consequence of poor leadership in his reference to poor reporting in government. African governments are punctuated by ineligible officials and cadre deployments based on partisan politics and party loyalty. Such undeserved appointments result in ineffectiveness and poor performance in public service. Such ineffectiveness and poor performance in African public sector organisations are a reflection on both political and administrative leaders (Thusi and Selepe, 2023). This is a sign that these leaders either do not have African wisdom (value systems of African leadership heritage) or they choose not to apply it. As a result, African wisdom is indispensable in public service institutions, serving as a prerequisite for enhancing governmental effectiveness in securing the collective welfare of African society.

African and Western leadership systems are inherently different in their conception owing to the value systems and ideologies upon which they are based. For example, Eyong (2016: 133) argues that paradigms of leadership in the Western world consider "linear hierarchies, dyadic...relationship, acts and behaviours of heroic figures and as an essentially human action" whereas "an Afro-centric indigenous concept

of leadership...challenges heroism, linearity, individualism and objectivism” of the Western approach. This argument by Eyong (2016) clearly reveals that Western leadership paradigms differ from those of Africa. From this distinction, it is evident that arrogance is implied in Western leadership paradigms. On the contrary, in a typical African context, it is understood that “traditionally, a wise leader was grown from the community and steeped in its communitarian traditions which led the leader to apply practical wisdom in seeking the collective good” (Ogunyemi, 2018: 1); adding that “the communitarian element of African indigenous wisdom stands out as the polis where wise leaders are taught and groomed for their responsibilities to the community (society). Where the person is disconnected from this reality of community, it could become more difficult for him or her to attain and maintain moral uprightness” (Ogunyemi, 2018: 1). Therefore, the significant disparities in value systems and cultures between these two worlds are what render it challenging to fully implement Western leadership paradigms in African contexts (Theimann, April, and Blass, 2006).

Ogunyemi (2018) posits that African wisdom is acquired in a society as an institution of socialisation where an African leader can be trained on how to lead and show love to people, how to serve people with diligence, and how to generously share with other people. African wisdom also links with patriotism on the part of leaders in order for them to be eligible to take on top government positions and serve societies with love, care, and dedication. In the South African context, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service (1997), which is commonly known as the *Batho Pele* Policy, is adopted to guide the public service in the delivery of social services. The phrase *batho pele* is a Sesotho phrase for *people first/people forward*. Within the spirit of the *Batho Pele* policy, a suitable public servant in an African public service should be someone who has been fully trained by a community on patriotism, caring for one’s own society by prioritising people and considering them as clients or customers for public service delivery. Thus, the *Batho Pele* Policy is an example of African wisdom that

can be applicable in public service for African governments in order to guide the delivery of social services for poverty alleviation in Africa.

African public servants must internalise indigenous African wisdom before taking public office. This means that schools, institutions of higher learning, and training centres should offer programmes on Africanism. African families constitute the primary institution for socialisation into African wisdom because they are better placed to build capacity in young ones in relation to Africanism. Highlighting the significance of the African family in this scenario acknowledges the potential existence of certain African families that have strayed from embracing Africanism and instead adopted a Eurocentric perspective, characterised by what Mbigi (2005: v) describes as “arrogant, narrow, empty, and materialistic”. Ilmi (2015) argues that African wisdom and indigenous philosophies can be found in oral traditions that are passed down through folktales, language, songs, proverbs, ceremonies, performing arts, cultural artefacts, myths customary law, traditions, customs, and ways of life.

**Table 8.1** demonstrates and proves that African wisdom is based on ethical behaviour. The table also demonstrates countries where Ogunyemi (2018) conducted his analysis of ethical behaviour, and the common good produced by such behaviour.

Other African wisdom concepts in addition to the above include *ujamaa* (brotherhood), Pan-Africanism, solidarity, sharing, egalitarianism, and collectivism (communalism). As indicated before, these African wisdom concepts are significant for application in African governments for good governance, patriotism and the effective delivery of social services. Having advocated for African wisdom in leadership and governance for the collective development of the continent, it logically follows to examine how this wisdom can extend its benefits beyond African borders. Subsequently, justification for this perspective is provided.

**Table 8.1:** Indigenous Intellectual and Reflective Wisdom in Africa

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Wisdom Concept /Ethical Behaviour</b>	<b>Common Good Orientation</b>
Somalia	<i>Dhaqaan</i> philosophy; communalism	Resources are shared for the collective common good in a society.
South Africa	<i>Ubuntu</i> : “ <i>umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu</i> ”, meaning a person exists because of others”. Giving, sharing, and solidarity.	One is connected to others’ well – being such that the good of other(s) is as important as personal good to self.
Nigeria	<i>Iwa</i> ; <i>omoluwabi</i> as evidence of practical wisdom and virtue.	The virtuous leader exhibits moral excellence and prioritises the common good.
Ghana	Wisdom and hospitality, communitarianism.	Welcoming visitors – strangers are simply extended family.
Kenya	Philanthropism: Love for others and generosity are aspects of wisdom – benevolence.	Caring for others as a tradition. Magnanimity.

Source: Ogunyemi (2018: 3).

*African Wisdom Beyond Continental Borders*

In striving to justify the relevance of African wisdom beyond continental borders, the contention arises that Africa possesses significant tools to offer the global community. Given the discussion on the African leadership heritage and the need for African wisdom, it is opportune to motivate and justify African wisdom beyond continental borders. Just as the discussion on the heritage of African leadership in this chapter refers, the philosophies of excellent African leaders are those that are built on solidarity, communalism, morality, humanness, ethics, and interdependence. These are philosophies that other countries may need for success, especially because, as discussed before, African wisdom relates to relational theories that improve understanding between leaders and followers.

As a value system, *Ubuntu* can therefore be a key leadership philosophy that Africa is offering to the global community. Tutu (2000: 1) argues that:

“Africans have this thing called UBUNTU. It is about the essence of being human; it is part of the gift that Africa will give the world. It embraces hospitality, caring for others, being able to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe that a person is a person through another person, that my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours”.

Ntibagirirwa (2012) analyses the ontological foundations of the concept of *ubuntu* from its roots, which are prevalent in various parts of Africa. He concludes that *ubuntu* is genuinely an African value system, both in terms of the ontology of the concept and the practice thereof (Ntibagirirwa, 2012). The concept of *ubuntu* exists right across the continent and is common in most African languages (Ntibagirirwa, 2012). He indicates that:

“...despite the cultural diversity observable in Africa, there is a common metaphysical backbone that unifies almost all

Africans. Central to this metaphysical backbone is the belief that the individual is ontologically part of the community... The particularity of the African sense of community lies in the way the Africans conceive the universe around them in general, and the human universe in particular” (Ntibagirirwa, 2012: 118).

The essence of Africanism lies in the practice of *ubuntu*, which underscores interconnectedness and mutual respect. Thus, advocating for the adoption and implementation of *ubuntu* is not only beneficial to Africa but also serves the best interests of the global community. The philosophy of *ubuntu* holds the potential to foster world integration, harmony, unity, peace, and socio-economic development. Given its potential for preserving peace, the United Nations may find it prudent to consider *ubuntu* as a guiding principle in its endeavours.

## Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide a literature analysis and critically examine the leadership styles and philosophies embraced by certain post-independence African heads of state. This was achieved by considering the prevailing conditions in Africa and recognising that the situation was shaped by colonialism and imperialism from the outset. Notwithstanding, it is the authors' view that the situation of poor governance in Africa can be addressed if African leaders can sharpen their focus on good governance and align themselves with African value systems for collective development. Underdevelopment and social ills that are witnessed and experienced on the continent can be solved if the continent can invest in developing, nurturing and grooming patriotic leaders. Finding a panacea for African developmental woes is dependent on the kind of leaders and followers that are produced on the continent.

There is no means by which other continents or foreign organisations can extricate Africa from the depths of poor governance and limited development in which the continent presently finds itself. Solutions for Africa have to be designed by Africans themselves. Some of the leadership theories



adopted by post-independence African heads of state have inherent limitations that prove detrimental. Due to this, alternative modern theories of leadership that consider followership, such as transformational and servant leadership theories were developed. Incidentally, such theories comprise traits that other heads of state in Africa epitomise, which represents African wisdom that can be globally beneficial. In wrapping up the arguments presented in this study, the following suggestions and proposals are presented for consideration:

1. Current and future African leaders should learn from the mistakes made by some post-independence African heads of state to enhance the present socio-economic conditions of Africa.
2. Africans should abandon the idolisation of European value systems and cultures and instead embrace Afro-centric content, thus affirming their own global relevance and self-identity.
3. There should be partnerships among elders, scholars, and leaders in Africa towards building African leadership theories based on the spirit of *ubuntu*, *ujamaaa*, and *batho pele* value systems, among others.
4. Focused research should be conducted to enhance knowledge, literature, and intellectual debates on African leadership theories as they relate to African value systems.
5. As immediate institutions for socialisation, African families, schools, and other primary institutions for socialisation should install and instil the spirit of Africanism and *ubuntu* as part of fundamentals of nurturing African children.

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**SECTION C:**  
EMERGING INNOVATIVE  
APPROACHES



## CHAPTER 9

# The effects of mass media on municipal governance: review of literature and a case study

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### **Introduction**

The term “mass media” refers to a variety of communication channels that are accessible to a broad audience, including the internet, radio, television, and print media. On the opposite end of the spectrum, municipalities are local governmental organisations in charge of running and offering services to a certain geographic region, including cities or towns. Mass media has ushered in revolutionary shifts across society, establishing itself as a dominant mode of communication and revolutionising the way corporate and public sector organisations engage with individuals. Leveraging mass media for citizen communications, outreach, and participatory engagement strategies can yield numerous advantages for local governments (Molale, 2019; Santoso et al., 2020; Neely and Collins, 2018; Epstein, 2022).

Nevertheless, this poses significant questions for local governments concerning the establishment and execution of a mass media strategy or project that attains organisational goals and maximises value while mitigating risks and eliminating barriers to mass media utilisation.

## **Problem Statement**

Arguably, mass media offers opportunities for local governments to address the challenges of increasing organisational transparency and improving citizen engagement. Mass media offers the potential to increase personal investment in government and to improve levels of engagement between citizens and government bodies. However, successful adoption of mass media by local government organisations requires the choice of the most effective media platform, understanding, and awareness of how to use the tools to improve transparency and fruitful citizen engagement.

Previous studies (Molale, 2019; Grawe, 2021; Babalola and Akman, 2022; Epstein, 2022; and Lee and Xenos, 2022) focused on participatory communication; the use of social media for employee communication; participation with social media in municipalities; incidental news exposure via social media; and political participation. This study focuses on the role of mass media in promoting good governance in a municipal context.

Mass media serves as a tool for increasing trust between municipalities and local communities (Epstein, 2022). However, the challenge of selecting the most effective platform to ensure widespread dissemination of intended information and awareness persists in many municipalities, resulting in limited access to some governmental services. Mass media and local governments have a complicated and nuanced connection (Stone et al., 2022; Guo and Lu, 2021). Informing the public about the operations of local government is one of the major functions of the media with respect to municipalities (Grawe, 2022). However, the relationship between the media and municipalities faces many challenges.

One of the issues municipalities face is prejudice or disinformation in news reporting, where personal biases or external influences can compromise the impartiality and accuracy of mass media information dissemination. As a result, facts may be misrepresented or distorted, which might



erode public confidence in news outlets and local institutions. A literature review revealed that municipalities lament that most social media outlets ignore good news and instead concentrate on bad news about them. This often tarnishes the municipality's reputation, posing challenges to attracting new investors and residents. At times, relationships with journalists become strained because municipal authorities view negative reporting as an assault on their reputation or management. In contrast, media outlets could encounter difficulties accessing municipal information, which could limit their capacity to offer thorough and truthful coverage and reporting.

In some local governments in the Eastern Cape, challenges persist on issues related to transparency and promoting community involvement. These challenges are particularly significant and pressing, leading to aversion and a lack of faith in government among citizens. Donald et al. (2020) emphasises the need for collaborative and participatory techniques to improve service delivery, strengthen the democratic process, and re-establish trust in government institutions. Curry and Stroud (2021) highlighted that government entities may regain public trust by improving the effectiveness of service delivery. Stuurman (2019) asserts that to improve trust between government and citizens at the grass-roots level, citizens should be enabled to participate and informed about such services from the planning phase through to execution.

Based on the information, this study will assess the effectiveness of the current media platforms used for the dissemination of information in municipalities and recommend the channels that will be more effective and will assist in addressing public problems. The literature is replete with examples of successful mass media platforms employed by local governments for communication; nonetheless, there has been insufficient exploration and documentation regarding the optimal media platform for information exchange at the municipal level. Moreover, inadequate attention has been given to elucidating the challenges

stemming from the ineffective utilisation of mass media platforms and their implications for governance.

## **Objectives And Significance**

The central objectives of this study are to:

- Investigate the effects of mass media on governance at the local government level;
- Evaluate the experiences of mass media users at local government level; and
- Establish mass media platforms capable of promoting good governance at municipal level.

Mass media is redefining society, altering interactions between firms and individuals, and pioneering the creation of novel forms of value, which are rapidly emerging as crucial differentiators distinguishing corporate performance and success (Sohn, 2022). This study is imperative from both a practical and theoretical standpoint. It aims to provide evidence-based information for local government organisations to utilise in identifying and implementing best practices in mass media that can be used to promote transparency and community involvement at the grass-roots level of government. This has numerous potential benefits for local governments, including ensuring a more robust evidence base for planning and policy development, allowing for the development of trust-based relationships with local citizens, and increasing the overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness of public service delivery and resource utilisation.

## **Literature Review**

Media has a major impact on people's lives, allowing them to quickly access essential messages, news, and information. This is one of the reasons why this era is referred to as the "information age" (Murphy et al., 2022). Media has a significant impact on people's lives, as it brings everyone up to speed on what is going on not only in their immediate societies

but around the globe at large. It enables people to quickly disseminate essential messages, news, or information.

Various mass media platforms are used as education and information platforms across the globe. Countries are not identical in terms of their choice of media platforms. Orth, Andipatin, and Van Wyk (2021) contend that in South Africa, Facebook is the most popular mass media network for organisations of all kinds, as opposed to other applications like WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. While many organisations are reaping the advantages of mass media, decision-makers in government agencies are still figuring out how to use the available social platforms to reach out to citizens. According to Epstein (2022), an average citizen of a municipality uses mass media, and this population is increasing daily. Platforms such as Twitter and Instagram have dramatically gained popularity among people of all ages over the last decade (Grawe, 2021). As a result, it is essential that government agencies begin to use social media platforms to improve engagement with people in a valued and relevant manner to make their intended policies efficient and effective. Thus, mass media platforms have transformed the way people communicate and acquire information from their service providers. In this regard, the role played by mass media in the swift distribution of information cannot be underestimated.

Most mass media platforms have become popular due to their ability to provide two-way communication (Kelley and Gillan, 2022). This is due to its ability to allow the sender to receive comments and track sentiments. While some government agencies are still considering whether to use social media, others have a significant presence on various social media platforms. Formerly, Departments of Local Government received public complaints from community members who were dissatisfied with the services they received through face-to-face engagement. Currently, social media platforms are used successfully for this type of communication.

Furthermore, municipal governments across South Africa adopt social media platforms to provide communities

with life-saving information, disseminate crucial information, and generally communicate with the residents (Maseko, 2022). Mass media can boost personal involvement in government and improve citizen-government engagement. Mass media platforms enable a paradigm shift in the citizen-government connection from a top-down, unidirectional approach to a more genuine two-way partnership that values citizen input (Criado and Villodre, 2021). Epstein (2022) alluded to the fact that the way humans use mass media has changed dramatically in recent years, and communicators now have a wonderful opportunity to interact with their audience. While Facebook was previously only intended to connect people and provide a means of communication, it has advanced into a platform for planning events and a tool for monitoring and evaluating government activities and projects. Most significantly, it has evolved into a means for individuals to connect directly with service providers and promote governmental relations (Chon and Kim, 2022). With so many social media venues to choose from, information may be disseminated quickly and without delay. In sum, Lee and Xenos (2022) advocate that the representation of community is the most significant aspect of any mass media presence, and it is a means for fostering community engagement.

Because of citizen expectations, the role of mass media in municipal government is growing. Social media is extensively utilised for more than just sharing information; it is also becoming essential to news providers as more people access information through mass media platforms. In other words, mass media platforms have great potential for improving local governments' connections with constituents by making information more accessible, increasing transparency, expediting communication, and improving service delivery (Babaoglu and Akman, 2022). It is critical to identify efficiencies and best practices so that local governments do not waste useful and limited resources in the pursuit of good governance. However, for local government organisations to successfully utilise mass media, they must first understand and be aware of how to use mass media tools and techniques

to promote transparency and constructive citizen interaction (Curry and Stroud, 2021).

## **Methodology And Sampling**

For this study, the researchers used a mixed-methods approach, which combines the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. Sahin et al. (2019) alluded to the fact that a mixed approach may be used to collect data in one research project with the goal of comprehending the research subject from several perspectives. Sahin et al. (2019) further highlighted that when using a mixed approach, one set of data (qualitative) can be used to strengthen the other set of data (quantitative). The study opted for a mixed-methods approach, recognising it as the most suitable strategy for capturing comprehensive data representative of the population (Kim et al., 2021). Mixed techniques were required for this study because of the researchers' philosophical viewpoint that facts can only be presented by using various lenses (Brink and Clark, 2019). It should also be noted that all ethical issues were considered throughout the study.

Probability and non-probability sampling were used for the study. In non-probability sampling, each sampling unit has the same likelihood of being selected (Speagle, 2020). The total sample was selected from ten (10) wards, with five (5) people per ward, for a total of fifty (50) local citizens and ten (10) municipal authorities, including four (4) councillors, for a total of sixty (60), since there are 37 wards in the municipality. Furthermore, 10 participants were selected from the municipal authorities, and 70 respondents participated in the study. The data was analysed using Atlas Ti and R-studio.

The qualitative data collected was used to support the findings that emerged from the quantitative findings in line with research data analysed by suggested researchers (Creswell and Poth, 2016).

## Results from the Quantitative Study

The statistical data below depicts the findings from the quantitative study, which focused on a survey of fifty (50) community members (residents) from the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality (KSDLM) in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The municipality includes the towns of Mthatha and Mqanduli. The findings are categorised according to:

- The awareness and knowledge residents have of mass media
- The use of mass media in promoting good governance
- The importance of mass media in promoting good governance
- Using mass media as an educational instrument
- Using mass media to share information from local governance

## The Awareness and Knowledge that Residents in the KSDLM have of Mass Media

Table 9.1 summarizes the knowledge from the study.

