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Editorial

Christelle Auriacombe
Chief Editor

This edition focuses on problem identification in terms of cases of individual and organisational performance and a number of suggested solutions for both individual and aggregate levels of analysis. The first article, “Paradigm of the administrative manager: Restructured higher education approach collectively aligned to private and public sector trends” by John Marcus, Hentie Joubert and Esther Hoffman, looks at the essential role, efficacy and paradigm of administrative managers (AMs) in the corporate environment in our time and how they relate to a Higher Education (HE) not concomitant with vocational training. The authors report on AMs being widely criticised for poor customer relations and service delivery, especially during the past ten years. Asking if academic curricula cater for the spectrum indicated, they investigated the *status quo* of the profession of AM in the South African private and public sectors as well as performed an intermediate gap analysis for the purposes of their article.

According to the authors, the past 20 to 30 years were characterised by a new AM paradigm centring around rapid and far-reaching changes in information and communication technology (ICT) developments that led to a new electronic (e-) economy, driven by so-called e-commerce, which in turn caused a move away from the building of capital structures to virtual business environments driven by the e-capturing, processing, storing and retrieval of data, rather than the manual administrative management procedures and processes known before. This new e-paradigm caused human resources to be based more exclusively on knowledge work interfaced by ICT, which gave AMs new status – they became Information and Administration Managers (IAMs).

It became clear that the most AM job titles are irrelevant and outdated, as AMs do not have the necessary skills and qualifications, their key performance indicators (KPIs) don't outline their responsibilities; and their remuneration packages are not in line with their responsibilities. This means that urgent steps need to be taken to restructure the AM profession, as well AM KPIs and the HE curricula, so that these cover managerial dimensions and an e-business environment with multi-disciplinary/multi-skill approaches that add an information management component.

In “Organisational culture and the implementation of performance management: A case study of a South African municipality”, Pearse and Williams explore how a culture of performance can be furthered, and performance management systems put

in place to make Government more responsive to the needs of the local communities they serve. Internationally, implementing performance management systems at local government level is affected by factors such as the organisational culture of the institution concerned. Pearse and Williams describe how an organisational culture impacts on how a performance management system is implemented, but also leads to a stronger, more dysfunctional culture of fear, as well as suffering negative effects from the dichotomy between political and administrative leadership. Such negative effects include a failure to implement council resolutions; a lack of organisational strategy; and poor arrangements and inadequate resource allocation within the institution concerned ... but, most importantly, toxic leadership, which led to a culture of fear. The authors discuss their findings, and make recommendations as to how the leadership approach and organisational could be changed.

In the third article, "The influence of strategic leadership role competencies on change: A model to strengthen the senior management service (SMS)", Vain Jarbandhan focuses on how strategic leaders can manage change through a sustainable pool of competent, reflective and dynamic senior public sector leaders and can use change for the good of the senior management service. Jarbandhan's strategic leadership model illustrates the value of strategic leadership for public sector institutions.

Eddie Ströh's article builds on the performance theme in "Strategies to motivate employees to increase work performance: An empirical assessment". Motivating employees is a key factor in improving work performance, but how can managers create an environment that can motivate subordinates enough that their performance will indeed increase? Ströh's empirical study looks at selected employee motivation strategies, how applicable to the work situation they are seen to be, and how people would prefer them to apply to the work situation – including people's chosen order of preference.

To be competitive, any institution must keep creating, managing and using new knowledge. In Public Administration and Management, government institutions and processes cannot be understood without such knowledge and ongoing research. It is the job of higher learning institutions to act as the custodians of new knowledge, to generate and transfer such knowledge, and to apply it. If they don't, the knowledge society will not be enhanced, not communities developed.

In his article, "Research in Public Administration and Management: The tool to objectivity in knowledge management", Hendri Kroukamp describes research as an action by which problems are solved and the boundaries of knowledge expanded, but this links up with building a research culture in which both institutions and ethos support research and emphasise a more practical, community-based approach to research. Research plays a special role in a practitioner-orientated field such as public administration and management, where it guides much needed theory development but also

influences the practices and even the decisions of managers and policy-makers. Public administration and management issues are difficult to identify, isolate, manipulate, or even directly observed. Kroukamp aims to close the gap between research, reflection and the realities of services and State action.

Thokozani Nzimakwe's "Information management and good governance: A focus-oriented approach" explores information as a fundamental resource to both Government and private sector organisations. All organisations need both financial and non-financial information to be able to analyse and monitor the extent to which goals are achieved. A greater use of reliable information, and more networking among public sector organisations will make it possible to deliver more efficient and effective service to the public. How information is collected, used and managed can enhance or impede good governance. Good governance also rests on whether the democratic process is in place. Nzimakwe looks at how information could enhance good governance and examines the relationship between provision of information, information management and good governance.

In their article, "Multi-stakeholder processes towards establishing water management agencies in South Africa: A case study", Kobus Müller and Willie Enright observe that the multi-stakeholder approach reflects some of the most debated governance, democracy, equity and justice issues in recent years. The term multi-stakeholder is used to include all role players, Government institutions, stakeholders, clients, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations. Ideally, all stakeholders are partners in building relationships and knowledge that will help develop sustainable solutions to new challenges. It is against this background that the processes leading up to the establishment of new decentralised regional water management institutions in South Africa are described and analysed in this article. The process in the Olifants-Doorn Water Management Area to draft the required proposal for the establishment of a catchment management agency is used as a case study (from then on referred to as "the Olifants-Doorn process"). According to Muller and Enright, the Olifants-Doorn process up to the formal establishment of the Olifants-Doorn Catchment Management Agency (CMA) is a success story when measured against the principles of good governance, especially in terms of improving stakeholder equality through capacity-building; representation; the exchanging of the information, time, human and financial resources committed to the process; and consensus-building; and finally – the key success factor – the professional commitment of the public administration technocrats responsible for activating, orchestrating and modulating the multi-stakeholder process.

Paradigm of the administrative manager

Restructured higher education approach collectively aligned to private and public sector trends

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the essential role, efficacy and paradigm of contemporary administrative managers (AMs) in the corporate environment in relation to a curriculum in Higher Education (HE) that is presently not concomitant with vocational training requirements (National Learners' Records Database 2005). The AM profession has been widely criticised for its poor customer relations and service delivery, especially during the last decade. In order to ascertain whether the academic curricula caters for the spectrum indicated, an investigation into the status quo of the AM profession in private and public sectors has been conducted in South Africa (SA) (Marcus 2003) in addition to an intermediate gap analysis that was done for the purposes of this article (Hoffmann, Marcus and Joubert 2008).

The past two to three decades were characterised by a new AM paradigm that revolves around rapid and far-reaching changes in information and communication technology (ICT) developments that led to a new electronic (e-) e-economy, driven by so-called e-commerce. This inevitably resulted in a move away from the building of capital structures to virtual business environments driven by e-capturing, processing, storing and retrieval of information, as opposed to manual

administrative management procedures and processes. Within this new e-paradigm, human resources operations centre more exclusively on knowledge work interfaced by ICT, thereby evolving the AM to a status of Information and Administration Manager (IAM). This is a value adding component of globalisation and international benchmarking where innovation is a turnkey strategy in economies of scale (Hoffmann and Farrell 2005).

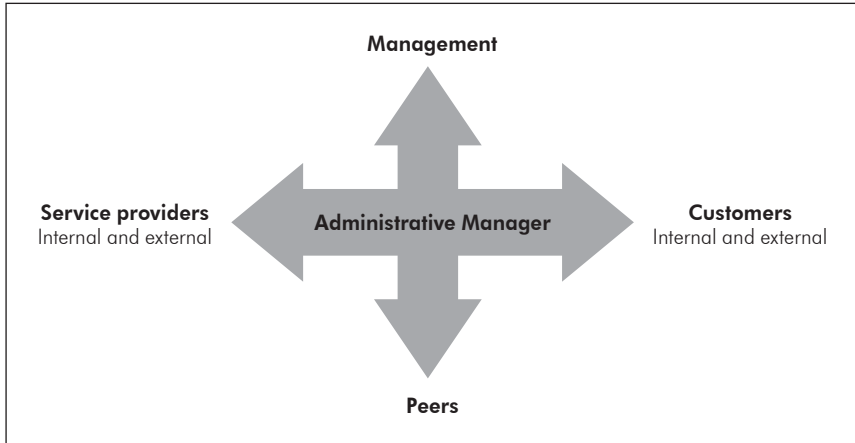
The inferential analyses clearly indicate that the wide conglomerate of AM job titles are irrelevant and dated; AMs do not possess the required skills and qualifications; key performance indicators (KPIs) do not depict parameters of their responsibilities; and remuneration packages are not concomitant with spectra and levels of responsibilities required of them. Urgent action needs to focus on restructuring of the AM profession concurrent with KPIs and relevant curricula in HE, including managerial dimensions, multi-disciplinary and multi-skill approaches within e-business environments where **information management** forms an additional and vital value adding component (Hoffmann 1999).