**Table 9.1:** Mass media knowledge by the KSDLM

Response	Percentage
Agreement	96
Disagreement	4

According to research, 96% of people in King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality (KSDLM) were familiar with mass media, while only 4% were not. This shows that most people in the KSDLM are aware of the media.

Table 9.2 summarizes the observations from the study.

**Table 9.2:** Mass media awareness and knowledge categorised according to residency, education, and gender

<b>Participant Group</b>	<b>Aware (%)</b>	<b>Unaware (%)</b>
Females with Degrees	65	5
Males with Degrees	25	5
Males outside KSDLM with Degrees	60	0
Females outside KSDLM with Degrees	40	0
Females within KSDLM with Diploma	30	0
Males within KSDLM with Diploma	70	0
Females within KSDLM with Matric	50	0
Males within KSDLM with Matric	50	0
Females outside KSDLM with Matric	60	0
Males outside KSDLM with Matric	40	0
Females with Informal Education	90	0
Males with Informal Education	10	0
All Participants with Postgraduate	100	0

In this study, it was observed that among the participants, a higher percentage of females (65%) exhibited awareness of mass media compared to males (25%) with degrees. Interestingly, the proportion of individuals who were not aware of mass media was the same among females (5%) and males (5%). However, when considering participants outside of KSDLM, a larger percentage of males (60%) showed awareness of mass media compared to females (40%) with degrees, and all of them demonstrated awareness of mass media. Additionally, only females (30%) exhibited awareness of mass media from both within and outside KSDLM with a diploma, whereas no male with a diploma showed awareness of mass media among all participants.

Within the KSDLM region, all participants showed equal awareness of mass media, with both females (50%) and males (50%) demonstrating familiarity with it. However, outside of KSDLM, a higher percentage of females (60%) with matric demonstrated awareness of mass media compared to males (40%) with matric, and both genders exhibited equal awareness of mass media (50%). Furthermore, a higher percentage of males both within (60%) and outside (70%) of KSDLM demonstrated awareness of mass media compared to females both within (40%) and outside (30%), and all participants, including those with postgraduate degrees, exhibited awareness of mass media.

Notably, a significant proportion of females (90%) with informal education demonstrated awareness of mass media, while only a small percentage of males (10%) showed awareness of mass media. However, there were no responses recorded from individuals outside KSDLM with informal education or those who were employed.

Table 9.3 summarizes the information.

**Table 9.3:** Mass media awareness and knowledge categorised according to age group

Age Group	Knowledgeable (%)	Not Knowledgeable (%)
20-27	40%	2%
27-37	30%	8%
28+	20%	0%

Residents aged between 20 and 27 (40%) exhibit a higher level of familiarity with mass media compared to other age groups. However, within this age bracket, a small percentage (2%) are not aware of mass media or lack knowledge about it. Moving to the age group between 27 and 37, there is a slight decrease in the level of knowledge about mass media, with 30% fewer individuals being knowledgeable compared to the younger age group. Additionally, within this age range, there is a 10% of individuals who are not aware of mass media.



Conversely, all residents aged 28 and above, comprising 20% of the population, demonstrate awareness and knowledge of mass media. This data suggests that younger age groups tend to be more aware of mass media, while as age increases, there is a gradual decline in awareness.

Table 9.4 summarizes awareness and knowledge.

**Table 9.4:** Mass media awareness and knowledge categorised according to status

<b>Participant Group</b>	<b>Awareness (%)</b>	<b>Unaware (%)</b>
Students	60	0
Employed	25	0
Unemployed	7	3
Retired	3	0
Self-employed	2	0

Among the various groups surveyed, students (60%) emerge as the most knowledgeable and aware of mass media. Conversely, while residents who are employed (25%), retired (3%), and self-employed (2%) also possess some degree of knowledge about mass media, their awareness levels are comparatively lower. Interestingly, a notable proportion of unemployed individuals (7%) demonstrate awareness of mass media, surpassing the percentage of unemployed residents who lack such awareness (3%). This suggests that while students exhibit the highest level of awareness, a significant portion of unemployed individuals also recognise the importance of mass media.

Table 9.5 summarizes media awareness and knowledge with residence.

**Table 9.5:** Mass media awareness and knowledge categorised according to length of residence in KSDLM

<b>Duration of Residence</b>	<b>Awareness in Governance (%)</b>
More than 4 years	54
1-3 years	24
Less than 1 year	22

The majority of residents in KSDLM who have lived in the area for more than four years (54%) are highly aware of, recognise the importance of, and view mass media as educational tools in governance issues. Conversely, those who have resided for 1-3 years, comprising about 24% of the population, and those who have stayed less than a year, around 22%, demonstrate varying levels of familiarity with mass media in this context. This indicates that longer-term residents of KSDLM tend to possess a deeper understanding of mass media’s role in governance.

Table 9.6 summarizes the residents’ agreement on utilizing mass media as a source of information based on their duration of residence in KSDLM.

**Table 9.6:** The use of mass media categorised according to length of residence in KSDLM

<b>Duration of Residence</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
More than 4 years	61	1
1-3 years	18	1
Less than 1 year	19	0

The majority of residents who have resided in KSDLM for more than 4 years (61%) agree that they utilise mass media as a source of information, with only a small percentage (1%) expressing disagreement. Among those who have lived in the area for 1 to 3 years (18%), a significant portion also acknowledge the utility of mass media in good governance,

while a similarly negligible proportion (1%) disagree. Additionally, all residents who have been in KSDLM for less than a year (19%) believe that mass media plays a role in facilitating good governance. These findings from the graph underscore that residents with longer tenures in KSDLM tend to rely more heavily on mass media for information.

### The Importance of Mass Media

Table 9.7 summarizes the importance of mass media by gender.

**Table 9.7:** The importance of mass media categorised according to gender

Gender	Recognition (%)	Non-recognition (%)
Females	68	2
Males	30	0

The findings indicate that a majority of females (68%) recognise the significance of mass media in governance. However, a small minority of females (2%) do not perceive mass media as essential for good governance. On the other hand, males, as a whole, demonstrate a lower level of agreement (30%) regarding the importance of mass media in governance compared to females.

Table 9.8 summarizes the importance of mass media in good governance.

**Table 9.8:** Importance of mass media in good governance

Response	Percentage
Agreement	96
Disagreement	4

When participants were surveyed about the significance of mass media in promoting good governance, 96% of KSDLM residents acknowledged its importance, while only 4%

expressed disagreement. This overwhelming consensus among KSDML residents highlights a widespread recognition of the crucial role mass media plays in fostering good governance within the community.

Table 9.9 summarizes the importance of mass media on residency.

**Table 9.9:** The importance of mass media categorised according to residency distribution

<b>Location</b>	<b>Acknowledged Significance (%)</b>	<b>Contrary View (%)</b>
Within KSDML	70	10
Outside KSDML	20	0

When respondents were surveyed about the significance of mass media usage within and outside KSDML, a notable trend emerged: a substantial majority of those residing in KSDML (70%) acknowledged the importance of mass media in fostering good governance, while a minority (10%) held a contrary view. Conversely, all participants (20%) originating from outside KSDML recognised the relevance of mass media in promoting good governance. The graph underscores the prevailing sentiment among KSDML residents, illustrating their collective belief in the indispensable role of mass media in ensuring good governance.

Table 9.10 summarizes mass media on employment status.

**Table 9.10:** The importance of mass media categorised according to employment status

<b>Participant Group</b>	<b>Acknowledged Significance (%)</b>	<b>Contrary View (%)</b>
Students	60	2
Self-employed	10	0

<b>Participant Group</b>	<b>Acknowledged Significance (%)</b>	<b>Contrary View (%)</b>
Unemployed	10	0
Employed	10	0
Retirees	0	8

In this context, the data reveals a clear consensus among students, with a substantial majority (60%) affirming the importance of mass media in fostering good governance, while only a small minority (2%) expresses dissent. Conversely, among self-employed, unemployed, and employed residents, unanimity prevails, with (10%) recognising the significance of mass media in good governance. Notably, retirees stand out as the sole demographic (8%) in disagreement regarding the importance of mass media in good governance. This collective perspective underscores the prevailing positivity towards the role of mass media, as the majority overwhelmingly acknowledges its significance in promoting good governance.

Table 9.11 summarizes the importance of mass media on education level.

**Table 9.11:** The importance of mass media categorised according to educational level

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Acknowledged Significance (%)</b>	<b>Contrary View (%)</b>
Degree Holders	45	2
Diploma Holders	28	0
Matriculation	12	0
Postgraduate	9	0
Informal Education	2	2

When examining the relationship between education levels and perceptions of mass media's role in good governance, a noteworthy pattern emerges. A majority (45%) of residents holding degrees acknowledge the importance of mass media in

governance, while only a small fraction (2%) express dissent. Moreover, across various educational backgrounds, including diploma holders (28%), individuals with matriculation qualifications (12%), and those with postgraduate degrees (9%) there is unanimous agreement on the significance of mass media in good governance. Interestingly, residents with informal education present a split perspective, with half (2%) acknowledging the importance of mass media, while the other half (2%) disagrees. This diversity in viewpoints underscores the complexity of attitudes towards the role of mass media in governance across different educational backgrounds.

### **Mass Media as a Catalyst and Educational Instrument to Support and Promote Good Governance**

Table 9.12 summarizes the respondents' views on the role of mass media in promoting good governance within KSDLM.

**Table 9.12:** Mass media as a catalyst to support and promote good governance

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agreement	82
Disagreement	18

When respondents were questioned about the role of mass media in promoting good governance, the results revealed a clear trend. Approximately 82% of individuals within KSDLM perceive mass media as a supportive tool for enhancing good governance at the local municipality level. Conversely, 18% of residents hold a contrary view, expressing disagreement with the notion that mass media aids in fostering good local governance.

Table 9.13 summarizes the respondents' views on the potential of mass media as an educational tool in matters concerning the governance of local communities.

**Table 9.13:** Mass media as an educational instrument

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agreement	88
Disagreement	12

When considering the potential of mass media as an educational tool, a significant consensus emerges among residents. Approximately 88% of respondents hold the belief that mass media effectively educates people on matters concerning the governance of local communities. However, a minority (12%) express disagreement with this notion, suggesting that they do not perceive mass media as fulfilling an educational role in local governance issues. These findings underscore the prevailing sentiment among the majority of KSDLM residents, who view mass media as a valuable instrument for educating the community on matters of good governance.

Table 9.14 summarizing the perceptions regarding the role of mass media as an educational platform for understanding good governance based on educational backgrounds:

**Table 9.14:** Mass media as an educational instrument categorised according to educational level

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Agreement (%)</b>	<b>Disagreement (%)</b>
Degrees	45	2
Diplomas	6	0
Self-employed	1	0
Informal Education	4	0
Matriculation	8	4
Postgraduate Degrees	16	5

In this context, a comprehensive analysis of residents' perspectives on the role of mass media in educating about good governance reveals nuanced trends. Among residents

with degrees, a substantial majority (54%) concur that mass media serves as an educational platform for understanding good governance, with only a minimal dissent (2%). Similarly, unanimity prevails among individuals with diplomas (6%), self-employed individuals (1%), and those with informal education backgrounds (4%), all of whom acknowledge the educational role of mass media in good governance.

Furthermore, among residents with matric qualifications, a majority (8%) agree with this perspective, while a smaller portion (4%) hold a contrary view. Notably, individuals with postgraduate degrees (16%) predominantly agree that mass media educates on good governance, though a minority (5%) express disagreement, with the highest dissent among those with matric qualifications (7%). Overall, the prevailing sentiment among the majority of KSDLM residents underscores the recognition of mass media as a vital educational tool for understanding good governance.

### Mass Media as a Channel to Share Information

Table 9.15 summarizes mass media as a channel to share information.

**Table 9.15:** The role of mass media as a channel to share information

Response	Percentage
Agreement	86
Disagreement	14

The results concerning information sharing through mass media reveal a significant consensus among residents of KSDLM. Approximately 86% of respondents acknowledge the role of mass media in sharing information related to municipal issues, indicating a widespread recognition of its importance in this regard. Conversely, a minority of only 14% express disagreement with the notion that mass media serves as a platform for sharing such information. Overall, these findings



show that the majority of KSDLM residents are aware of the crucial role that the media plays in disseminating information about governance-related issues.

Table 9.16 summarizes the perceptions regarding the role of mass media in disseminating information about good governance based on respondent status.

**Table 9.16:** The role of mass media as a channel to share information categorised according to employment status

<b>Respondent Status</b>	<b>Agreement (%)</b>	<b>Disagreement (%)</b>
Students	60	8
Employed	8	2
Retired	2	0
Self-employed	2	0
Unemployed	9	9

Breaking down the findings by respondent status reveals notable trends. The majority of respondents which are students (60%) agree that mass media plays a crucial role in disseminating information about good governance, there is a slightly proportion of dissent (8%) which disagree. Interestingly, unanimity prevails among employed (8%) with (2%) who disagree, retired (2%), and self-employed (2%) residents, all of whom agree on the significant role of mass media in sharing information about governance issues. Even among the unemployed, a majority (9%) recognise this role, with the number (9%) expressing disagreement. These findings suggest that while students constitute the largest demographic acknowledging the role of mass media in information sharing, there is widespread recognition across various statuses of its importance in this regard.

## Results From The Qualitative Study

From a qualitative perspective, the participants who answered “yes” to the question, asking whether they were using mass media, were given a follow-up option to specify the mass media type they preferred. Following the internet and television in that order, a word cloud analysis revealed that mass media is the most frequently used platform. Radio and magazines are the least used platforms. These findings imply that everyone is content with mass media as the communication alternative utilised by KSDLM. This is confirmed by the quantitative study, as Table 9.3 indicate that 96% of KSDLM are using mass media, and Table 9.10 show that 54% are youth who are using mass media, which makes mass media the most used platform.

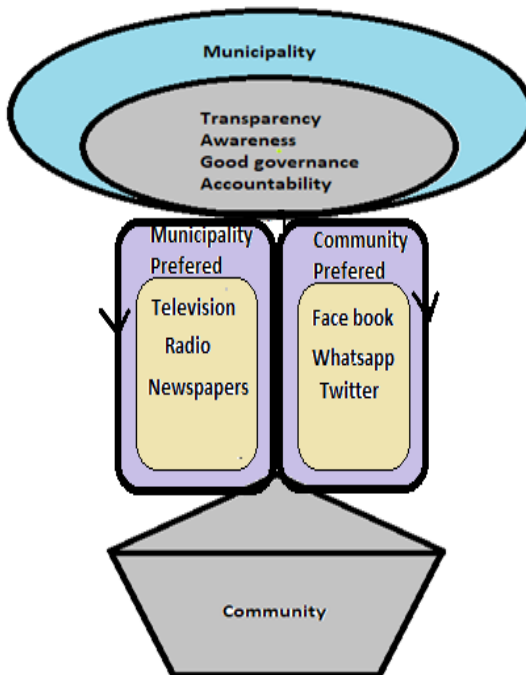


**Figure 9.1:** Mass media as promoter of good governance

The majority of community members indicate that the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality primarily uses local newspapers, mass media, and community radio to promote good governance and public awareness. These platforms reach the large population of the municipality. This further indicates that the majority of KSDLM is content with the mechanisms utilised by the municipality, especially local newspapers. On the other hand, a respondent mentioned, “*Mass media is a popular platform, especially Facebook, because it is user-friendly, and local newspapers such as Mthatha Express and Isolezwe.*”



**Figure 9.2:** Composition of preferred mass media platforms used by the community



**Figure 9.3:** Conceptual framework developed by the authors based on the results

Based on the findings that emerged in this study and the literature reviewed, the researchers developed the diagram above (Figure 20) to depict the top-bottom and bottom-top transmission and dissemination of information between the municipality and the local community. Although municipal officials prefer to use local radio, magazines, and television to promote good governance and the sharing of information, most of the respondents indicated their preference for using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, as indicated in Figures 15, and 16, respectively. The figure above depicts that good governance and information sharing can be promoted by municipalities, not only through magazines, radio, or TV. Contemporary mass media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp play a crucial role in promptly and efficiently disseminating information to the intended audience. These media platforms can be used to promote good governance in municipalities, given the level of acceptance and adoption they receive from the municipal populace.

The community believes that municipalities need to share information with the community and the public at large, with the purpose of ensuring transparency and good governance.

The respondents were asked were asked to name the types of mass medial platform they prefer, respondents have this to say: *“Local media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, are more preferred than local magazines and radio stations and should be adopted by municipalities to promote good governance, transparency, and the sharing of information with the public”*. This shows that most of the community or public is positive and trusts the media to ensure good governance in KSDLM, as it can be used to promote good governance.

To the question, in your opinion, how does mass media coverage influence public engagement with local government issues? One respondent indicated that: *“In the context of municipalities, mass media provide conducive space for the masses to participate in governance issues and be used to enhance public*

*consultation in matters related to the planning, formulation, implementation, analysis, and evaluation of public policies. This assist in holding public officials accountable for their actions and will also help strengthen good governance and education for the public through public engagements”.*

Protection of human rights must be maintained by mass media when information is published with respect to human privacy, dignity, and equality.

Moreover, mass media needs to provide room for feedback from the public on their submissions or demands. The media must prioritise education over fostering instability and violence, emphasising enhancements in community development, national, provincial, and local security, as well as the promotion of democratic peace. The media employer needs to train employees to publish information or stories in accordance with the Constitution. Better remuneration to journalists and compensation will ensure that the rate of accepting bribes to publish false information decreases. The information must not be biased, and it should be presented in a manner that is in favour of the public interests with the aim of protecting democracy. Accurate information enhances the ethical conduct of media practitioners, while improved publication standards, marked by accuracy and honesty, further cultivate public trust in media outlets.

When respondents were asked, what can be done by municipalities to ensure that good governance is promoted? A respondent had this to say:

*Great study, especially under 2020 and 2021, when the country is under lockdown restrictions, the government must consider mass media as an official platform to make public governors, account, and encourage public participation”. Another respondent requested that “the researcher must share the findings with KSDLM for implementation so they can do better in service delivery”.*

The public’s perception of media depends on a few variables, including the kind of media a person uses, their degree of participation, and the environment in which the

local government operates. The experiences of individuals in mass media can greatly differ within local government contexts. News coverage is one of the main ways that local governments communicate with their communities. Information regarding local government decisions, policies, and activities is provided via local news channels, both traditional and digital. These news outlets frequently cover subjects including elections, public meetings, fiscal concerns, and neighbourhood activities. Users of mass media depend on these outlets to keep up with local government activity and comprehend how it could affect their lives. Users of the media frequently anticipate that local governments will operate with accountability and transparency.