INTRODUCTION

An investigation (Marcus 2003) was inspired by Borgelt (1997:12), who stated that, ten years ago, the job of an AM encompassed four dimensions as indicated in Figure 1.

These four areas of responsibility included in the AM profile comprise the broad dimensions of management, namely interaction with peers, customer relations and service delivery in both internal and external business environments. Although a substantial amount of research has been done on aspects of general management, very little scientific research has been done on the KPIs of the AM. Consequently, Marcus (2003) conducted an investigation that resulted in a Magister degree in order to analyse the *status quo* of the administrative management profession and market needs concomitant with its education and training programs in HE in SA. This has especially been necessary in view of the Department of Education's strategic planning regarding the restructuring of all HE programs commencing from 2007, with 2011 as the targeted phasing in date (National Learners' Records Database 2005). In addition to this empirical investigation, the expertise of the authors of this article is supplementary and substantive to the results of the investigation. This collective expertise covers a post-school period of more than forty years of extensive and international

Figure 1 Administrative manager's areas of responsibility



Source Borgelt 1997:12

research and involvement in the fields of information and administration management (Hoffmann 1999). In recent dissemination of several research publications (Bothma 2006; Bothma and Hoffmann, 2008; Van Wyk 2008), it was found that a serious lack of expertise hampers effective information and administration management in industry.

This article focuses on the internal variables of human resources, with particular reference to the multi-disciplinary roles within a new IAM e-paradigm to ensure that appropriate planning, organising, staffing, directing and control are evident. Both the public and private sectors are covered because of the similarities that exist within the field of information and administration management, as inferred in the relevant analyses.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The AM is not afforded the recognition in trade and industry that the profession deserves. The contemporary IAM should operate within the parameters of an executive officer in the organisation **concurrent** with restructured postgraduate academic qualifications appropriately aligned to global e-trends within a new ICT interfaced paradigm. The problem investigated therefore focused on the multi-disciplinary dimensions of an ideal IAM profile required for reaching organisational objectives, in addition to the attainment of job enhancement and career advancement as opposed to the previously dated traditional dimensions of the AM profession.

OBJECTIVES

Primary objective

The primary objective focuses on determining the holistic nature of the AM profession within the private and public sectors encompassed within multi-disciplinary and e-business spheres in which it presently operates. It evolves, as point of departure, from the traditional and dated AM role into a restructured IAM e-paradigm, as encompassed in the following specific objectives:

Specific objectives

Three specific objectives respectively focused on:

- investigating the *status quo* of administrative management operations in public and private sectors that are expected to complement general management efficacy;
- determining whether HE provides the required support structures for empowering AMs to function within the paradigm of revised e-parameters; and
- establishing a profile of the ideal IAM within a new e-paradigm.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The holistic research framework used in the investigation is outlined as follows:

Literature survey

A national and international survey of available literature has been conducted from sources such as professional bodies, academic journals, newspaper reports, books, theses and dissertations, conferences, the internet and industry journals.

Empirical investigation: methodologies and geographical demarcation

Within the parameters of applied research, a combination of descriptive and exploratory approaches were followed focusing on the Pretoria, Gauteng area, which is one of SA's most densely populated provinces and industrial areas. The main investigation (Marcus, 2003) concluded with a gap analysis that aimed to determine the required KPIs in delineating an ideal IAM profile, concomitant with a market related HE curriculum. An additional intermediate gap analysis

was done in order to clarify the present AM profession profile in SA industries (Hoffmann, Marcus and Joubert 2008), for the purpose of this article.

Population, sampling and demographical demarcation

Population (N) and sample (n) sizes were determined according to the sampling table of Krejcie and Morgan (Leedy, 1997:211) with a suggested ratio of $N=4000:n=351$. N covered small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) as well as large organisations. These included

- two public sector industries: Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry;
- five private sector industries: Absa, Toyota SA and three micro enterprises (close corporations); and
- three semi-state HE institutions: Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), University of Pretoria, and the University of SA.

Purposive and convenience n comprised of AMs at senior and executive levels covering **both public and private sectors** as presented in N . The empirical investigation was conducted in two phases with the N and n framework as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 Population and sampling framework

Phase	N	n	No response	Spoilt data	Response (quantity)	Response (rate)
1. Main investigation	4 000	330	74	31	225	68.00%
2. Gap analysis	30	30	-	-	30	100.00%
TOTAL	4030	360	74	31	255	70.83%

Table 1 shows a cumulative representative response rate of 70.83 percent according to the totals of N and n (4030:360) that is concurrent with the ratio specified in the Krejcie and Morgan table (Leedy 1997:211 in Marcus 2003:118).

Measuring instruments and data collection

In Phase 1, structured questionnaires requested information on biographical particulars, job satisfaction, corporate image of the AM and dynamic functionality within the organisation. This was followed with a gap analysis (Phase 2) also consisting of a structured questionnaire that requested information for the purpose

of establishing an ideal IAM profile. In addition, an intermediate gap analysis focused on obtaining KPIs required by industry and relevant remuneration packages for the different AM job levels (Hoffmann, Marcus and Joubert 2008, in Anon: 8-13 2007).

Data capturing, processing and analyses

Codifying and capturing was done on the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) in addition to Cramer's V-testing. TUT statisticians verified and cleaned the data and 53 cross-tabulations were done in the first two phases of the investigation (Marcus 2003:123).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to obtain a realistic depiction of the construct under investigation, the following conceptual analysis obtained from the sources studied delineates the point of departure of the empirical investigation and gap analyses. This is elucidated in the following seven sections covering

- an introductory synopsis to the AM;
- *status quo* of the AM profession;
- evolvement of the AM profile;
- management role of the AM;
- the AM's role towards management;
- the AM's role towards colleagues and peers; and
- the AM's role towards suppliers and clients.

Introducing the administrative manager

It is a complex task to narrow down the AM's role and responsibilities. It is influenced by globalisation, ICT and corporate developments that result in their roles in the business environment being inconsistent because of the evolving change factor. Bates (n.d.), in Badenhorst (2001:32), summarises the quintessential message of the change process when he asserts that "change is a highly complex business, difficult to understand and, because of its non-linear nature, almost impossible to deal with systematically or write about convincingly." Within the hybrid context of this article, Da Samraj (2008) states that "change is not a matter of not doing something. It is a matter of doing something else – something that is inherently right ... Therefore, the key is insight and the freedom to ... participate in ways of functioning that are right and new." This quotation encompasses the dated traditional role of AMs. This role has evolved from the performance of manual

tasks into a new e-paradigm that now actively includes the contemporary IAM in a dynamic and integrated sphere of the executive management process. ICT, combined with the management role of AMs, have brought about an irreversible change in administrative management. It now involves, *inter alia*, research, e-interfaces, management information systems, crises management, decision making and financial-, knowledge-, strategic- and project management. As a unit, the IAM and line management do not only form a team, they also manage the business and information administration function in industry as active partners within a multi-disciplinary e-business environment (Hoffmann 1999). Steyn, AM of Absa DevCo, in Raats (1997:6), asserts that the demands on AMs are excessive because they perform customer relations and management functions, have major responsibilities over and above their usual administrative management duties, "but seldom receive financial benefit or recognition for going the extra mile".