Some of the respondents stated that: *“We rely on the media to expose potential corruption, waste, or unethical activity and make local governments responsible for their deeds. News coverage may shed light on issues that the public might otherwise overlook”*.

Citizens may use this information to assess the effectiveness of their representatives and hold them accountable during elections or other forms of civic engagement. The people can connect with and participate in local government concerns through the mass media. It gives people the opportunity to express thoughts, worries, and ideas about numerous problems influencing their communities. Mass media users may add to the public conversation and affect local government policy with letters to editors, opinion articles, and online comment sections.

When respondents were asked what mass media is used for? the respondent said that: *“Local governments frequently employ a variety of media outlets to notify the public about public meetings, town halls, and other types of community participation”*. Users of mass media can attend these occasions to interact with neighbours and directly voice their opinions to local government representatives. Although the media is essential for increasing communication between local authorities and individuals, there are obstacles and constraints to consider.

Respondents were asked what are some potential challenges or limitations associated with the portrayal of municipal governance in mass media? One of the interviewed respondents stated that:

“As audiences we are not given enough context when it comes to municipal governance in the media to fully comprehend the specifics of local politics and decision-making procedures. Viewers or readers could find it difficult to completely understand the significance of some events or policies without this context”.

Another responded added that: *“Media sources’ representations of municipal governance is influenced by their own objectives or biases. This led to selective reporting, which highlights some aspects of governance while downplaying others, creating an inaccurate or partial picture”.*

The possibility of prejudice and false information in news reporting are some of the challenges. To make sure they are getting accurate and impartial information regarding local government activities, users of the media must critically assess the sources they rely on.

Have you observed any differences in the effects of mass media on governance between urban and rural communities? The respond from the respondents were that: *“The mass media is extremely helpful in encouraging community involvement in matters of local governance. Media coverage can assist communities mobilize around important problems and hold elected officials accountable in urban areas where there may be more active civic participation and advocacy groups. While in rural areas there is less engagement due to poor network, lack of access to mass media and level of education”.*

The above statement was supported by another response from respondent who added that: “Urban and rural locations may differ in terms of internet connectivity and access to digital media outlets”.

Another challenge was that not every individual has the same level of access to media outlets. High-speed

internet and digital media are often easier to access in urban communities, which lead to more online conversation engagement and access to information. Socioeconomic factors like geography or income level can have an impact on the accessibility and affordability of media outlets. This digital gap may make it more difficult for certain people to follow local politics or engage in public debates. Depending on several variables, including the type of media ingested, the degree of communication with local government, and the general media environment in each area, the experiences of media users in local government can vary substantially.

Exploring reporting on issues pertaining to municipal government, such as budget allocations, policy choices, and possible corruption or wrongdoing, is a key task for journalists. Mass media outlets may ensure openness in government operations and hold municipal authorities responsible through their reporting. Additionally, the media provides a forum for towns to interact with their citizens. Local governments frequently employ a variety of media platforms to share crucial information on public programmes, activities, policies, and initiatives. Press releases, PSAs, official interviews, and updates on social media are all examples of this. Mass media serves as a conduit for information and promotes civic engagement between governments and their citizens.

How do you think the use of mass media platforms have changed the influence of community on municipal governance?

*“Mass media has a big impact on public opinion and municipal decision-making processes. Media coverage and editorial positions may have an impact on public perceptions of a variety of topics, which may then affect the objectives and course of action of local governments”.*

Election-related media coverage is also affecting voter behaviour since it informs the public about the agendas and accomplishments of candidates. Understanding how media consumption affects people's perceptions of and participation with their local government is one of the most important



additions to the body of research already available about the experiences of mass media users in municipalities. According to research, the media is an important factor in forming public opinion and influencing political action. For instance, research has shown that those who watch more news tend to be more politically aware and involved in local politics.

Furthermore, by holding municipal representatives accountable for their activities, the media may serve as a watchdog. Investigative media plays a vital role in exposing corruption, inefficient administration, and other issues within local government. Through investigative reporting, mass media readers gain insight into the workings of their local government, empowering them to make informed choices when electing representatives. From the community's standpoint, users of local government media encounter a diverse range of experiences. The public's access to information about, accountability for, and openness regarding the operations of their local government comes mostly from the media. It offers venues for public interaction and involvement, enabling people to express their thoughts and participate in the decision-making process. However, to guarantee that all residents may fully interact with their local governments, issues like bias in news coverage and uneven access to media sources must be addressed.

## **Conclusion**

The central argument of this chapter is that mass media platforms are used as tools for information sharing in various organisations. Local government authorities should employ these methods to promote public participation and good governance. The selection of relevant and optimal mass media channels should be a priority to accommodate people from all categories since there is disparity between the platforms preferred by officials and the dominantly used platforms used by communities. Through mass media, the public may participate in discussions and dialogues about policies and governance-related issues to collaborate with

their service providers. The study found that the extent to which communities and local government authorities utilise, comprehend, appreciate, and endorse mass media influences the promotion of good governance. However, the selection of media outlets is crucial to ensuring citizens' optimal participation in governance. The study also unveiled the risk of essential information not reaching the intended population when the wrong platform is employed. Furthermore, there are significant benefits for various and multifaceted media platforms in promoting public awareness.

Municipalities may encourage transparency and accountability by disseminating information via various mass media platforms and can engage with the local populace by streaming council meetings and procedures to their residents on mass media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook with the aim of promoting transparency. In sum, municipalities and local communities should not fixate on certain media platforms to avoid being deprived of vital information. A vast majority of the local populace will actively participate in governance, provided two-way communication between municipalities and the local populace is promoted through various media outlets.

**Disclaimer:** Given that the focus of this study was on one local municipality (KSDLM) and the sample size was drawn from the findings that emerged in the study, it may not represent all municipalities and may not be generalised to other municipalities.

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## Chapter 9

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## CHAPTER 10

# The role of the youth in socio-economic development

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### **Introduction and Background**

In the National Youth Policy, youth are identified as anyone between the ages of 14 and 35 years (National Youth Policy, 1996). This classification encompasses diverse youth groups that have experienced different historical, socio-political, and cultural influences. In addition to the ability to understand their own needs, young people possess the creativity and energy to rethink old problems (Coccia, 2019). An economy's growth rate is determined by the intensity of youth involvement in socio-economic development. As the youth unemployment rate is high, they will inevitably become dependent on the state, which means there will be no significant economic growth (Oaktree, 2016; Human Development Report, 2018). Modern society relies on the youth for justifiable socio-economic development; hence their involvement in a country's development plans is vital. The youth represents maximum multicultural competence in terms of culture (Coccia, 2017b). As a result of changes made over the years, it is now easier to cross borders and travel across countries. Many study abroad and come back with new ideologies and expertise to improve the country (Richards & Aldana, 2013; Oaktree, 2016). The technological advancements that have rendered the world a global village have simultaneously positioned the youth as the embodiment of multicultural competence. Consequently, thanks to technological progress, communication becomes

instantaneous, transcending geographical boundaries (Iwasaki, 2014; Chambers, 2020).

The paper shows that placing a premium on socio-economic development enables young people to participate in economic activities and be more meaningfully engaged. Investing in the development of skills among young people greatly benefits the economy. When young people are empowered and given sufficient educational opportunities, they play an important role as active citizens, and this role is associated with positive economic outcomes (De Cubellis, 2021). Public engagement with young people helps in understanding the needs of young people and how best to capture their specific requirements in public policy development. Promoting youth participation is vital to achieving economic growth and development (Arnold, 2018; Johnson, 2021). In this context, this paper seeks to advance perspectives that could promote greater youth involvement in socio-economic development. In this paper, we will discuss the significance of enabling the youth in areas such as education, economics, industrial training, policy development, including morals. It is important that the youth be equipped to make informed decisions regarding their communities, countries, and the world at large.

In the National Youth Policy, youth are identified as anyone between the ages of 14 and 35 years old (National Youth Policy, 1996). This classification encompasses diverse youth groups that have experienced different historical, socio-political, and cultural influences. In addition to the ability to understand their own needs, young people possess the creativity and energy to reconsider old problems (Coccia, 2019). One of the ways to determine an economy's growth rate is by measuring the intensity of youth involvement in socio-economic development. As the youth unemployment rate is high, they will inevitably become dependent on the state, which means there will be no significant economic growth (Oaktree, 2016; Human Development Report, 2018). Most society relies on the youth for justifiable socio-economic development; hence, their involvement in a country's



development plans is vital. The youth represent maximum multicultural competence in terms of culture (Coccia, 2017b). As a result of changes made over the years, it is now easier to cross borders and travel across countries. Many study abroad and come back with new ideologies and expertise to improve the country (Richards and Aldana, 2013; Oaktree, 2016). The technological advancements that have rendered the world a global village have simultaneously positioned the youth as the embodiment of multicultural competence (Iwasaki, 2014; Chambers, 2020).

This chapter shows that placing a premium on socio-economic development enables young people to participate in economic activities and be more meaningfully engaged. Investing in the development of skills among young people greatly benefits the economy. When young people are empowered and given sufficient educational opportunities, they play an important role as active citizens, and this role is associated with positive economic outcomes (De Cubellis, 2021). Public engagement with young people helps in understanding the needs of young people and how best to capture their specific requirements in public policy development. Promoting youth participation is vital to achieving economic growth and development (Arnold, 2018; Johnson, 2021). In this context, this paper seeks to advance perspectives that could promote greater youth involvement in socio-economic development. This paper, discusses the significance of enabling the youth in areas such as education, economics, industrial training, policy development and morals. It is important that the youth be equipped to make informed decisions regarding their communities, countries, and the world at large. The next section reviews three theories which are; youth development theory, theory of positive youth development and theory of context and community change. These theories serve as the basis for this study.

## **Theoretical Literature**

### **Youth Development Theory**

Youth development theory emphasises the importance of creating supportive communities. Developing solutions that meet urgent needs sustainably is more likely when those most affected by a challenge are involved in the process (Caine and Boydell, 2010; Ross, 2011; LaPeer, 2020). Youth growth ventures and programmes profit from young people's participation at every stage of the process (Cammarota, 2011; Arnold, 2018). In addition to understanding their own needs, young people are creative and energetic, and they are able to view previous challenges in a new light. Involving youth in the design and delivery of programmes can improve modernisation, surge participant maintenance, result in longer-long-lasting programme outcomes, and influence neighbouring practices (Coccia, 2018a). The positive youth development philosophy, which views young people as resources rather than challenges, is the starting point for positive youth engagement. Efforts aimed at supporting youth, devoid of their active involvement, pose a dual risk of potential failure and missed opportunities (LaPeer, 2020). Youth are the prime drivers of their own growth, with systems and adults maintaining and supporting them. Young people's presence is often seen as a token or decorative gesture. Support is indispensable for fostering effective youth engagement, providing opportunities and services that enable youth from diverse backgrounds to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes and assume leadership roles (Coccia, 2016; De Satge, 2021). Majority of the of the community faces a significant challenge in engaging marginalised youth since they are often disconnected from and distrustful of their environments (Davidson, Wien, and Anderson, 2010; Ramey, Busseri, Khanna, and Rose-Krasnor, 2010; LaPeer, 2020).

Youth commitment is crucial both for optimal youth development and as a facilitator for system changes to encourage high-risk, ostracised youth and families (Yohalem and Martin, 2007; Blanchet-Cohen and Salazar, 2009;

Wexler, DiFluvio, and Burke, 2009; Davidson et al., 2010). Furthermore, youth ought to be more courteously recognised as a key backer to youth growth and system change (Durlak et al., 2007; Hodges, Ferreira and Israel, 2012). Fostering health, development, and well-being outcomes for ostracised youth is a shared responsibility across all societal structures and sectors (Delgado, 2002; Ersing, 2009; Zahradnik, et al., 2010). Support systems must be transformed to enhance these effects for ostracised youth. Research indicates the significance and challenges of working and engaging with marginalised youth in a youth-friendly manner to build positive, meaningful relationships (Yohalem and Martin, 2007; Ersing, 2009; Smyth and Eaton-Erickson, 2009; De Cubellis, 2021). The literature detects considerable disparities regarding the use of youth-guided approaches to engage youth with high-risk behaviours and conditions such as homelessness, abusive and health-risk behaviours, mental health challenges, poverty, and social exclusion (Davidson et al., 2010; Cammarota, 2011; Gharabaghi and Anderson-Nathe, 2012). This theory promotes youth leadership in the context of supporting and inspiring high-risk, ostracised youth in their quest for an optimistic, involved, and profound life. The next theory's discussion on positive youth development will help attain this aim.

### **Theory of Positive Youth Development**

The 1990s saw the emergence of positive youth development (PYD), an alternative to the deficit model of adolescent development that had dominated adolescent development for the majority of the 20th century. The strengths-based PYD approach views youth as resources to be developed, as opposed to this deficit model's perception of youth as problems to be managed (Zeldin, 2000; De Satge, 2021). Sustaining the convergence of research and practice is crucial to addressing complicated concerns related to the promotion of PYD and optimizing positive development for all young people.

Positive youth development entails the incorporation of various theoretical inclinations. The reason for this is that optimistic youth advancement includes numerous scholarly

disciplines and spheres of practice (Coccia and Wang, 2016; Nelson, 2020).. A series of developmental psychology-based questions underpin positive youth development theory (Coccia, 2017a). This model specifically aims to elucidate the capacity of youth to undergo transformation in a way that fosters both individual and societal well-being. It seeks to explore how contingent and ecological factors contribute to this transformation, as well as how the developing individual shapes and is influenced by these elements. Additionally, it investigates the principles and mechanisms that facilitate dynamic and mutually beneficial collaboration between the individual and their environment (Zeldin, 2000; De Satge, 2021). In addition to positive youth development being a field of practice since several decades ago, the creation of a developmental theory is also an ongoing and dynamic process (Larson, 2000; Zeldin, 2000; Benson and Saito, 2001; Hamilton and Hamilton, 2004; Johnson, 2021). The theoretical foundations of positive youth development have been laid in the past few decades. During the mid-1990s, positive youth development research flourished with the burgeoning literature on service-learning, civic engagement, connectedness, empowerment, generosity, purpose, and leadership. Theory of positive youth development supports guides for theoretical and change research which will be discussed in the next theory.

#### *Theory of Context and Community Change*

The literature on developmentally supportive contexts is extensive and growing. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development has a significant influence on the theory, research, and practice of optimistic youth development. In a canon of youth development, the ecology of human development would be at the top of the list (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Chen, 2016). Viewing individuals as actively engaged within their environment, the human development ecology explores how their growth is shaped by both their immediate surroundings and the broader context (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). The conceptualisation

of development contexts was one of Bronfenbrenner's many contributions. In his view, nested systems influence development by interdependently influencing one another; none stands or functions alone. Exertions to augment youth benefits should adjust more than one system and concentration to be effective. The effectiveness of altering schools, or even families, will be lower than adjusting numerous approaches or backgrounds (Wynn, 1997; Nelson, 2020). Support for youth is voluntary; youth make choices about what they will do and how they will do it. In contrast to the passive role of the student, primary supporters provide opportunities for youth to take initiative and contribute vigorously. Among the primary sources of support are arts and after-school programmes, organised sports, community service opportunities, and youth entrepreneurship. This would include the establishment and maintenance of parks, libraries, museums, and community centres (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Chambers, 2021).

In the tierce articulation, the focus is on the approaches, procedures, and strategies that can directly or indirectly alter perspectives and communities (Coccia, 2018a). Among the three theoretic societies presented, this is the least developed. An in-depth appraisal of the science of "how change occurs" contended that the developments and processes of a surging approach to developing nutrients and assets on a gigantic scale are the most compelling question emerging from the study of dynamic and bidirectional sources of growth (Oaktree et al., 2016). Several hundred communities, organisations, and systems are already implementing positive youth development activities (Alicea, Pardo, Conover, Gopalan and McKay, 2012). Several concepts hypothesised to be vital to this investigation can be observed by connecting this principle and examination programme to the preceding segment on framework and society pressures. Building a shared vision, mobilizing joint and individual efficiency, enhancing relationships with young people, forming efficient cross-sector partnerships, and improving developmentally proper pursuits constitute just a few essential endeavours (Coccia, 2019). Granger

(2002) identified two predominant paradigms: intrusion approaches aimed at improving change and intervention strategies aimed at improving change capacity. He suggests five crucial approaches: redistribution approaches, investment tactics, human capital creation, social capital creation, and efficiency tactics. Moreover, Benson et al. (2003) identified five interconnected realms of intrusion. This model is based on organisational systems theory and suggests that changes in one sphere have an impact on the others. In terms of theory, this assertion is in line with the tenets of developmental systems theory (Alicea, Pardo, Conover, Gopalan and McKay, 2012). It is hoped that this five-fold model will serve to create a developmentally attentive community by mobilising and activating the capacity-building of families, neighbourhoods, schools, youth organisations, and other institutions (Rhodes and Roffman, 2003; Burciaga and Erbstein, 2018). The basis for this study is established by the three theories covered in this chapter.

The discussed theories promote social change aimed at providing better support for marginalised youth (Yohalem and Martin, 2007; Blanchet-Cohen and Salazar 2009; Wexler et al., 2009; Davidson et al., 2010). In economics, political economics, and other social sciences, the study of economic development is an important research field (Nafziger, 2005; LaPeer, 2020). In classical and neoclassical economics, youth development is analysed as a matter of the efficient allocation of scarce resources (Curran, Bowness, and Comack, 2010; Nelson, 2020). It is attributed to socio-economic, political, and institutional factors that increase monetary development, enhance living standards, diminish poverty among the inhabitants, and reduce income disparity and violent delinquency in the population (Todaro and Smith, 2003; Coccia, 2017a). The next section focuses on empirical literature and review the principles of youth engagement, approaches to youth engagement and indicators of socio-economic development.

## **Empirical Literature**

A youth-oriented attitude to societal transformation is recommended across collaboration with community-university associates. Youth development is crucial to strengthen youth living in high-risk, banished environments more realistically by accentuating youth engagement and development (Blanchet-Cohen and Salazar, 2009; Curran et al., 2010; LaPeer, 2020). Thus, engaging young people in reflective participation is essential for fostering both positive youth development and Societal Justice youth development (Cammarota, 2011; Ross, 2011; Gharabaghi and Anderson-Nathe, 2012). This approach promotes social change aimed at providing better support for marginalised youth. This section discusses the principles of youth engagement, approaches to youth engagement and indicators of socio-economic development.