Another paradigm that ensconces business and information administration management is the *domicile* where such activities traditionally took place within geographically centralised corporate buildings. This has evolved into a virtual or e-environment where information and administration management can take place anywhere, anytime with ICT as the enabler (Hoffmann 2002, Van Wyk 2008). This places the IAM in a pivotal position in enabling management to manage the organisation, to be competitive and to enable growth. Similar to the radically changed role of the AM in recent years, the ICT interfaced workplace has also changed. According to Odgers and Keeling (2000:305), some of these most prominent changes within a new e-paradigm are the following:

- "Virtual organisations are replacing traditional companies with collaborative networks.
- Lifetime jobs are a thing of the past.
- Businesses are outsourcing more functions to stay flexible in times of rapid change.
- Road warriors, the new ultra-mobile workforce, increasingly work out of 'brief-case offices'."

Therefore, the AM acquires a completely new paradigm: that of an **executive** e-business partner within an information and administration management environment. Pretorius, in Viljoen (1999:4), states that managers of the future will need their AMs "as a vital element of their management teams". The management pressure that results from the shortage of especially middle-level managers and the variety of tasks they have to accomplish, particularly as a result of rapid ICT progress, means that managers need competent support infrastructures to assist them in carrying out their tasks effectively (Auerbach, 2002:12). A vocationally trained IAM represents one such profile fulfilling an essential role in supporting the top echelons in industry, albeit the private or public sector.

Why then do employers not grant this profession the well-deserved prestige in terms of qualification requirements, recognition and remuneration? Have they become accustomed to AMs who operate without job descriptions (no parameters) at the lowest possible remuneration packages in view of the absence of appropriate HE qualifications? Marcus (2003:128) found that 98.2 percent of the *universum* studied consist of female AMs. One can therefore argue that this situation resulted because of the fact that the administrative management profession has traditionally been a female domain that today still suffers from its historical legacy (Marcus 2003:2). The time has come to position the administrative management profession in a new e-paradigm “as a profession both in the eyes of Human Resource Departments specifically, and in the market place generally” (Bond *et al.* 1995:4).

Status quo of the administrative management profession

As experienced by the authors, there has been a great deal of speculation at conferences, seminars and informal discussions about the changing role of the AM. These include arguments such as the following:

- The wide variety of titles related to the administrative management profession is questioned since it does not clearly identify administrative management professionals (*cf.* single titles in other professions such as lawyer, dentist, bookkeeper, etcetera).
- AMs are not afforded the recognition that they deserve in terms of the importance of their contributions in trade and industry.
- Inadequate remuneration packages hamper the dynamic development of this profession.
- Allegations that the AM is not suitably qualified, that leads to poor customer relations and poor service delivery.
- AMs themselves underestimate the importance of their contributions to the organisation, trade and industry and the economy in general.

Hermann (2008:21) emphasises that, in the very near future, affirmative action will be “axed” (not applicable) in ten job categories in SA of which **business administration and computer related careers** are included. This announcement was triggered by a desperate Eskom manager whose primary requirement for new appointments was that **incumbents should possess the required skills**.

Status quo of the administrator job profile

As many as **thirteen** traditional titles ascribed to an administrative professional for many decades – in sequence of a possible career path, these include

- administrator;
- administrative assistant;
- typist;
- telephonist;
- switchboard operator;
- receptionist;
- secretary;
- office/administrative professional;
- administrative officer;
- administrative director;
- executive assistant;
- personal assistant; and
- office/administrative manager (Bond *et al.* 1995:13; Anon:8-13 2007; Hoffmann, Marcus and Joubert 2008).

The relevance of these traditional titles has been under scrutiny globally for quite some time. According to the forum Professional Secretaries' International (Bond *et al.* 1995:20), USA executives preferred the title of Personal Assistant or Administrative Professional, whilst in the UK the title of Office Professional was preferred. Titles favoured in SA were Executive Administrative Assistant, Office Manager and Administrative Manager/Director. The question remains: why such a variety of titles ascribed to **one** profession?