### **Principles of Youth Engagement**

The goal of optimistic youth development is to guide societies in the way they coordinate services, prospects, and support in order that young people can progress to reach their comprehensive capacity (Pittman et al., 2001; Burciaga and Erstein, 2018). There is more to positive youth development than just another programme. The youth development principles are emphasised by communities that adopt a youth development approach. To adopt youth development approach positive outcomes and building on strengths should be the focus. Rather than focusing on weaknesses, communities should intentionally help young people develop competencies, values, and connections. It is important to include youth in programmes and the communities as value-adding and decision-making partners. A core youth development principle is to view young people as assets rather than as dilemmas or maintenance beneficiaries. Youth involvement can take a variety of forms, from youth participation to youth involvement in designing and implementing programmes. The engagement of young people in the planning, development, and execution of youth-oriented initiatives challenges adults

to reassess their approach to involving the younger generation (Coccia, 2018b; Johnson, 2021).

There is a strong link between positive orientation and universality. If all young people require support in their development, participating in a programme should not carry any stigma. In theory, youth development programmes should target specific groups for different programmes (Wexler, DiFluvio, and Burke, 2009; Chambers, 2020). Youth are embryonic, and their growth can either be improved or hampered by the prospects they have in their families, schools, and societies. This does not imply that the entire youth population has similar prospects. Some youth might require an opportunity to practice leadership skills, whereas others might require a safe place to stay. According to the principles of youth development, affording a shelter for the evening is essential but not adequate; growth opportunities need to be provided as well (Zeldin, Krauss, Collura, Lucchesi, and Sulaiman, 2014; Gonzalez, 2020). Instead of focusing solely on “high-risk” or “gifted” youth, communities should support and engage all youth. While communities acknowledge the responsibility to acknowledge and address challenges faced by specific groups of youth, such as violence or early parenting, they often lack the knowledge or resources to effectively do so.

Optimistic youth development stimulates organisational change and collaboration for societal change, in addition to programmes. Every sector has a responsibility to ensure that society provides an enriching and secure environment for children to grow up in. When youth-serving and non-youth-serving sectors in a society cooperate, youth are more likely to obtain essential services, assistance, and opportunities. To foster communities that are mindful of development, faith communities, government agencies, businesses, and individual members of society all have roles to play (Ross, 2022). Over the first 20 years of a child’s life, communities provide ongoing, developmentally appropriate support. Youth development requires ongoing activities and supportive relationships. Despite short-term positive results, community-based youth consequences may not



be quantifiable for 15 to 20 years. As a result, youth growth approaches should consider how they will be sustained (De Satge, 2021).

It is crucial to undertake actions aimed at enhancing the health, safety, performance, and overall well-being, including physiological functions, of young people. Public health systems, school districts, and recreational facilities provide primary, secondary, and, to some extent, tertiary intervention services. While they play an important role in fostering well-being, they are not sufficient on their own (Arnold, 2018). Interpersonal relationships and resources are fostered through tangible activities with youth. There are three main types of support, namely, emotional, motivational, and strategic. These support channels work together in equal portions to nurture constructive growth. Overall, support creates an optimistic environment for development. Emotional support can facilitate a perception of safety, nurturing, and friendship. The purpose of motivational support is to provide encouraging expectations, guidance, and developmentally suitable confines. Approaches to information and resources are made easier with strategic support (Chambers, 2020; Johnson, 2021). Young people are playing an active role in these actions rather than receiving them as beneficiaries. In the SOS trilogy, the “O” signifies the degree to which youth are given evocative and actual prospects to execute and amplify what they understand and comprehend. Consistent opportunities for young people to practice significant decision-making responsibilities can foster the greatest number of personal competencies (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, and Lorens, 2001; Chen, 2016).

Youth have a range of options available to them, all of which qualify for support. One form of support is facilitating connections with others, while mentoring serves as another example. Access to services and opportunities should be ensured for young people. When opportunities for learning, exploration, play, and self-expression arise, young people eagerly seize them. This approach ensures that support is both universal and tailored to individual needs. (Pittman et al., 2002; Johnson, 2021). A number of services are provided,

including health care, housing, social services, compulsory education, and drug treatment. In theory, everyone with a need for a service has access to it. In addition to a universal safety net, there is a safety net for targeted services. This strategy begins by identifying the most prevalent youth issues within a particular society and then selecting an accredited programme, or programmes, to address and reduce those challenges (Hawkins, 1996; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins, 1998; Catalano and Developmental Research and Programmes, 2000; LaPeer, 2020). The Search Institute, by contrast, helps communities identify and build both their own assets and those of their own youth. Due to this, it is less prescriptive and less focused on identifying and resolving problems. This framework is potentially viewed as complementary, tackling numerous facets of comprehensive, community-wide youth development resourcefulness, irrespective of financial and other constraints (Whitlock and Hamilton, 2003; Nelson, 2020).

### **Approaches to Youth Engagement**

Young people should advise decision-makers on matters relevant to development through youth councils. Youth councils would have been created by a number of elected administrators and both legislative and non-legislative organisations throughout the country. Youth governance should provide support and encouragement to young people in leading organisations so that they can develop healthy adolescent initiatives. These structures should also assist youth to achieve positive outcomes and reach their full potential through a partnership between youth and adults (De Satge, 2021).

It may be a good idea to add a youth representative to the governing board of organisations and ensure that the position is filled regularly. Thus, youth should have a voice to generate prospects to articulate themselves, voice their concepts, and stipulate their contribution (Arnold, 2020). This contribution is an important component of youth engagement. The voices of youth must be understood. Youth in focus inspires urban

youth, through photography, to practice their realm in innovative approaches and to make optimistic alternatives for their beings by obtaining their expression and understanding how to articulate it (LaPeer, 2020). Young people can develop essential life skills and learn leadership skills through a wide variety of youth leadership programmes. Young people formerly in foster care attend youth conventions and nurture care-related events within the country as part of the Foster Club's All-Stars programme each year, where they receive intensive leadership and public speaking training (Burciaga and Erbstein, 2018). Young people can develop essential life skills and learn leadership skills through a wide variety of youth leadership programmes. Youth can communicate about concerns impacting their wellbeing, such as texting, late head start times in school, tobacco use, healthy eating, and support for themselves and their needs (Nelson, 2020). Service projects contribute to youth's sense of community, their engagement in school, and their training for the workplace. The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) fosters the development of young leaders through service-learning initiatives like Project Ignition, which is aimed at improving teenage car driver welfare. Alongside offering leadership opportunities, guidance, and resources, the NYLC supports youth in addressing issues they are passionate about (De Cubellis, 2021). It would be beneficial to engage young people in projects that promote adolescent and young adult health by bringing their peers together.

### **Indicators of Socio-Economic Development**

According to the WHO (World Health Organization), South Africa's average life expectancy, based on 2016 data, stands at 63.6 years. A wide range of health programmes are provided by the government (Fields, 201; Nelson, 2020). Education plays a crucial role in socio-economic development. The GDP plays a pivotal role in driving socio-economic development. Currently, both the private and public sectors within the industrial domain contribute a larger proportion to the GDP. As a result, government funds and public spending

increased. Employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors is clearly shifting from the primary sector. There was a rise in the number of people moving to urban areas in pursuit of employment. By subsidising electricity at a lower rate, the government encourages the private sector to start industries in developing and rural areas. The aim would be that these initiatives and shifts would assist in eliminating regional inequality. In order to combat diseases and malnutrition, clean water and sanitary facilities are necessary. The availability of these resources will improve people's life cycles.

In the employment sector, young people promote multicultural competence. As a result, no group in the population will feel marginalised, which is optimistic for economic development since marginalisation usually leads to revolutions and civil wars when it affects an entire community (Orton-Johnson, 2013; Nelson, 2020). Embracing cultural diversity, led by the youth, enables a nation to uphold economic equilibrium and foster an equitable distribution of wealth. Sustainable socio-economic development is the result of equitable economic growth that alleviates poverty equally. This study used primary data which was collected using a desktop study, will be covered in more detail in the following section.

## **Methodology**

This paper adopts a literature-based methodology to review the role of youth in socio-economic development. It has employed this methodology to analyse the prospects and challenges thereof. This type of methodology employs a qualitative approach, which focuses and reflects primarily on the subjective and objective stances of different scholars. This methodology allowed the researchers to immerse themselves in the existing literature and identify the gaps and weaknesses of the literature. These gaps were addressed by explaining that youth involvement is vital to enhancing economic development. Due to the nature of this study, data was collected using a desktop. The use of a desktop is one way

to collect data through a review of the literature. Hence, data was collected through access to journals, books, and reports to synthesise and review the subject under investigation. This enabled the researchers to review, analyse, and discuss different viewpoints of scholars in an attempt to achieve the purpose of the paper.

## **Discussions and Recommendations**

The socio-economic development of destitute groupings is a broad area requiring an understanding of various frameworks. To empower disadvantaged groups, development in the social, biological, political, science and technology, language, and literature sectors is imperative (Coccia, 2018d). In the socio-economic framework, development is characterised as improvements in the lifestyles of individuals in terms of education, income, skills development, and employment. Culture and environment play a crucial part in the process of economic and social transformation (Blanchet-Cohen, 2009; Gonzalez, 2020). Consequently, it is regarded as the procedure for societal and economic growth in a society.

Socio-economic development is determined by two primary elements: economic growth and poverty levels. Economic growth must be accompanied by poverty reduction for socio-economic development to be sustainable. Creating employment opportunities is the primary method of reducing poverty (Iwasaki, 2014; SFCG, 2017). Employment prospects typically arise from economic development, facilitated by investments in less industrialised areas. It is possible to invest locally or internationally. Despite this, several factors influence the willingness of businesses to invest in certain regions (Caine and Boydell, 2010; Nelson, 2020). There are several factors to ncludes the convenience of labour and the accessibility of the area in terms of infrastructure and security. Young people's participation in policy dialogue and decision-making processes is crucial to their socio-economic empowerment To foster youth involvement and commitment in socio-economic development, emphasis should be placed

on innovation, creativity, and willingness to take risks. Organisations should intensify their initiatives to unleash the creativity and energy of young people. This is as far as foresight or “outsight” goes (Coccia, 2019). Now, it appears that the “comfort level” is primarily to involve young people in activities that are more or less planned beforehand by the project. The perception of risk may play a role in this (Coccia and Wang, 2016).

Research revealed that some young people are already contributing to a lot of promising work and bringing smiles and hope to the world. Young people in the Philippines are receiving emergency assistance because of Typhoon Yolanda. To fully understand what works and what does not, more targeted data secondary must be collected. In addition to critiquing and sharing policies and programmes that have been successful and less successful, there is also a need to share global successes and failures (Coccia and Wang, 2016). Most youth are willing, prepared, and ready to participate in larger deliberations concerning their lives and their prospects, according to the findings. A sturdy obligation to listen to, act upon, and respect the voices of the youth of different classes, ages, socio-economic circumstances, and capabilities will accelerate the achievement of the social development goals. A significant portion of this can be credited to the proficiency of youth in cultivating networks and fostering movements across generations and within them. Hence, policymakers must include the youth in executive spheres, involving those with authorities, the private sector, and civil society (Nelson, 2020). In the research, the youth commonly mentioned violence in various arrangements, involving exploitation and the abuse of authority, as issues of apprehension. Intercessions in the study included accountability components in some cases, but not all.

To be operative and vigorous citizens, youth must comprehend in what manner political and economic choices are put together, and they must recognise the significant role they can perform in refining accountability across all levels (Johnson, 2020). Knowledgeable and enthusiastic participation in accountability methods can reduce youth’s uncertainty

about politics, private sector operations, and civic institutions. Young people, particularly youth-led clusters and associations operational at the ground level, can safeguard accountability and transparency. These clusters are more probable to retort to the desires of the youth cohorts they signify, as well as provide greater opportunities for youth creativity and innovation (LaPeer, 2020).

## Conclusion

It is essential that the youth participate in the development plans of a country because they are the driving force behind sustainable socio-economic development. Increasing young people's participation and engagement are regarded as a means of developing a sense of equality, justice, and citizenship (Lerner and Overton, 2008; Zeldin, Krauses, Collura, Lucchesi, and Sulaiman, 2014; Oaktree, 2016). SJYD prejudices the youth's fundamental viewpoints, including their propensity to engage in societal alteration activities (Camarota, 2011; Arnold, 2018; Johnson, 2021). As discussed in this manuscript, Ross (2011) accentuates the necessity of youth-initiated societal change instead of adults striving for change on behalf of youth. Young people, committed to studying ways to empower themselves and others through collaboration, shared learning, and teamwork, play a vital role in promoting positive outcomes. This aligns with the principles of Positive Youth Development (PYD) (Chambers, 2020). In contrast, developing exploration into activity expertise, translation, and pragmatic usage are key SJYD-related concepts. This article illustrates the reciprocally bolstering responsibilities of PYD and SJYD rather than treating them separately. To motivate and encourage ostracised youth that are at extreme risk of a diversity of lifetime encounters, youth leadership with the support of community partners and stakeholders is essential (Worker, Janiero, and Lewis, 2020; LaPeer, 2020). It is important not to underestimate the power of youth in mobilising systems and social change.

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## CHAPTER 11

# South Africa's national development plan vision 2030 – the context of entrepreneurship and small businesses since 1994

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### Introduction

South Africa continues to face severe socio-economic challenges, encompassing the pervasive presence of poverty, elevated unemployment rates, widening disparities, and stagnant economic growth. In attempting to address these challenges, the government of South Africa, through the National Development Plan (NDP), has underlined the important role that entrepreneurship and small businesses can play in this respect (Beresford, 2020; Lebambo and Shambare, 2020; Musara, Mabila, Gwaindepi and Dhoru, 2020; Meyer, 2019).

Before the inception of the National Development Plan, the government had already been formulating policy positions to support Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). (Beresford, 2020; Malebana, 2014; Department of Trade and Industry, 2005). Some of the policy frameworks include the White Paper on National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business, the Small Business Act, and the NDP, among others.

Organisations such as the National Planning Commission (NPC) (2012); General Entrepreneurship Monitor

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1 University of South Africa.

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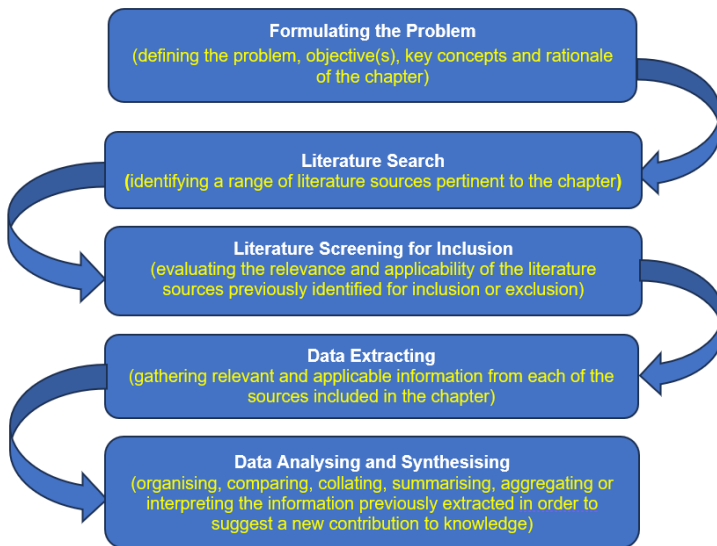
(GEM) (2009); and authors such as Iwu (2021); Mafukata, (2020); Swartz, Amatucci and Marks (2019); Odongo and Kyei (2018); Iyigun (2015); and Ansari, Mirdamadi, Zand and Arfaee (2013), among others, recognise entrepreneurship and small businesses as an important vehicle and a major force of economic development. Entrepreneurial activities and small businesses are anticipated to play pivotal roles in poverty alleviation by fostering employment opportunities and enabling impoverished individuals to generate income to meet their essential needs (Beresford, 2020; Musara et al., 2020; Meyer, 2019; Mwatsika, 2015; White Paper on National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business, 1995). Despite the consensus on how the government intends to create decent living standards for all South Africans, the question of how to drive the promotion of entrepreneurship and small business development remains at the top of government policy agenda.

Considering the literature review, institutional organisations such as the NPC (2012) and GEM (2009), among others, reflect that the second economy can address the social and economic challenges of any developing country and aid in achieving the NDP Vision 2030 and its objectives. Such studies contributed to the premise and gist of the main focal point of this chapter. Thus, it is within this background that this chapter examines, through literature analysis, the ability and importance of entrepreneurship and small business development towards the achievement of the NDP Vision 2030. Therefore, this chapter gathers desktop data in the form of a literature review for analysis and findings. Thus, the chapter solely relies on a literature review and analysis for assembling the notions that substantiate the premise and argument thereof.

Employing rapid and narrative literature reviews as the methodology facilitates the exploration of the significant role played by SMMEs since 1994. These reviews assist in unlocking the potential for achieving Vision NDP 2030 and addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by South Africa. The data were sourced from a variety of reputable channels, including



peer-reviewed journal publications, books, government documents, and internet sources. Additionally, data collection encompassed diverse databases and platforms, including university libraries, Google Scholar, Google, J-Gate, and Scopus. Primary themes and keywords relevant to this chapter, such as 'National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030', 'small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs)', 'entrepreneurship', 'small businesses', as well as pertinent patterns and trends, guided the search process. The inclusion criteria encompassed all forms of articles, documents, and reports available in these databases and online pertaining to entrepreneurship and small businesses. The rapid and narrative literature analysis followed the framework in Figure 11.1 below.



**Figure 11.1:** Framework of rapid and narrative literature analysis for the chapter (Source: Authors)

Accordingly, this chapter provides the substantiated premise of the discourse with respect to entrepreneurship and small businesses. That is, considering the use of extensive literature and internet searches related to entrepreneurship

and small businesses in South Africa for the purpose of the chapter's conceptual framework. With respect to the structure and framework, the chapter starts by examining the current development policy dilemmas facing South Africa and then provides a synopsis of the essence of the NDP. Furthermore, the chapter provides the potential and ability of entrepreneurship and small business development towards attaining the NDP Vision 2030 for addressing the triple challenges, which are poverty, a high unemployment rate, and inequalities facing general citizens. Lastly, prior to the conclusion and recommendations, the chapter examines the generic challenges faced by entrepreneurship and small business development in South Africa.

This chapter examines the ideology of the NDP Vision 2030 on how entrepreneurs can become mainstream economies to address the imbalance of the historic past engineered by the apartheid system. Furthermore, this chapter argues that the post-apartheid political-economic transformation through the NDP Vision 2030 should have focused more on entrepreneurs and small businesses for the economic mainstream. The premise of this chapter revolves around promoting the culture of entrepreneurship and small businesses to address long-standing socio-economic challenges. It further argues that, to achieve this, there is a need to create an enabling environment and provide necessary support for entrepreneurship and small businesses to thrive. Thus, the paper is adamant that the support should be fast-tracked and accelerated to increase the number of entrepreneurs and small businesses in the economy. Furthermore, research on entrepreneurship and small businesses should be undertaken on how the marginalised manage to sustain their families through enterprises, considering decades of hardship, discrimination, and impediments, among others, imposed by the apartheid regime in South Africa.

## **The Development Policies and Quandary in South Africa**

South Africa's democracy is nearly three decades old. Some notable achievements have been made since, especially the embedding of a non-racial constitutional democracy. The largest weakness, however, has been the government's inability to make significant inroads in transforming the socio-economic legacy of the past. This is because of the deep-seated nature of the country's crisis of unemployment, poverty, and inequality (Mafukata, 2020; Boohene and Agyapong, 2017; Tebele, 2016; Cronin, 2013). Of course, these aspects are encapsulated in the NDP as major issues to be dealt with by 2030. Paradoxically, even though the country's policies profess a commitment to achieving socio-economic development, implementing developmental policies has been one of the government's Achilles' heels. South Africa has certain development policies that are ironically deemed the greatest in Africa and superior to those of the majority of other nations worldwide. The sarcasm arises due to the ineffective and often absent or poorly executed implementation of these development policies.

The NDP acknowledges that ineffective policy implementation is the primary cause of the country's delayed development (Cronin, 2013; NPC, 2012). Chapter 13 of the NDP acknowledges that South Africa has a tendency to jump from one quick fix or policy fad to the next without effectively evaluating the successes or failures of successive policies. This shows how the government fails to reflect on its practices; if one policy fails, a new one is developed without considering how the first one could be better implemented or investigated in terms of its discrepancies. In addition, Ngcamu (2019); Odongo and Kyei (2018); Tebele (2016); Kanjere (2015); and NPC (2012) assert that the lack of policy implementation in South Africa was also attested by the prevalence of service delivery protests by citizens who express frustrations with the government's failure to effectively implement policies that are supposed to address their needs. According to Ngcamu (2019), the Municipal IQ recorded 24% of service delivery

demonstrations in 2018, higher than the preceding record year of 2014. The contention is that service delivery demonstrations have been exacerbated by inadequate service provision.

Odongo and Kyei (2018) and Tebele (2016) emphasise that South Africa has emphatically failed to implement its policies to deal with the unabated social ills. It could be argued that the failure of the government to implement its policies led to increased service delivery backlogs and problems, which have serious or negative implications for the country's democracy (Tebele, 2016; Akinboade, Mokwena and Kinck, 2014; Bond, 2014; Sebola, 2014). Some of the first major development policies to be adopted post-1994 included the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994, Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1996, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) in 2006, and recently the NDP in 2012. The RDP sought to address the numerous social and economic issues the nation was experiencing, such as housing, a lack of jobs, inadequate health care and education, and an overall failing economy. GEAR considered ways to stabilise and strengthen the struggling economy at the time of transition. ASGISA was aimed at accelerating the growth of the economy as well as redistributing wealth. The NDP aims to establish consensus-building mechanisms towards a maximum reduction in unemployment, inequality, and poverty (Madzivhandila, 2014).

What happened to these development policies? These policies were designed with noble intentions to address the insurmountable problems facing the nation. However, does the absence of observable change result from their creation? Good development policy intentions do not always lead to positive development outcomes if not properly implemented (Mpya, 2020). Or, contrarily, the fundamental problem that led all of these sensible, well-written policies to fail was simply one thing: poor implementation of these policies. There still remains significant uncertainty among South Africans regarding the government's capacity to achieve its developmental objectives, given the persistent hurdles

stemming from inadequate implementation of policies aimed at translating these goals into tangible progress. Such questions consequently put significant pressure on policymakers to develop more effective policies that could direct and manage resources in more focused and efficient ways. An essential lesson from this context underscores that poorly implemented or designed development policy measures can yield adverse, enduring consequences for both the government and its citizens (Mpya, 2020).

Tebele (2016) and Kanjere (2015) attributed the failure and difficulty of implementing policies in South Africa to the following generic factors:

- Policies are often based on social fantasy, which does not have a direct bearing on reality;
- Some policies fail due to the absence of incentive structures that should induce individuals to pursue policy implementation;
- Entrenched political interests and power also lead to the failure of some policies;
- The politicised nature of policies and their inherent limited ability to effect change can serve as a barrier to their success;
- Some of the policies pursue multiple and conflicting goals that are not clearly articulated;
- Lack of capacity and resources can also serve as a barrier to the success of some policies;
- Limited or lack of consultation with the affected stakeholders can lead to failure when a policy is implemented;
- Some policies are not easily digestible by the operational staff that is supposed to implement them;
- Lack of clearly outlined processes and procedures for implementation; and
- Some policy failures are based on the assumption that market forces will improve and that there will be enough revenue to finance programmes.

Madzivhandila (2014) identified lack of communication, resources, dispositions or attitude, and bureaucratic structures as some of the implementation problems that derail efforts to implement sustainable socio-economic policies. These problems are influenced by factors such as corruption, a lack of continuity in government policies, and inadequate human and material resources. According to Madzivhandila (2014), these factors lead to an implementation gap, which is the widening gap between a stated policy goal and the achievement of such intended goals. Neglecting to account for these challenges would be short-sighted and lead to unrealistic expectations regarding the attainment of the intended NDP objectives. Although South Africa has well-designed policies, there is no clear plan of action on how such policies should be executed. Odongo and Kyei (2018) and Kanjere (2015) assert that governments should develop realisable policies and not aspirational policies, which are developed within their own context and not in denial of their contextual reality and should represent the interests of the poor, but they are in fact representing the interests of the elites in society. One can put emphasis on the fact that the government should focus on pro-poor policies that directly target low income or no income people and are aimed at reducing poverty and other dire socio-economic issues.

Van der Walt (2013:1) is of the opinion that the “government represents primarily the interests of the emergent black capitalists and state managerial elites, top officials and politicians, judges, and military leaders. This is despite the myth that the government represents the interests of previously disadvantaged communities, whereas it is actually anti-working class, as shown by its embrace of neo-liberalism and support for elitist Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) deals for black capitalists” (Van Der Walt, 2013:1). The NDP states that most BEE has taken place through the first avenue, as agreements have been made to enable black ownership of large firms. However, there has been less success in implementing the second opportunity, which focuses on growing entrepreneurs and small businesses.

This is because the government sets double standards as far as policy matters are concerned. Osman (2002:37) avows that public policy making is a “complex process that is influenced by diverse socio-political and other environmental forces; hence, it should not be taken for granted”. Accordingly, the NDP acknowledges the importance of promoting entrepreneurship and small business development. Thus, the next section highlights the essence of the NDP.

### **National Development Plan: Our Future in 2030**

The Diagnostic Report by the NPC identified nine key challenges facing South Africa, which include chronic unemployment, poor education and infrastructure, an unstable economy, inadequate and poor-quality healthcare and public services, high levels of corruption, and an unequal society (Zarenda, 2013; NPC, 2012). The national government adopted the NDP Vision 2030 in 2012 as South Africa’s long-term socio-economic roadmap to address these perpetuating socio-economic challenges. The NDP outlines a strategic framework for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth, which includes a comprehensive vision and actionable goals to address the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by the country. The plan focuses on four areas, namely, rural economy, social protection, regional and international affairs, as well as community safety (Kanjere, 2015). The main aim of the NDP is to ensure that all citizens attain a decent standard of living through the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequalities by providing proper housing, water, electricity, sanitation, infrastructure, quality healthcare, social protection, employment, quality education, safety, and security through state intervention, investment, and transformation of society (Swartz et al., 2019; Shava and Maramura, 2017; Hendriks, 2012; NPC, 2012). This, however, can only be achieved through uniting the citizens, unleashing their energies, growing an inclusive economy, and enhancing the capability of the state and leaders working together to solve these diverse and complex problems facing the country (Shava and Maramura, 2017; Ramoroka, 2013; NPC, 2012;

Zuma, 2012). The NDP was adopted with the primary goals of addressing inequality, poverty and unemployment. It includes every aspect of society and outlines how the government should advance each one to a level where it can meet the requirements of all South Africans. In essence, the NDP wants to ensure that all South African citizens enjoy a better standard of living and a life that is worthy of respect. The NDP intend to transform the country into a thriving, equitable and sustainable society and provides a roadmap for tackling current challenges and leveraging opportunities to ensure long-term prosperity and well-being for all citizens. However, realisation of these noble intentions depends on how the NDP is implemented.

The NDP has been implemented in phases so that all the long-term plans of the national departments will be aligned with it (Kanjere, 2015). The implementation of the NDP is a complex process involving multiple stakeholders including the government, private sector, civil society and international partners. Such process involves a multi-faceted approach with strategic planning, robust institutional frameworks and continuous monitoring and evaluation at its core. For the NDP to be operationalised, the NPC (2012) makes several proposals for transforming the ownership of the economy, which include the following:

- Creating an enabling environment for small, micro and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs to thrive. This includes inculcating the spirit of entrepreneurship in schools, lowering the cost of doing business in the economy and reducing barriers to entry in various value chains.
- Aligning all the codes and charters that flow from the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act. This process is underway and should continue to ensure that the state procurement lever is used more effectively to advance socio-economic targets in certain geographies and industries. Mandatory targets for socio-economic development and job creation for all tenders above R10 million should be introduced.



- The National Empowerment Fund must be resourced adequately to execute its mandate. It must strengthen its support for black-owned small and medium sized enterprises, as well as strengthen and expand the provision of finance and other support to new black industrialists and entrepreneurs. This should not just be in the form of financial support but must also include enabling market access and the removal of administrative and regulatory burdens on small businesses.
- The state must develop capacity to optimise returns from South Africa's natural resources. Revenues collected from mining companies should be used to drive an accelerated development agenda for skills development and sustainable job creation.

Despite these ambitions, the NDP, however, has been under a lot of public scrutiny for its lack of clarity, inconsistencies, errors, selective and incorrect interpretations, and overly ambitious projections on poverty, employment, economic growth, and social justice since its adoption [Confederation of South African Trade Union (COSATU), 2013; Ramoroka, 2013]. Supposedly, the NDP has become one of the thorny issues that produces robust and contentious debates within the public and policy making circles, even within the Tripartite Alliance. COSATU and the National Union of Mine Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) have since become the leading critics of the NDP. Awuah (2019) and COSATU (2013) identify three main criticisms of the NDP. Firstly, the plan is problematic for job creation in that more jobs would be created by the small business and services sectors; secondly, the NDP ignores the New Growth Path (NGP) and the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP); and lastly, it calls for job creation by reducing the rights of existing workers. In some instances, NUMSA (2012) rejects the NDP entirely, citing that it is the exact economic plan of the Democratic Alliance (DA). Thus, the NDP has since been a topic of contentious debates and a divisive issue between the ruling party and its Tripartite Alliance allies, as well as within government circles. Albeit the critics, the following section provides a discussion on the potential of

entrepreneurship and small business promotion towards the attainment of NDP Vision 2030.

### **NDP Vision 2030: Unlocking the Potential of Entrepreneurship and Small Businesses**

Given the inability of the formal sector to absorb the growing labour force, coupled with the burgeoning youth unemployment crisis, the government has prioritised small business and entrepreneurial development in the NDP Vision 2030. Entrepreneurship and small business development are becoming increasingly understood to have a significant impact on the economic viability of communities and South Africa in general (Lebambo, 2019; Cassin, Soni and Karodia, 2014; Hart, 2003). Entrepreneurial activity is considered an important mechanism for economic development through job creation, innovation, wealth accumulation, reinvestment, and its welfare effect, which leads to a growing policy interest in entrepreneurship at the national level (Mafukata, 2020; Boohene, 2017; Akinwale, 2014; Paul and Sharma, 2013; Herrington, Kew and Kew, 2009). Thus, the NDP places significant emphasis on entrepreneurship and small business development as crucial drivers of economic growth, job creation and innovation in South Africa.

The NDP recognizes the critical role of entrepreneurship and small business development in achieving South Africa's economic and social goals. In his keynote address in 2014, the Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene, stated that the NDP provides a variety of opportunities to boost the development and growth prospects of the country (Nene, 2014). The plan aims to accelerate economic growth, which will consequently eliminate poverty, create over 11 million jobs, and reduce inequality by the year 2030. By achieving these goals, the NDP expected that the unemployment rate would decline from 24.5% in 2012 to 14% in 2020 and to 6%, with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increasing by 2.7 times at an annual rate of 5.4% by 2030 (Beresford, 2020; Awuah, 2019; Lebambo, 2019; NPC, 2012). According to the NDP, SMMEs should be responsible for

creating 90% of these jobs. Furthermore, in the plan, Chapter 6, the NDP suggests that by 2030, 643 000 direct jobs and 326 000 indirect jobs will be created in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, accentuating the effects of an integrated and inclusive rural economy (Lebambo, 2019; Hendriks, 2013). Similarly, promoting SMME growth inside designated local economic zones is one of the NDP's primary goals, and it expects that its initiatives will boost yearly economic growth by 5%, and SMMEs will be crucial to achieving this aim by 2030 (Enaifoghe and Vezi-Magigaba, 2022).

To achieve the aforementioned, the NDP sees entrepreneurship and small business development as the most important mechanisms for growing an inclusive and sustainable economy that is able to create employment opportunities. This will depend on how enabling and conducive the environment is for entrepreneurial activities and small businesses to strive and prosper. According to Nene (2014), the government aims to create an enabling environment for small businesses and entrepreneurs through policies that promote and enhance the development of entrepreneurial skills. In developing such a nurturing environment, cognisance should be taken of the fact that small businesses are diverse in nature, each with its own unique set of requirements (Mafukata, 2020; Groepe, 2012). Small businesses operate in both the formal and informal sectors, where some can be classified as survivalists while individuals with entrepreneurial flair are managing others. Some are start-ups, others are growing rapidly, and others are well established and stable. By implementing targeted strategies to enhance access to finance, streamline regulatory processes, develop entrepreneurial skills, and improve market access, the NDP aims to create a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The White Paper on Small Business (1995) states that small businesses represent an important vehicle to address the challenges of job creation, economic growth, and equity in our country. Furthermore, small businesses are regarded as a fundamental part of the economic fabric of a developing country by furthering growth and innovation, with a particular

contribution towards employment generation for both semi-skilled and unskilled labour (White Paper on Small Business, 1995). Despite their low profile, entrepreneurial activity and small businesses tend to account for the majority of economic activity and employment. Small and medium businesses constitute over 95% of the number of enterprises and 40% to 80% of employment in manufacturing, thereby generating two-thirds of private sector employment and thus being regarded as the main drivers of new jobs (Beresford, 2020; Mafukata, 2020; Burger, 2012). Despite being a developing country, the country has a low entrepreneurial rate compared to other countries globally. This is because of problems facing entrepreneurship and small business development, such as an unfavourable legal environment, a lack of access to markets, finance, and credit, low levels of skills, a lack of access to information, and a shortage of effective supportive institutions (Phugwanyo and Mogashoa, 2014; Ngorora and Mago, 2013). Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a more dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. Indeed, South Africa's entrepreneurial activity is lower compared to many other countries, which poses a challenge to achieving the ambitious goals outlined in the NDP.

Nevertheless, the NDP highlights the significance of the promotion and development of small businesses towards meeting the goal of creating 11 million new jobs by 2030 through support and an enabling environment for up-and-coming businesses to develop and thrive (NPC, 2012). According to the NDP, small and medium-sized businesses will create over two-third of all new jobs by 2030, which amounts to around 9.9 million jobs of the target (Department of Small Business Development, 2022; Hassen, 2018). However, the NDP does not provide a breakdown of sector-by-sector contributions of these small businesses (Hassen, 2018). The plan envisages that 90 percent of new employment opportunities will come from small and expanding firms, with the goal of mass entrepreneurship (Iwu, 2021; Beresford, 2020; Boohene, 2017).

Whether or not this NDP ambition is attainable, it is certain that small businesses are crucial to the process of creating jobs in South Africa. Nearly two-thirds of the 11 million new jobs envisaged in the NDP 2030 are to come from services, domestic work, and the informal sector, although the latter receives remarkably little attention in the plan (Cilliers and Camp, 2013). Clearly, the NDP places significant importance on small businesses as a major source of growth and employment creation. Despite having such aspirations, South Africa nevertheless has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the entire world. The country recorded an unemployment rate of over 28% in 2019, one of the highest compared with other countries in the world (Bureau for Economic Research, 2020). Indeed, South Africa continues to grapple with high unemployment rates, a significant socio-economic challenge for the country. While the government has implemented various policies and initiatives to address unemployment, significant challenges remain. Achieving the goals set out in the NDP, particularly the ambitious target of reducing unemployment to 6%, will require concerted efforts to boost economic growth, improve education and skills development, and create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive and create jobs.

The NDP aims to review the regulatory environment for small, medium, and micro enterprises to develop and thrive (Budget Review, 2013). Furthermore, the plan proposes that some labour regulations be loosened in an effort to encourage business enterprises to easily employ more people. Burger (2010) agrees with the sentiments of the NDP that small businesses hold the potential to create employment opportunities for most of the unemployed in South Africa through expanding public employment programmes. With an unemployment rate of over 25%, the NDP aims to put policies in place so that unemployment will decrease to 6% by 2030 (Burger, 2010). Most critics consider this goal to be unrealistic and overly ambitious. The review of the NDP in 2020 found that ineffective support and market and regulatory barriers were hindering the growth and employment potential

of SMMEs in the country (Department of Small Business Development, 2022). Creating a conducive environment for these small businesses to thrive is crucial in a quest to realise the aspirations espoused in the NDP. Enabling environments should not only refer to the legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks of the country but also the strength of the partnerships between the public, private, civil society, and labour sectors. All stakeholders must work together to coordinate their efforts in order to effectively support and foster an environment for small businesses (Department of Small Business Development, 2022). By improving access to finance, simplifying regulatory processes, fostering an entrepreneurial culture, enhancing education, improving market access, and investing in infrastructure, the country can create a more supportive environment for entrepreneurship. The successful implementation of these strategies, aligned with the objectives of the NDP, can significantly boost entrepreneurial activity, drive economic growth and create jobs, contributing to a more prosperous and inclusive South Africa.