The new e-paradigm concomitant with roles and responsibilities involved in an ICT interfaced business environment transpired from 'typing and cabinet filing of hard copies' into **data capturing, processing, storage (e-filing) and retrieval of soft copies**. Manual communication processes relayed through analogue signals (land telecommunication lines) have globally evolved into digital e-communication transmissions at the speed of light via cyberspace and wireless fidelity technologies (WiFi). This bears evidence of the primary change agent within the administrative management environment where information **and** administration management have become of paramount importance (Workplace Staff 2007:9). Therefore, a critical need to align vocational training programs and concomitant qualifications that are aligned with contemporary administrative management trends has been identified by academics in the field.

Robins and De Cenzo (2001:427), in Marcus, (2003:8) argue that, for any change or restructured process to be successful, a specific model should be used that requires "unfreezing the *status quo* (equilibrium state), changing to a new state, and refreezing the new change to make it permanent." In order to accomplish this within the change model, they furthermore advise that "unfreezing the equilibrium state is achieved by increasing driving forces, decreasing restraining forces, or combining these two approaches." Figure 2 provides a graphical presentation of

Figure 2 Three phase change/restructuring model



Source Robbins and De Cenzo, 2001:429

the proposed three-phase change or restructuring process that could prove to be extremely useful in a new IAM e-paradigm.

An administrator used to be a 'person employed to do office work'. This is a very general description in terms of what 'office work' entails and where the 'office' is geographically situated in e-commerce. Doing office work can vary from receiving visitors and preparing refreshments for them to organising an international conference for 500 delegates or working in a building as opposed to working at an airport terminal or in a hotel on a laptop computer. AMs are the backbone of a streamlined administrative management environment where incumbents anticipate their managers' needs and mastered multi-tasking. Efficient executive offices lead to successful companies and such a rationalised environment sets the standards for the rest of the organisation. Competent AMs refer queries and crises to the relevant line managers **in addition to managing information**. AMs are the first line of access that their associates turn to for information retrieval. Therefore, they are probably the employees who are the most adept at managing information that is relevant to and important for decision-making and the operations of the business (Du Plessis 1986:160).

What transpires here is that AMs are managers – they manage their managers'/ employers' business environments, they are time managers and they manage all company information. Along with the changing role of the AM, which implies more responsibilities and managerial involvement, the profession has evolved into a full-fledged career that has resulted in more males entering the AM profession (Van Antwerpen 2003). Hoffmann (1992:2) stated that the AM "is a time manager, a document manager, a liaison expert, an organiser, an expert in high technology equipment, an all round multi-talented professional, and to conclude: the manager's manager." Stevens (1993:1) refers to the contemporary AM as "a vital link between those who make management-level decisions and those who react to and implement the decisions." Presently, a competent AM serves not only as a link between management and staff, but also as a key support person for the executive who is not desk-bound any more.

The perception exists that the administrative management profession is stigmatised as being inferior in terms of the eight well-known areas of management. This is evident, for example, in Cronje, *et al.* (1997:100) where only seven areas of management are reflected – **excluding** Administrative Management, but making

provision for an additional management area that they refer to as “other areas of management”. Members of professional bodies have been trying to rid the profession of the stigma (Bond, *et al.* 1995), based on the general perception that neither industry nor the education sector have kept pace with the new paradigm of an e-economy concomitant with KPIs required of the contemporary AM.

The following section clarifies three administrative management areas of responsibility, namely the AM’s role towards management, the AM’s role towards colleagues, and the AM’s role towards suppliers and customers. These areas have each been clarified by providing information on the different roles and figure heads that comprise more comprehensive and specific KPIs of the e-paradigm IAM. These have been collectively sourced from Du Plessis 1986; Odgers and Keeling 2000; Anon 1995; Vinnicombe 1980; Stanwell and Shaw 1974; Stevens 1993; Nel 2002; Bond, *et al.* 1995; Popham and Tilton 1983; and Valenté 2002.

The management role of the administrative manager

The role and function of the contemporary AM are determined and influenced by various internal factors that are subsequently influenced by the organisation’s activities, objectives and functions. For that reason, the holistic internal environment should be taken into consideration when the role of the AM in the corporate environment is analysed. Du Plessis (1986:160) states that the administrative management function is the central nervous system of any organisation. It is the point of departure, the control centre and the finishing point of almost all the activities of an organisation. Administrative management includes a wide variety of activities, such as the allocation of administrative management duties; physical layout and ergonomics of the administrative management environment; mechanisation and automation, supervision and control; the organisation of administrative management duties; the reprography of documents; incoming and outgoing mail – hard copies and e-mail; filing and indexing; and general administrative management procedures (Odgers and Keeling 2000).