The NDP further suggests lower entry-level wages as a means to stimulate job creation and to facilitate a higher uptake of young and unskilled people in the labour market. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report has convincingly shown that the level of early-stage entrepreneurial activity is directly related to per capita income and small business growth; therefore, it should be seen as an important creator of jobs, a source of economic growth, and a solution to poverty problems in the country (KPMG, 2012). The proposal for lower entry-level wages is part of a broader strategy to tackle high unemployment and stimulate economic growth in South Africa. While it has potential benefits, including increased employment opportunities and economic activity, it must be implemented with caution. Safeguards are necessary to prevent worker exploitation, ensure that wages meet basic living standards, and promote skill development and career progression. Balancing these factors is key to making the policy effective and ensuring that it contributes

positively to the country's long-term development goals. Some of the proposals in the plan, however, are in conflict with those of organised labour and will require intense negotiations and possibly trade-offs prior to and during the implementation of the plan.

Though the development and promotion of entrepreneurship and small businesses remains an important priority of the government, a number of constraints facing small enterprises exist that need to be dealt with in order to create an enabling environment. These include the legal and regulatory environment, access to markets, access to finance and affordable business premises, the acquisition of skills and managerial expertise, access to appropriate technology, management of the tax burden, and access to quality business infrastructure in poor areas (Ngorora and Mago, 2015; Department of Trade and Industry, 2005; White Paper on Small Business, 1995). These factors inhibiting entrepreneurship and small business development are explored in detail in the next section.

### **Challenges Facing the Prospect for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development**

Entrepreneurs and small businesses are playing a very important role in the development of the economy. Small and medium enterprises in South Africa are perceived to contribute between 52% and 56% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), constituting 56% of employment (Ncube and Zondo, 2022; Snyman et al., 2014). The NDP sets out several ambitious goals for the entrepreneurship and small business sectors to address the challenges of high unemployment and envisages the economy to grow by 5.4% annually to treble in size by 2030 with the sector identified as a pivotal driver of such growth [Small Business Project (SBP) Alert, 2014]. Job creation depends on economic growth in order to achieve this NDP priority. The rate of economic growth has lagged below the rate of population increase since 2015, partly because of the declining global market for minerals, the SA energy crisis,

and the lack of clarity surrounding government policies even prior to the COVID-19-induced shutdown in 2020 (Bureau for Economic Research, 2020). Slower and stagnant economic growth has caused a deterioration in job creation, which, combined with steady population growth, has resulted in even higher unemployment. The unemployment rate was over 28% in 2019, twice the 2020 target, which was further worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Bureau for Economic Research, 2020). As a result, the government is relying on small businesses and entrepreneurship to help reach the NDP's employment targets. However, due to a variety of difficulties, small businesses and enterprises still struggle, and their survival rate is worryingly low.

The achievement of NDP priorities will depend on the creation of an enabling environment that supports the growth and sustainability of existing small businesses and allows new small businesses to flourish, as well as promoting a culture of entrepreneurship among citizens. South Africa's small enterprises are estimated to account for over 60% of employment compared to a global average of 77%, but they have an exceptionally high failure rate, with 70% of the country's small enterprises failing in their first year, which is one of the highest failure rates in the world (SBP Alert, 2014; Brink, Cant and Ligthelm, 2003). Notwithstanding the high failure rate, approximately 24% of business entities in South Africa become established firms that could be regarded as panaceas to the soaring unemployment problem as well as alleviation of poverty (Liedholm and Mead, 2010). The high failure rate of such businesses in South Africa is largely instigated by multiple challenges that impinge on their survival and growth prospects.

Despite the substantial commitments made by the national government to promote entrepreneurship and small business development, these enterprising ventures encounter formidable challenges that can hinder their success and sustainability. These hurdles encompass a scarcity of skills, tedious regulations, adverse local economic conditions, limited access to finance and markets, insufficient capital,



inadequate support infrastructure, and the high costs entailed in staffing, along with a deficit in managerial expertise and overall business resources (Dilip, 2014; SBP Alert, 2014; Agbenyegah, 2013; Ansari et al., 2013; Kanchana, Divya, and Beegon, 2013; Ngorora and Mago, 2013; Patel and Chavda, 2013). The Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Growth Index has identified the regulatory burden as one of the critical challenges facing small businesses.

The SME Growth Index underscores that frequent regulatory changes, the challenge of navigating overlapping and conflicting requirements across various government levels, limited communication and information access, and administrative inefficiencies in government bodies result in small enterprise owners devoting a disproportionate amount of time to regulatory compliance, averaging eight working days per month spent on managing bureaucratic red tape (SBP Alert, 2014). Regulatory requirements are time-consuming and frequently something that small business owners and entrepreneurs find difficult to manage and carry out. As a result, small businesses and enterprises frequently fail to comply, incur higher costs, and use more time and energy trying to comply.

The lack of financial sources and initial start-up capital is also one of the major impediments to entrepreneurship and small businesses. Ngorora and Mago (2013) assert that the financial and operating environment in South Africa is not supportive of entrepreneurship and small businesses in terms of regulations, policies, and access to capital. Access to financing is consistently cited as one of the country's biggest problems facing small businesses and enterprises that require immediate attention. According to Agbenyegah (2013) and Meyer-Stamer (2003), there is a lack of efficient support systems that are accessible to young and emerging entrepreneurs, making it extremely difficult for them to access existing support mechanisms. Furthermore, poor or lack of networking and confidence, as well as small markets with stagnant economies, also affect entrepreneurship and small businesses in most rural areas (Ngorora and Mago, 2013).

According to Liedholm and Mead (2010), the challenges in respect of entrepreneurship and small businesses could result in owners or managers of such enterprises contemplating shutting down and discontinuing operations if the total cost of production exceeds the total revenue. It is evident that small businesses are confronted with numerous and diverse challenges, demanding urgent attention if the vision outlined in the NDP 2030 is to be achieved.

By addressing these challenges through concerted efforts from governments, financial institutions, and the business community, the prospects for entrepreneurship and small business development can be significantly enhanced. Nonetheless, considering the path envisaged in the NDP for dealing with the scourge that South Africans are faced with, promoting entrepreneurship and indulging in small business is a great trajectory and an optimum way to enhance the standard of living. Laconically, entrepreneurship and small businesses play a pivotal role by alleviating and becoming part of the quest to eradicate the dire unemployment, poverty, and inequality that most South Africans are confronted with. As a result, how the national government addresses these major issues will determine the success of entrepreneurship and small businesses. This is because these challenges could severely influence the sustainability and survival of entrepreneurial activities and small businesses in the country.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

While significant challenges remain, the NDP provides a comprehensive roadmap for fostering sustainable and inclusive development in South Africa. The NDP is an ambitious government initiative with a roadmap to 2030 to address a wide range of social and economic issues such as high unemployment, poverty, and low economic growth. Entrepreneurship and small business development have been identified as one of the strategies to facilitate economic development in South Africa to attain Vision 2030. Thus, there is a plan to increase the commitment towards promoting

entrepreneurial activity and small business development in the minds of everyone concerned. The plan also aims to create an enabling environment that acknowledges the significant role that entrepreneurship and small businesses can play in improving the standards of living of the people and, consequently, the country's economy. The NDP places a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship and small business development as pivotal elements for economic growth, job creation and reducing inequalities.

Indeed, most scholars acknowledge entrepreneurial activity and small business development as an important mechanism to help curb appalling levels of poverty, high unemployment, a stagnant economy, and widening inequalities in the country. Unfortunately, for the less privileged population, these conditions continue to persist, and it appears to be a challenge that might persist for a few years before 2030. Even though entrepreneurship and small business development are seen as critical to Vision 2030, they face a number of adversities. These challenges encompass low skill levels, limited market access, insufficient financial resources and credit, and inadequate information access, all exacerbated by ineffective support structures and institutions.

Therefore, it is imperative to first equip people, particularly youth and graduates, with entrepreneurial and small business skills to create jobs and improve their well-being instead of seeking employment at the commencement of their careers. Hence, the government should prioritise investment in youth entrepreneurship, particularly in disadvantaged communities. Equally, there is a need to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and small business development among people that could be beneficial to their well-being and the success of the country's economy. In conclusion, enhanced access to and robust support from institutions such as banks and microfinance entities are crucial in facilitating the growth and success of entrepreneurial endeavours, especially those in their emerging stages.

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## CHAPTER 12

# The fourth industrial revolution and government of the future: a case of South African Social Security Agency during the covid-19 pandemic

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### Introduction

In the tumultuous year of 2020, the world was ensnared in the relentless grips of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic ravaged countries and economies, which were forced into lockdowns as the virus spread rapidly, leaving death and destruction in its wake. COVID-19's impact reverberated across every corner and facet of South Africa, a nation already grappling with years of near-stagnant growth and mounting unemployment. In response to the virus's relentless spread, the South African government activated a state of emergency in March 2020, swiftly imposing a nationwide lockdown for an initial three-week period. Yet, as time progressed, it became evident that the varying levels of lockdown would persist throughout 2020 and into the foreseeable future. For many, the lockdown proved as devastating as the virus. Businesses were forced to close and the majority of the population

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could not work. Without an end in sight and restrictions in place, there was no way of earning a living for many, which placed the burden on the government as the unemployed sought relief.

The Department of Social Development (DSD) portfolio remained at the forefront in terms of the provision of essential services or interventions to the poor and vulnerable during this period (SASSA, 2020:2). The pandemic required a coherent and integrated response to the needs of the vulnerable sectors of the population. In light of the restrictions during this period, departments had to look for new and innovative ways of delivering critical services. It became evident that the South African public administration had to swiftly adopt a digital revolution to sustain its mandate of service delivery. Viewed through the lens of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), the public sector presents a promising, albeit complex, opportunity poised to revolutionise service delivery for the better.

This paper seeks to contribute to the emergent body of knowledge on public administration, 4IR, and service delivery. It discusses how service delivery was impacted at SASSA during the COVID-19 pandemic and how the agency managed to embrace technologies afforded by the 4IR in order to sustain the dispensing of social grants. SASSA is a Schedule 3A Public Entity established in terms of the South African Social Security Agency Act (SASSA Act, Act 9 of 2004). The mandate of SASSA is derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). Section 27(1)(c) of the Constitution states that “everyone has the right to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance”.

The pandemic compounded the country’s crises of poverty, unemployment, and inequality as over two (2) million people (StatsSA, 2020) lost jobs and more households became impoverished, thus not affording basic necessities, including meeting their rates and service obligations to municipalities. As the pandemic reversed the economic gains made over

the past twenty-seven years of democratic governance, the national lockdown further reduced citizens' access to services, as in-person services were limited. SASSA's ability to sustain services was tested during this period, especially in the context of the new social relief of distress grant that was introduced and implemented during hard lockdowns (risk-adjusted levels 5-3). The organisation had limited lead times to prepare for the shift to adopting digital technologies to effectively serve the public and they did not have sufficient resources. There was no time for planned and intentional digital transformation; SASSA had to take a digital leap.

As stated in law, SASSA's responsibility is to ensure effective administration, management, and payment of social assistance and social security, and to render social assistance to eligible persons (SASSA, 2019). Acknowledging the significant role of institutions such as SASSA, the National Development Plan (NDP) underscored the imperative for South Africa to meticulously design and implement policies aimed at supporting the most vulnerable segments of society, particularly children, the disabled, and the elderly, many of whom face barriers to earning a livelihood. The form of social assistance they receive from SASSA reduces extreme poverty through income transfers (SASSA, 2019).

For more than a decade, SASSA continued to provide social relief to many families and households in South Africa. However, the need for social services has increased significantly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the country under lockdown to contain the spread of the virus, many people lost their jobs and had no source of income. Globally, the pandemic brought about an unexpected social and economic crisis. In response to this crisis, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a massive social relief and economic support package of R500 billion in April 2020. This included a social relief grant of approximately R50 billion directed towards alleviating the plight of those most desperately affected by the pandemic (SASSA, 2020:2). With the added task of distributing these funds, SASSA's usual mandate had increased substantially, and innovative ways of service

delivery had to be established in order to improve performance. Against this backdrop, the reliance on technology became imperative, catapulting service delivery into the realm of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Consequently, SASSA had to undertake a digital leap to guarantee uninterrupted service delivery.

This study followed a secondary research approach where research data was collected from existing sources. This paper reviewed formal reports, presentations, and unstructured interviews with members of senior staff at SASSA who were directly involved with the delivery of services using digital transformation initiatives during the lockdown period.

## **Background**

According to Mittal (2020), in the government of the future, citizens expect a personalised and responsive public service similar to what is received from the private sector. Certainly, in the digital era, leveraging technology and adopting a user-centric approach have the potential to greatly enhance the citizen's comprehensive experience of public services. The government needs to adopt a 'citizen-first' culture in framing policies, applying policies, and delivering services. The ultimate aim of the future government is to elevate service quality, bolster public trust in governmental policies, and achieve improved outcomes for citizens. Thus, the introduction of 4IR, digital public services, government procurement of advanced technology, data capability, technology skills, innovation capabilities, and artificial intelligence (AI) can enhance improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector (Mergel, Edelmann & Haug, 2019; OECD, 2019).

## **Defining the Fourth Industrial Revolution**

Olojede, Agbola, and Samuel (2019:162) indicate that the global village is currently on the threshold of an unprecedented technological transformation that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and communicate with each other.



The previous industrial revolutions featured steam power and mechanisation, electricity and mass production, and computers and automation. It should be noted that any industrial revolution changes government policies and the way government provides services to various communities and influences both social and economic aspects of society (Kayembe & Nel, 2009:80). In a study by Vries (2008:158), an industrial revolution is referred to as the occurrence of modern economic growth during the transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial society.

Various studies (McKinsey, 2016; Uwizeyimana, 2019) have outlined the benefits of 4IR in both the private and public sectors. However, a number of concerns have also been noted. The most common concern is that the technological progress will substitute human labour with machines, which could lead to technological unemployment, that is, the loss of jobs caused by technological change, resulting in increased inequality in the short term, regardless of the long-term benefits (Mokye, Vickers & Ziebeth, 2015:32; Xing et al., 2018:175). Marwala, Mahola and Nelwamondo (2006) assert that 4IR will revolutionise industries so substantially that much of the work that exists today will not exist in 50 years' time. The 4IR is challenging traditional management and governance in the private and public sectors around the world. The innovations and technological advancements of the 4IR are uprooting and changing how societies normally do business and go about their daily work (WEF, 2017:6). The public service is not excluded from these advancements, as it has to move with the times or face being stuck in the stone age of working and thus relying on old ways of delivering the most needed services to the communities.

As per Kayembe and Nel (2019:79), the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) represents the evolving landscape characterized by transformative technologies and trends like the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), reshaping both our lifestyles and the way we work. The advent of the 4IR represents a number of implications for the public sector, such as reinventing processes of service delivery and

strategic approaches to increase creativity and innovation. As such, the 4IR is projected to bring about enormous benefits associated with increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. It can thus be extrapolated that, in order to improve service delivery, the government has to adopt and implement more innovative and cost-effective solutions. This implies that the government has to take advantage of the development of 4IR technologies to provide innovative, reliable, efficient, and effective services to communities. Over time, integrating 4IR technologies has the potential to enhance the government's ability to directly serve communities more effectively.

### **Public Administration and the Imperative of Service Delivery**

Thornhill (2010) defines public administration as “a study of the administrative activities concerned with governing and the administrative requirements to give effect to government policies”. Sebola (2015:3) posits that public administration is a field that involves and deals with complex interactions within a public sphere for the achievement of the welfare of society. In the works of Ngcaweni (2020:608), public administration is seen as a cornerstone of the functionality of society, including the management of the economy. Thus, the safety and wellbeing of citizens and a thriving private enterprise depend on a capable, responsive, effective, and efficient public administration. Service delivery refers to the efficient and effective provision of basic services that a selected municipality or department should provide to its citizens (Mpofu & Hlatywayo 2015:134).

The democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution must govern public administration, according to Section 195 (South Africa, 1996). It sets out the principles and framework within which public administration must operate in order to deliver government services to the people. It is thus imperative that the mandates of government departments and entities are implemented based on these principles to ensure that service delivery takes place in an efficient and effective way.

Over the past few years, the public sector in South Africa has been working on moving away from manual and paper-based processes towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the use of technology. SASSA is one of the government organisations that were heavily reliant on manual processes, thus characterised by long queues and unhappy citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown have accelerated the adoption of technology, enabling the public sector to maintain its commitment to service delivery throughout this challenging period.

## Discussion

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent impact on individuals and the economy, the President announced a massive social relief and economic support package of over R500 billion on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2020 (SASSA, 2020:2). This amount included approximately R50 billion for the Social Relief Grant (SRG) support directed towards alleviating the plight of those most desperately affected by the pandemic. Part of the package of benefits introduced by the government to assist the vulnerable that were mostly impacted by lockdown was the special COVID-19 Social Relieve Distress (SRD) grant of R350. This grant primarily sought to assist individuals who are currently unemployed and do not receive any form of income (SASSA, 2020:2). SASSA pays approximately 18.4 million grants to 12 million beneficiaries every month. Thus, the total disbursed amount is around R15 billion every month. The top-up to various grants as a result of the COVID-19 special government intervention increased the total amount disbursed through the SASSA system to about R20 billion a month (SASSA, 2020:2).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown, SASSA used an in-house system (SOCPEN) to onboard and administer the payment of social grants. SOCPEN is a reliable, stable database that has been used for the administration, maintenance, and payment of grants to all qualifying beneficiaries. Until the introduction of the special

COVID-19 SRD grant, all grant applications, including normal SRD, were processed manually, from screening applications to onboarding. Payment or disbursement was done through SOCPEN payment processes. This system is capable of processing in excess of 18 million grants to 12 million beneficiaries every month. Data for all 12 million beneficiaries is stored and maintained in this database. The critical data content about beneficiaries includes, amongst others, the following information: name and surname; identity document number or refugee identification number; banking account details; address; and contact details. SASSA has collected the majority of beneficiaries' biometric data and is in the pilot phase of implementing an Identity Access Management (IAM) module for biometric access by staff to all corporate systems, starting with access to SOCPEN. However, despite SOCPEN being a mature, stable system, it is a legacy mainframe system built on old technology. As a result, it is not agile or able to respond to new ways of working quickly. As a result, the new COVID-19 grant could not be processed on SOCPEN (SASSA, 2020).

Due to the impact of COVID-19, many employees had to work from home in order to curb the spread of the virus. This meant that even though the objectives of SASSA had increased substantially, face-to-face contact with its clients had to be reduced in order to avoid the spread of the virus and to comply with the regulations promulgated under lockdown levels. The logical response was for SASSA to invest in technology that would enable the processing of this additional grant in an efficient and effective way. This is supported by the study conducted by Gumede (2021:291) where the findings indicate that technological changes drastically influence decisions at levels of policy development in South Africa. Accordingly, policies required recalibration to align with the emerging paradigm; crucial operations like supply chain management necessitated adjustments; and legislation concerning procurement underwent redrafting (Malatjie, Poonsamy & Ngcaweni, 2021).

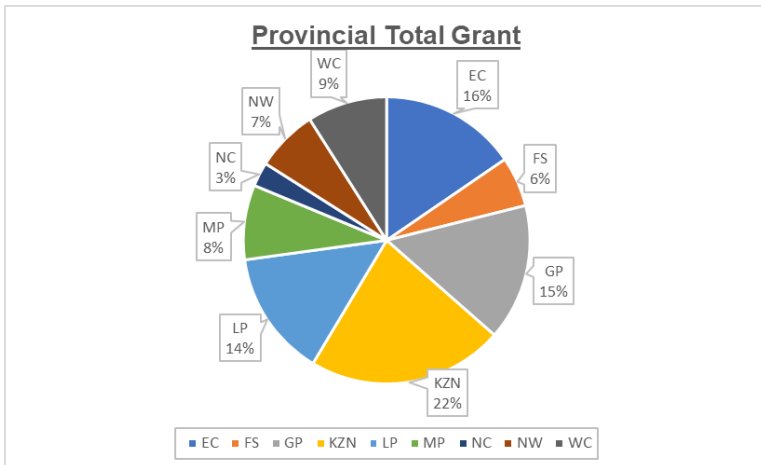
Before the pandemic, SASSA had started engagements with industry stakeholders to improve the payments of social grants through automation and digitisation of many processes. Furthermore, among the initiatives was the modernisation, transformation, and replacement of the legacy technology with modern service-oriented architecture, which increased the ability to integrate with other systems. With the advent of COVID-19, SASSA has had to accelerate some of its plans, including the introduction of the contactless application platform and electronic disbursements of this relief fund. SASSA opted to execute the special COVID-19 SRD through its internal systems and processes, given that grant payments constitute a fundamental aspect of its operations.

Nevertheless, the introduction of this new grant entails the requirement for system upgrades and capacity enhancements to accommodate the accompanying directives effectively. The system that was implemented for potential beneficiaries to apply for this grant was largely electronic, using simple technologies such as WhatsApp, unstructured supplementary service data (USSD), and web applications (SASSA, 2020:5). Via these four application channels, over 16 million raw applications were registered in under four weeks, all accomplished without any physical interaction between applicants and DSD or SASSA personnel.

The Minister for Public Service and Administration issued a directive outlining arrangements for employees to work remotely while ensuring business and service continuity to support the delivery of public services (DPSA, 2020). In the reports that were analysed, it has become more evident that SASSA had to rely on technology for service delivery as its mandate had increased while its employees had to be at home to curb the spread of the virus. According to Dimitrieska, Stanskovska and Efremova (2018:184), some of the advantages of the 4IR are recognised as higher productivity (producing more with fewer resources); the creation of new jobs in place of those that are automated; and the replacement of manual work with knowledge.

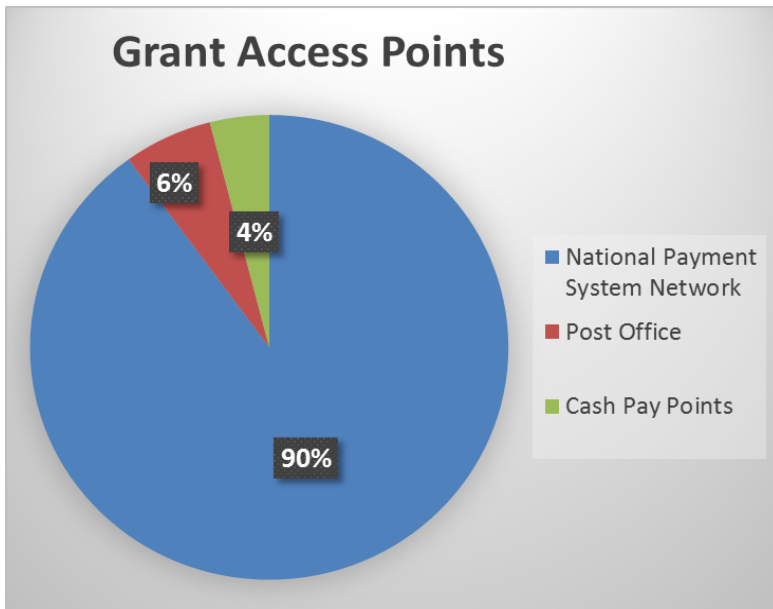
His statement is exemplified by the case of SASSA, wherein within a year, technology facilitated the processing of 6 million new individuals (SASSA, 2020:10) to access direct income support from the government. These improved measures introduced with the implementation of the special COVID-19 SRD grants are expected to improve the decisions regarding the broader social grants administrative systems and specifically the SRD payments in the long term. The investment and development endeavours were not solely geared towards a six-month project; rather, they aimed to foster enduring enhancements in how the government interacts with these citizens over the long term.

Figure 12.1 depicts the distribution of social grant recipients across provinces in November 2020. Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) emerged with the highest percentage of grant recipients, trailed by the Eastern Cape (EC) and Gauteng Province (GP). Conversely, the Northern Cape exhibited the lowest number of grant beneficiaries. The integration 4IR technologies has empowered the SASSA to extend its services to a broader demographic, including individuals residing in rural and remote locales.



**Figure 12.1:** Provincial Total Grant – November 2020 (Author’s own graph - Source: SASSA report)

Figure 12.2 below indicates that approximately 90% of the beneficiaries access their grants using the National Payment System network, 6% through the Post Office, and 4% at the remaining cash pay points. SASSA deposits money directly into the bank accounts of all beneficiaries, including those using Post Bank cards. The Post Office only serves as a withdrawal channel. Normally, SASSA staff is there on payment days to provide support to beneficiaries and deal with queries. However, during Stage 5 Lockdown, all SASSA local offices (where at least 5 000 staff work) were locked (SASSA, 2021). Therefore, the use of technology was essential to ensure that service delivery is not interrupted.



**Figure 12.2:** Grant Access Points (Author’s own graph – Source: SASSA report)

McKinsey (2016) asserts that developing and developed countries seem to have embraced the innovative technologies made available with the 4IR. These technologies can assist local and central governments to accelerate service delivery to their constituents. This was evident in the case of SASSA,

where the use of technology ensured that service delivery was not affected and that the organisation was able to deliver on its added mandate.

**Lessons learned through the SASSA case study:**

- During this transition, SASSA encountered challenges in implementing relief measures, such as delays in processing payments and appeals, as well as issues with overcrowding and system failures.
- The introduction of the Special COVID-19 SRD Grant (the first in the history of SA) has brought over 6 million new people, who had never received a grant before, into the space of receiving direct income support from the government. This was possible to process in a short space of time by relying on technology.
- Implementation of the grant has opened doors for full automation of the social assistance programme. There is an urgent need for full automation of the programme going forward to sustain the gains achieved with the R350 SRD grant.
- The introduction of the special R350 SRD Grant has also led SASSA to rethink the alternative distribution of these government services and related benefits in the future.
- The R350 SRD grant has also opened doors for alternative payment methods, including cellphone payments, EFT's, and e-vouchers.
- Overall, government departments should prioritise investment in technological infrastructure, as it has been paramount in ensuring efficient service delivery throughout the lockdown period.
- In the future, the government will increasingly depend on technology rather than human resources. Consequently, the existing government workforce requires retraining and upskilling to prepare them for roles demanding cognitive abilities (SASSA, 2021).

The finding of the study points out that, during lockdown, SASSA increasingly adopted different 4IR tools to ensure



that they delivered on their mandate and that service delivery continued unaffected in spite of the large volumes of applications and payments that they had to process. As such, SASSA was able to effectively deliver on the government's priority 4 as contained in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) of "Consolidating the Social Wage through Reliable & Quality Basic Service" (SA, 2019). These observations indicate that South Africa has pockets of excellence that need to be replicated in other departments. Mhlanga and Moloi (2020) posit that, considering that the pandemic has brought massive human suffering across the globe, it presented an opportunity to assess the successes and failures of deployed systems, the costs associated with them, and scale this to improve service delivery. Therefore, the government must devise a strategy to increase budgets to ensure greater investment in technology across the entire public sector.

### **Organisational implications**

SASSA managed to deliver on its additional mandate using technology such as smart phones. The agency relied on the fact that access to cell phones in South Africa was already very high. Therefore, they used USSD, which is a technology that was already in use by community members to upload airtime. Thus, applications for grants were done via platforms such as USSD, WhatsApp, email, and the web. In addition to that, volunteers were appointed to support communities in rural areas. It's worth noting that SASSA already possessed the largest database of individuals in need across the country, simplifying the process of matching applications to existing data. Additionally, applications underwent matching with data from other government databases, including the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), and Persal/Persol. This measure aimed to prevent applicants from receiving duplicate financial assistance from the government, thus mitigating the risk of double-dipping. Back-end processing was automated for most of the process except for

a few databases where data dumps were used. The outcome of this entire endeavour was the establishment of the largest database of impoverished individuals in South Africa by SASSA. This database presents an opportunity for the government to use it for future planning and interventions.

### **Strengthening Partnerships for Digital Transformation**

*GovTec*

Ensuring comprehensive digital transformation within an organisation is paramount to unlocking its most significant rewards. Given the connectivity of systems and processes in this digital age, any blockage in the process hampers the efficiency and effectiveness of all systems involved. Therefore, it is imperative that the government, in its digital transformation efforts, partner with experts in the space that can assist them in making the absolute most of the technologies. The National Digital and Future Skills Strategy issued by the Minister for Communication and Digital Technologies is a key strategy document for empowering South Africa with digital skills and addressing the digital skills divide (South Africa, 2020: 22). Thus, the ability to harness the 4IR in the public sector rests on forging collaborative partnerships between the government and the private sector, with policymakers and industry experts, and with our counterparts nationally and internationally.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, secondary research was done to understand the impact of COVID-19 on influencing the digital transformation in the public sector. In essence, the study investigated how the public sector adopted the use of 4IR tools during the COVID-19 lockdown period. The study was based on the review of secondary data sources such as internal reports, peer-reviewed journals, recently published journal articles, and policy reports by the government.

This case study attempted to provide an understanding of how the public sector responded to the crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, paying attention to the shift in policies and a move towards 4IR. It is clear from the study that the public sector was able to continue to deliver services through the use of technology during lockdown. It is evident from the case of SASSA that technology can successfully improve service delivery. The agency managed to process the applications for special grants from over 6 million people through the use of technology. Therefore, the 4IR is crucial for governments to serve their citizens in an efficient and effective way.

Ngcaweni (2020:612) asserts that the COVID-19 pandemic played a pertinent role as a catalyst to accelerate innovation in areas that faced the most strain, including the health and education sectors. As strategic future plans are made, the momentum gained from the pandemic's embrace of technology must persist. The boundless potential of technological adoption holds the promise of heightened efficiencies and effectiveness, offering endless possibilities for advancement. In a country where unemployment and rising levels of poverty persist, if agencies like SASSA are to improve service delivery, then the utilisation of intelligent technologies must be adopted. Thus, the government needs to invest more in technological infrastructure in order to ensure continued efficient and effective service delivery.

Ultimately, the government must streamline its operations, harnessing the appropriate skill sets to effectively use technology and emerging digital tools. Collaboration and interaction with citizens, society, and businesses are imperative for enhancing service delivery. The digital transformation of governments is not merely desirable but essential to cater to the needs of modern digital societies and economies. To achieve this goal, the governments need to use data capabilities and skills as strategic components of their efforts to improve and modernise services in the public sector.

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## CHAPTER 13

# Curriculum reforms in the scholarship of public administration

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### **Introduction**

In the 21st century, individuals require a distinct set of skills for employment, civic engagement, and personal fulfilment, which have evolved from those necessary in the 20th century. Educational systems in a society must be able to transform curricula, objectives, and assessments to help students attain the requisite outcomes for a successful lifestyle link to effective contributions and citizenship (Human, 2017). It is imperative for higher education institutions to equip students for a world that demands expert thinking and sophisticated communication skills, as these are fundamental intellectual competencies that enable individuals to achieve prosperity and fully utilise their potential. One of the main responsibilities of any government is to provide and maintain a supply of public services and goods to society in the name of good governance.

Similarly, the South African government has recognised the imperative of capacity building and enhancing education, training, and innovation to achieve the objectives outlined in the National Development Plan's Vision 2030, placing particular emphasis on strengthening local government. The National Development Plan (2011:388) identifies several challenges, including the shortage of skills and the decline in accountability within government departments. Given these challenges, it is crucial to prioritise the establishment of a competent and professional public service at all levels of local government. Generally, the responsibility for educating

and training public servants lies with the government, higher education, and training institutions. Examining South Africa's educational legislative framework, including acts like the National Education Policy Act (NEPA), National Qualifications Framework Act (NQF), and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), it's evident that the country's higher education system must deliver the necessary internationally recognised skills, knowledge, and competencies to both public and private institutions.

Higher education institution curricula should continuously reflect the evolving local and industry needs while aligning closely with the demands of the labour market (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). Curriculum reforms are improvements made to the teaching curriculum in learning institutions to address societal and learners' needs. Learners must be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge that will strengthen communities and be employable for industries. Research studies such as the one conducted by Ogude et al. (2005) revealed that outdated or non-responsive curricula, especially in universities, result in an increase in the unemployment rate in South Africa due to the large pool of graduates exiting universities with outdated skillsets. As a result, organisations find themselves compensating for inadequate academic preparation by investing in the training of new employees, leading to increased operational costs and decreased productivity and competitiveness.

Given the rapid changes in social, organisational, and technological conditions, institutions of higher learning are expected to be abreast of these reforms in order to formulate and develop responsive curricula. Therefore, this paper serves as a useful tool for curriculum designers, scholars, and government practitioners who are in constant search for a responsive curriculum in the Public Administration space. Furthermore, comprehending these factors will enhance the likelihood of successfully reforming and creating responsive curricula in higher education institutions.



This chapter focuses on the factors that influence the implementation of curriculum reforms in Public Administration. The chapter begins by conceptualising Public Administration education, higher education curricula, and the nature of higher education curricula in the South African context. The next section presents a brief discussion of the current state of the Public Administration curriculum in South Africa and a theoretical framework underpinning the design and reform of a responsive Public Administration curriculum. Furthermore, the chapter proceeds to discuss the factors that influence the implementation of curriculum reforms. The conclusion provides a summary of the chapter and highlight areas for further research.

### **The Nature of the Public Administration Discipline in South Africa**

Public administration and management practitioners, experts, and scholars have been given great responsibility for advancing the public sector and the state service delivery through relevant teaching methods and practices and innovative research. Consequently, it needs to be questioned whether it is evident in the current curriculum practices. The National Development Plan (2011), a policy directive of the current ruling party (ANC), contains objectives of a developmental state that are yet to be realised. South African universities have the potential to enhance research capacity to align with these developmental goals, necessitating a Public Administration curriculum that cultivates the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviours among public servants to effectively achieve government objectives.

Numerous scholars of Public Administration reveal the confusion other scholars and practitioners face concerning the true nature of the discipline. For instance, Van der Waldt (2012); Davies et al. (2017); Mutereko and Wedekind (2016); Subban and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2014); and Van Dijk and Thornhill (2011) raise some pertinent questions that should be asked in curriculum design and development. Their

questions centre around whether the discipline should focus on preparing public officials for the labour market, or should it focus on the academic facet producing knowledge, conducting research, and formulating and testing theories. These authors further concluded that the new generation of Public Administration academia seemingly shows no interest in the fundamental underpinnings of the discipline. Likewise, Clark et al. (2014) concurs with the assumption that academics feel that the theory of Public Administration is irrelevant to the world of work and learners are not fully exposed to the relevant theories. Consequently, students encounter difficulties advancing in postgraduate research endeavours owing to the absence of a comprehensive theoretical groundwork within the discipline.

In addition, it is necessary to note that Public Administration education in South African universities is situated in management science faculties or business and economics schools and departments. However, if Public Administration education is in the management domain, then the focus is on increasing the skills of public servants rather than building knowledge, which fuels the debate between technical and academic relevance (Lam & Wong, 2018). This should raise a question for curriculum designers whether they are designing curricula to train generalists or specialists for the labour market. A variety of factors should be considered when deciding on a curriculum focused on Public Administration. It should be considered whether a department decides to offer Public Administration with a vocational focus. The department needs to ensure that the curriculum covers the competency profiles for managerial positions in the public service such as Directorial positions, and Senior Management Services (Van der Waldt, 2012).

Much of the available literature on the Public Administration education curriculum in South Africa reveals that academics can be isolated from experiences of development if they only rely on information in textbooks and scholarly articles. Additionally, the study materials should include practical exposure to enrich tuition and address

real-life situations (Subban and VyasDoorgapersad, 2014). This raises concerns about lecturers losing legitimacy as reliable figures or sources of knowledge. Davies et al. (2017) add by noting that if students have access to real-life cases, it can enhance research endeavours and simultaneously improve curriculum relevancy. Balancing traditional teaching with research is vital for connecting academics and public officials. Engaging relevant stakeholders like the community, employers, students, and discipline experts is key to effective Public Administration curriculum reform.

Drawing from the inception of Public Administration in Europe in early 1887, the nature of the discipline has been subjected to various paradigm changes that gave rise to different schools of thought. As observed in most developing states, South African education has been largely influenced by Western ideologies and paradigmatic shifts. These influences were well documented by Nicholas Henry back in 1975. This can be traced back to the establishment of the discipline by Woodrow Wilson, who advocated for a dichotomy between politics and administration, which further led to the professionalisation of public service (Henry, 1975). He simultaneously defines administration as the division that focuses on the implementation of government policies.

This is seen in the separation of powers in the three branches of the state (legislature, executive, and judiciary). Secondly, the principle of the Public Administration paradigm is concerned with scientific guidelines that public administrators should learn to apply when performing their respective governmental functions. Thirdly, Moloney (2021) concurs with Henry's (1975) documentation and background of the Public Administration and Political Science paradigm, highlighting the inseparability of Public Administration and politics concerning the equal collaboration of essential managerial and political expertise for effective service delivery.

The fourth and last paradigm is related to Public Administration from 1970 to date. In agreement with Henry's

conclusions, De Wet (2014:7) maintains that the inclusion of management science and organisational theory in New Public Management focuses on improving techniques that require specialisation and expertise. In view of these accounts, one can conclude that Public Administration is the skill and discipline of management practiced by government officials in the name of service delivery across branches of the state, and it is led by social, scientific, technological, political, and economic influences that are apparent in the public realm. It's undeniable that scholars like Thornhill, Cloete, and Schwela contend that the Public Administration discipline suffers from a lack of cohesive theoretical foundations and consistency in its application. Consequently, it finds itself in an intellectual quandary stemming from unsuccessful efforts to establish a clear identity.