Role of administrative managers towards management

As the AM’s role has changed, the role of the manager, especially with regard to the AM, has also changed. It is essential that they should cooperate and that they should have a relationship of mutual loyalty and trust. Because of the rapid ICT developments, managers have a tendency to perform many tasks themselves, instead of entrusting and delegating these to their AMs. Managers should be able to focus on their managerial tasks, thereby adding to the efficacy of their internal partnerships with their supportive AM infrastructures (Anon 1995:14). By not applying AM potential optimally, counter-productivity and a waste of

time and resources result. Vinnicombe (1980:14) asserts that the importance of cooperation between the AM and the manager is vested in the fact that an “important function is fulfilled by the secretary in terms of the way she acts as an ‘extension’ to her boss, and on occasions even as a surrogate to him.”

The AM’s secondary functions demand knowledge rather than skills. Having the relevant knowledge and being well informed ensure that the AM can act dynamically without instructions or supervision. AMs need knowledge of the micro and macro business environments and of their own organisation in terms of logistics, infrastructures, vision and mission, procedures and systems. If they have that, they will be capable of and empowered to perform the following dynamic tasks, using their own discretion and judgement (decision-making):

- AMs deal with various administrative management tasks on behalf of their managers; coordinate and maintain effective office procedures and workflow; implement the policies and procedures set by the manager; establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with line managers, co-workers, subordinates, clients, customers and suppliers.
- AMs have to be well versed in verbal and written communications and must be able to finalise certain correspondence independently on behalf of their managers.
- The AM is seen as an extension of and substitute for the manager. For this reason, the manager is sometimes judged according to the appearance, image and competencies of the AM.
- AMs perform actions that they are empowered to carry out in the absence of the manager and use their own initiative and judgement to ensure that matters that require attention are referred to the appropriate individuals.
- AMs are often responsible for training new employees also fulfilling a supervisory or mentoring role and are often involved in the appointment of new employees.
- The AM must have knowledge of relevant labour legislation concerning the rights and obligations of employers and employees.
- They are capable of acting as advisers to subordinates and sometimes even to managers.
- The work of the contemporary AM includes many aspects of interpersonal relations such as tact, sympathy, patience, the ability to work within a team and a willingness to support where necessary.
- AMs have to be able to do research and to manage and analyse information for reporting purposes.
- AMs are often responsible for procurement and dealing with budget and expense accounts and interpret financial records.
- They often have to be diplomats in a public relations capacity, since new work requirements imply that they carry out senior tasks and interact with external customers and the public at different levels.

It is of the utmost importance that AMs identify with managers on a professional basis – the manner in which they think and react, their actions towards people and situations, their relationships with colleagues and external relationships with customers and the public, the manner in which they express themselves and communicate and the corporate image that they convey. Stanwell and Shaw (1974:539) summarise it as follows: “You must think for him (*sic*), speak for him, write for him, act for him. When a situation arises you must know what he would do and do it for him”.

The profession profile of AMs has changed to the extent where it could encompass any or all of the following ten roles and/or figureheads that are self-explanatory:

- Representative figure on behalf of the company, employers, colleagues and subordinates
- Leadership role
- Liaison role with internal and external customers
- Monitoring role within the company hierarchy and position profile
- Disseminator of information
- Spokesperson on behalf of the company and the employer or line management
- Entrepreneurial role in terms of being innovation, progress and development strategies
- Conflict resolutions with peers, subordinates and customers
- Allocation of resources within their AM environment
- Negotiator in terms of the supply chain

The administrative manager’s role towards colleagues

In their relationships with colleagues, AMs interact mainly with three groups. Firstly, with senior staff that includes line managers and their managers’ peers. Secondly, they interact with their own colleagues or peers and thirdly, subordinates. This implies that AMs must have sound interpersonal skills, as emphasised by Stevens (1993:5), who states that “you will need to work not only with your peers but with all co-workers, regardless of professional level. In doing so, you should display loyalty, dependability, and good judgment.” The role of AMs towards co-workers contains a strong management component that is embedded in the following seven dimensions that are self-explanatory:

- Recruitment officer.
- Orientation/induction trainer of new employees.
- Training, mentoring and development of subordinates.
- Delegator of tasks.
- Motivational expert within team context.
- Evaluator/performance manager.
- Job enrichment strategist.