Content is another interesting focus area of the nature of the Public Administration and Management discipline. Van der Waldt (2012) asserts that the most crucial aspect of curriculum design and development is the decision-making process regarding what to incorporate and exclude, and how to adapt to the ever-evolving dynamics of the public sector, its trends, developments, events, and disciplinary research.

Following the prescribed processes of the South African Qualifications Authority, the Standards Generating Body (SGB) for Public Administration and Management identified the eleven functional areas of public management. According to Van Dijk and Thornhill (2011), the SGB comprises of professional bodies, academics, members from specific specialisation areas, and practitioners. They are responsible for developing unit standards per NQF level and identifying outcomes for each functional area of the discipline. As a result of deliberation, the SGB identified the following as functional areas of Public Administration:

1. Public Policy Analysis and Management
2. Public Administration and Management History and Research
3. Managing public service delivery

4. Public Management Ethics
5. Development Management
6. Inter-governmental Relations
7. Human Resource Management
8. Financial Management and Procurement
9. Information, Knowledge, Communication, and Technology Management; and
10. Disaster Studies.

Collectively, the studies on the nature of Public Administration and Management provide substantial evidence for considering the historical background of the discipline in crafting a responsive curriculum with academical and technical relevance. Furthermore, the PAM curriculum needs to allow for developments that may be influenced by real-life situations. As much as these arguments are convincing, it cannot be ignored that the discipline still lacks theoretical foundations that can be applied uniformly throughout all universities and vocational institutions that offer Public Administration and Management.

Studies have shown that the triumph of the Public Administration discipline depends on the country's educational system. For example, Davies et al. (2017) are of the idea that most developing countries, such as Latin America, the Netherlands, and South Africa, lack educational opportunities and the rapid transformation of existing skills and knowledge. As a result, there may be fewer experienced, skilled, and qualified educators and trainers to support the constantly changing nature of public administration. Furthermore, there is another crucial factor in this complexity.

For instance, Mbhele (2014) argues that the value placed by communities and the government on Public Administration is a challenge in its own right. A labour market with compensation lower than the private sector and limited new public sector job opportunities, which may be inadequate or scarce, do not bode well for attitudes toward public administration (Davies et al., 2017). This literature emphasises the urgent demand for rapid expansion in

public administration education and training. It compels public institutions to cultivate competent and qualified public servants equipped with the necessary knowledge to adeptly address economic, social, political, and technological challenges.

### **The Public Administration Education Curriculum**

Public Administration is generally associated with the government's ability to render services to society. Public administrators serving the public require necessary and specific skills to perform functions related to government operations (Ganapati & Reddick, 2016). Institutions of higher learning and training have been entrusted with the responsibility of educating and training public servants. For instance, the South African Qualifications Authority (2000) calls for institutions of higher learning to formulate qualification curricula that comprehensively cater to society's needs. Consistent with Ganapati & Reddick's view, Wessels (2012:161) refers to the public administration education curriculum as a set of teaching and learning activities designed to train and develop capable public servants and to improve living standards. Additionally, some academics in the field of public administration concur, to a certain extent, that social practice and an ongoing social process characterised by the interaction of teachers, students, knowledge, and the environment should contextualise the public administration curriculum (Ohemeng, 2014:427; Ogude et al., 2005; Van Dijk & Thornhill, 2011:5). Undoubtedly, these scholars hold diverse perspectives on Public Administration education. However, a common thread among their arguments is the focus on programme outcomes that transcend disciplinary boundaries.

Van Dijk and Thornhill (2011:5) focus on the original intent of Public Administration education, which aimed to cultivate a specific set of cognitive abilities to strengthen essential public skills and merge the theoretical foundations of Public Administration with those of the Management discipline. As South African public administrators become

more professional and dedicated to service delivery, Thornhill and Van Dijk argue that it is critical to assess whether or not the provisions of the Public Administration education curriculum create the balance between 'doing' public administration and 'being' public administrators (leading the administration). The analysis of this degree supports the initial meaning of education that education should strike a balance between a set of skills and cognitive abilities (theory and practice).

The curriculum of Public Administration education necessitates robust and comprehensive program content that is firmly oriented towards the principles of good governance. The curriculum content should be designed with specific and clear objectives and outcomes in mind that will continue fighting for its right to exist. Relating to this, Van Dijk and Thornhill (2011:4) believe that regardless of the different conceptual understandings of public administration, those differences constitute the content of Public Administration education. In their research, Van Dijk and Thornhill further discovered that the content of Public Administration education is sectioned into two segments, namely, Public Administration and Public Management. Moreover, the general distinction between the two signifies the need for understanding both the theory and practice of Public Administration (Lam & Wong, 2018: 14).

Similarly, Wessels' (2012: 156) research findings suggest that a connection between higher education institutions' priorities and the content of Public Administration and Public Management as a discipline should be evident. These studies are consistent with Public Administration education being the conjunction of theory and practice in ensuring public officials and cadres are fully trained in all aspects of government administration. Furthermore, for a curriculum to be responsive, it should respond to the needs of the general public and employers in the government sector. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the factors influencing the implementation of Public Administration curriculum reforms in universities.

## **Theoretical Framework: Moll's Stratified Model of Curriculum Responsiveness**

Generally, the Department of Higher Education is expected to simultaneously address the issues of society by widening access, upgrading success rates, and setting targets for improved gender and racial balances. Not only that, but higher learning institutions are also required to be market-oriented by competing for students and producing employable graduates (Ogude et al., 2005). Moll (2014) advocates that the curriculum should not be viewed as just an organised learning syllabus, but it should be descriptive of what, how, and why students should learn systematically and globally. Furthermore, Moll came up with a Stratified Model of Curriculum Responsiveness, which explains how a curriculum should be responsive by simultaneously addressing cultural, economic, learning, and institutional issues.

Applying Moll's model in the formulation of the curriculum ensures that Public Administration programme learning outcomes match the skillset desired by public sector organisations. A severe weakness of Moll's stratified model of curriculum responsiveness is that it reveals limited consideration of the government's policy framework. Given the stringent statutory frameworks under which higher education institutions operate to implement government policies practically, Moll's stratified model might have been more fitting if it had included the application of government educational policies as a factor to be considered in a responsive curriculum. Furthermore, higher education institutions curricula should also respond to the high demands of public policy experts in formulation, implementation, evaluation, and analysis.

However, Moll did establish a comprehensive model for both curriculum design and development. Notwithstanding the stated weakness, this chapter drew from Moll's stratified curriculum responsiveness, as it is useful for grasping how universities create their curriculum in the Public Administration discipline. Moll's focus on the economic aspect



of his theory is valuable in shaping a curriculum that not only prepares students for job roles but also instills critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This equips them to tackle economic challenges by fostering innovation, creating employment opportunities, and implementing efficient resource management strategies.

The adoption of Moll's Stratified Curriculum Responsiveness theory is based on the following reasons:

Firstly, as the theory provides a rooted background on responsive curricula it can be utilised as a tool to formulate, implement, and review Public Administration curriculum in higher education. Secondly, Moll's philosophy on responsive curricula advocates for programme content to be constructed specifically to respond to the needs of the society, culture, economy, and students' needs. Hence, the theory addresses the core components of the Public Administration programme content and the main objective of the discipline. Lastly, the study's focus is on the implementation and challenges thereof. Therefore, Moll's theory will be used as a criterion to ascertain whether the gaps are associated with the formulation of programme content or the delivery.

### **Factors Influencing the Implementation of Public Administration Curriculum Reforms**

Studies have shown that countries' education systems influence the discipline of Public Administration. For instance, Davies et al. (2017) observed that in developing countries like South Africa, there are limited educational opportunities available, which adversely affect the skills and qualifications of practitioners, ultimately rendering them incompetent. This chapter contrasts with this, noting that South Africa has qualified and competent lecturers who can enable the swift implementation of the Public Management curriculum. Moreover, they are depicted as knowledgeable about global conditions, and universities effectively meet the demands of Public Administration modules, thus fostering the development of a competitive future workforce. To qualify the

identification of the factors influencing the implementation of public administration curriculum reforms, the four factors (cultural, learning, economic, and societal needs) of Moll's stratified model of curriculum responsiveness was a referral point. Each influencing factor is tested against each factor of Moll's model of curriculum responsiveness. It should be noted that academic departments offering Public Administration should consider all factors influencing the implementation of curriculum reforms.

### **Partnership with other universities and employers**

A considerable body of literature on responsive Public Administration education curriculum reform suggested the involvement of industry representatives (employers) and their expectations in designing the higher education curriculum. For instance, Mutereko and Wedekind (2016), in their study concerning curriculum responsiveness and employability in post-school education and training, mentioned that an inventory of skills demanded by the labour market implies that post-school education and training institutions need to ensure a balance between their expectations and those of the world. In the same vein, Human (2017: 32) observed that since the transformation in 1994, higher education and training have been faced with designing learning curricula that will adapt to the nationwide transformation and produce graduates suitable enough to be absorbed by the economic sectors. Reliably, Mbhele (2014), Motene (2017), and Mutereko and Wedekind (2016) concluded that employers want graduates that have business sense, knowledge, and competencies that can compete on a global scale, have a clear digital footprint, and use social development as the currency of employment.

It's clear that curriculum reforms entail more than just updating documentation of offered programmes, courses, learning materials, evaluation methods, and outcomes within a defined timeframe. Rather, they are tools that aim to enable students to gain and improve competencies, skills, and knowledge to better their lives, secure employment in the economic sector, and contribute to resolving societal

issues. Moreover, reforms in Public Administration education curricula are unlikely to be responsive unless they are built upon the pillars of a proficient academic staff, students as stakeholders, recognition of the growing need for lifelong learning, and the enhancement of graduates' employability upon course completion. However, little is mentioned about government legislation and its role in shaping higher education curricula. Lastly, nothing is mentioned about international professional associations for global academic consistency.

### **Professional development**

Firstly, for Lam and Wong (2018:14), Wessels (2012:163), and Ganapati and Reddick (2016), professional development is one of the internal factors that can enable or hinder the implementation of curriculum reforms in the Public Administration discipline. Continuous academic and professional development needs to be considered a fundamental element of curriculum design and development, as numerous studies have revealed that this factor has both negative and positive impacts on implementation. Balfour (2017:54) supports the need for professional development by alluding to the fact that professional development for both experienced and newly appointed academic staff improves the implementation of the curriculum in various disciplines. It also sharpens the skills of the academic staff in the teaching and learning milieu. Similarly, Dehghani and Pakmehr (2011) reported that lecturers who attended curriculum development workshops and summits were better implementers than those who did not. Lecturers who actively participate in academic research, retreats, workshops, conferences, and community engagement projects are more likely to enhance their understanding of the discipline and become acquainted with the objectives and outcomes of the curriculum, compared to those who display less interest or attend infrequently (Dehghani & Pakmehr, 2011). From the scrutinised literature on professional development, it is evident that the development of lecturers improves not only the articulation and implementation of curricula but also serves as motivation

for them to reflect on their teaching practices in a scholarly manner through the above-mentioned academic activities. Furthermore, resistance from lecturers in taking professional development programmes seriously leads to failure to implement the curriculum reforms effectively.

### **Teaching experience**

Wang and Cheng (2009) discovered that the more experienced lecturers possess knowledge about the discipline itself, the attributes, the institutional operations, and, more importantly, about their students and student learning. This knowledge places them in a better position to mediate most predicaments that might arise. Others have highlighted the relevance of capacity building in higher learning institutions to improve staff skills and enhance the implementation of curriculum reforms. For instance, Balfour (2017:54) shares some strategies or approaches implemented by North-West University to ensure the capacity building of skilled and knowledgeable curriculum designers and implementers.

According to Balfour (2017:54), each faculty ensures that new lecturers are guided in curriculum planning and development through workshops and an induction programme. These workshops introduce teaching and assessment strategies and university expectations. Without a doubt, having skilled, knowledgeable, and competent academic staff improves the curriculum design and implementation. Conversely, Wang and Cheng (2009) reported that experienced lecturers could resist change due to the least favourable attitudes towards new approaches. Similarly, Wessels (2012:163) analysed lecturers' experiences and concluded that having a positive attitude does not necessarily signify a tendency towards positive action regarding curriculum implementation.

### **Curriculum review**

Another fundamental factor in the implementation of curriculum reforms is curriculum review. Reviewing the

curriculum refers to revisiting and assessing the relevance and the achievement of the intended curriculum outcomes (Prideaux, 2003). For example, North-West University has found this useful. Balfour (2017:54) asserts that faculties must review and amend curriculum changes through internal and external professional board evaluations for quality assurance and the sustainable relevance of offered programmes. Furthermore, Balfour (2017:56) indicates that, in all academic programmes, lecturers should maintain a healthy and beneficial relationship with industries and business sectors by being involved in integrated projects, and by attending conferences locally and internationally. Feedback from external stakeholders, such as employers, is imperative for reviewing and amending curriculum content and relevance.

Another significant obstacle to implementing Public Administration curriculum reform, as highlighted in the literature, is institutional autonomy. For example, the authorising of some universities to design their curriculums without external interference or influence may result in the privatisation of the curriculum, and the educational system would be serving the interests of the lecturers and not the students and the market (Bitzer & Botha, 2011). Thus, such autonomy should be discouraged, as it prohibits the responsiveness of the curriculum.

In contrast, Subban and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2014) argue that the public sector has gradually become associated with corruption, inefficiency, low wages, and limited growth prospects.

Consequently, this perception renders it a less attractive field of study for many students. The subject is unpopular with students who consider Public Administration a desperate or last resort, as they do not want to be associated with these challenges upon completion of their studies. Hence, it is imperative for Public Sector and Public Administration departments to undertake restructuring and revitalisation efforts to make themselves more attractive to students. This

is crucial, as it even affects the implementation of Public Administration curriculum reforms.

### **Student funding**

One of the major external factors that influence the implementation of curriculum reforms in Public Administration is student funding. A study conducted by Elliott, Robson, and Dudau (2021) about building student engagement through co-production and curriculum co-design in public administration programmes reveals that most students fail to progress in higher learning institutions due to the inability to fund their further studies. Wessels (2012:163) noted that when students have to focus on how they can fund their studies, they lose focus and do not grasp the curriculum gainfully.

Notwithstanding the government's intervention through the National Student Funding Scheme (NSFAS) to assist students from poor backgrounds, not all applicants are eligible to be funded, and those qualified can still be disqualified provided they failed to meet contractual obligations. Student funding is also one aspect that plays a greater role in securing study material for students, including textbooks, laptops, Wi-Fi connectivity, and stationery. This has been noted as one of the hindrances during the 2019 COVID pandemic, where students did not have sufficient access to such resources, especially those coming from deep rural areas (Sinervo, Kork and Hasanen, 2023). Consequently, students are compelled to grapple with the financial burden of funding their tuition, causing their attention to divert from the intended curriculum, thus perpetuating an injustice against them.

### **Teaching and learning resources**

One common factor in realising a responsive curriculum is teaching and learning resources. For instance, Ameyaw et al. (2019) and Bitzer and Botha (2011) believe that teaching and learning cannot take place in the absence of supporting resources. These resources contribute to a smooth curriculum

implementation, given their availability and accessibility to both students and lecturers. Furthermore, Blair and Valdez Noel (2014) and Maunder et al. (2013) argue that since module learner guides are designed to guide and navigate students through the module, they become useless if textbooks, tutorial assistance, computers, and scientific labs (depending on the course), and other relevant learning resources are unavailable to students. The significance of providing resources, particularly technological teaching and assessment resources, to assist less untrained and inexperienced lecturers who have less knowledge about the discipline or module contents cannot be ignored (Sinervo, Kork & Hasanen, 2023). Therefore, the availability or unavailability of these resources can enable or hinder the implementation of curriculum reforms in public administration education.

However, various scholars in the discipline expressed concerns over the unavailability of teaching assistance. For instance, Awaah, Okebukola, Shabani, Raheem, Aabove, Onowugbeda and Agbanimu (2023) alluded to the fact that, the recruited number of lecturers did not measure up to the demand, and on top of that, development prospects were not made available to them. As a result, this limits the scope of programme and even module contents due to the inadequate human resources (lecturers) to teach and train students. As mentioned earlier, the lack of recognition as a discipline meant that the tutors lack the desired exposure to grow in the field.

Wang and Cheng (2009) emphasised the necessity of furnishing material resources to support the growth of lecturers, particularly those who are less seasoned or untrained. However, a misalignment persists: module content often fails to mirror real-life scenarios, as highlighted by Clark et al. (2014: 4). This observation is closely intertwined with Wessels' (2012) insight, indicating that the adequacy of essential resources is pivotal for the seamless execution of a curriculum. It is then advisable that universities continue supplementing their online, tutorial or mentorship programmes, and physical libraries with relevant books, as this directly influences a responsive administration curriculum.

In line with these findings, other studies on curriculum responsiveness disclosed that acknowledgment of cultural differences enabled lecturers to improve classroom-learning experiences. The argument was that exposure to various societal cultures equipped them to approach the diversified classroom. Moll (2014), however, stresses that a cultural responsiveness curriculum requires adequate knowledge of diverse cultural encounters and changes.

### **Student voice**

Other researchers expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of student representation in curriculum developments. They argued that students had needs that, if adhered to, would contribute to a working curriculum. Even though the literature seems to differ, students' contributions were given cognisance and even shaped the curriculum (Elliott, Robson & Dudau, 2021). However, the extent to which the ideas were put into practice or operationalised is questionable. Hence, this rigidity of not wanting to hear the voice of the future generation of employees' may negatively affect the curriculum and its applicability to the outside world.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the factors influencing the implementation of curriculum reforms in the teaching of Public Administration. The developments employed to improve the Public Administration curriculum create a platform for enhancing teaching and learning activities in institutions of higher learning. The documentary evidence highlighted the need for curriculum reforms in the scholarship of teaching Public Administration and the factors influencing its implementation. Professional development, student representation, availability of teaching and learning resources, and partnerships with other universities and employers were identified as critical enablers of effective and responsive Public Administration curriculum reform implementation. These insights have profound implications not only in higher



education but also in the public sector institutions that absorb public administration graduates from universities. However, it is notable that universities offering Public Administration should improve the adaptability of curriculum reforms by creating and sustaining a healthy relationship with public sector employers to stay relevant in the economic and competitive world.

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