Role of the administrative manager towards suppliers and clients/customers

The interaction between administrators and its network of suppliers is one of the best examples of the influence of environmental variables within an organisation. ICT services have greatly simplified and streamlined this function, which means that many AMs can manage it from their desks, which has the advantage that it can be direct, personal and more accurate. A key element of effective procurement strategies is choosing capable, trustworthy and reasonable suppliers, and it is often the AM's responsibility to network, record and maintain those contacts. Sources of information that are often used are trade magazines, brochures, price lists, advertisements, buyers' guides, visits to trade shows (quite often impossible for the manager to attend because of the time factor), demonstrations by suppliers, contacts, or arranging visits by sales representatives.

Sound client service is probably one of the most important business principles, and once again, the AM, as a front line employee, fulfils an important role on behalf of the manager and the organisation. To provide satisfactory client service, one should know the profiles of clients who deal with the organisation. Nel (2002:21) defines a client as "anyone in your work environment, internal or external, to whom you offer a product or service." AMs know that an organisation cannot exist without clients and that they have a major responsibility in that regard. An exceptional personality, strong personal characteristics and dynamic actions are necessary to fulfil this responsibility and AMs should develop a unique temperament and attitude in meeting these expectations. Goals that AMs should set themselves in order to fulfil their role as excellent service providers are summarised as follows:

- Establishing and maintaining dependable client service.
- Communicating with clients.
- Developing positive, workable relations with clients.
- Problem-solving on behalf of clients.
- Introducing and evaluating changes to improve client service.

FINDINGS, ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATIONS

The results of Phase 1 of the investigation are depicted in Table 2 followed by inferences to the concluding gap analysis.

Phase 1: Empirical findings

Table 2 (Marcus 2003) outlines a selection of findings, analyses and interpretations of the main investigation relevant to this article.

Table 2: Results and analyses: main investigation

Nr	Variable	Result (mean)	Analyses and interpretations
1	Require a high school qualification	33,48%	Only one third of subjects infer that a high school qualification is sufficient. A significant majority of 66 percent emphasise the need for higher qualifications (cf. problem statement and Table 2:2).
2	Require an undergraduate qualification	54,46%	This result infers that about half of the subjects express a need for qualifications higher than a senior certificate (cf. status quo).
3	Require a degree	12,00%	Only 12 percent of respondents infer that a degree should be a requirement, but most of those who do have degrees are not applicable to the administrative management profession. This proves the absence of relevant HE training programmes and possible reasons for poor service delivery.
4	Require a postgraduate qualification	0,00%	Subjects are unanimous in their inference that they do not need postgraduate qualifications. This result emphasises the seriousness of the dichotomy expressed in Table 2:1 (cf. problem statement and status quo).
5	Qualifications applicable to their profession	67,40%	Most subjects are qualified in administrative management. This result contradicts the results in Table 2:1and2 and therefore clearly emphasises a serious lack of self worth since the majority reports satisfaction with a high school qualification (cf. problem statement and status quo). It also implies that more than 30 percent are not qualified in the relevant field. This could reflect negatively on quality of service delivery.
6	University qualifications	30,36%	About one third of subjects inferring that university qualifications are necessary support the results in Table 2:1and2. On the other hand, the remaining 70 percent clearly support the interpretation in Table 2:4 (cf. status quo).
7	Obligations to colleagues and departments outside own departments	90,62%	A significant majority infer that their work relationship extended further than the department they worked for, which clearly supports a multi-disciplinary environment (cf. role towards managers and Table 3:7,8,10,11,12,13,25,28,33,64,65).
8	Represented the organisation by means of formal visits	50,89%	Half of AMs infer that they know and understand internal policies, politics and image of the organisation that assist them in fulfilling a public relations role in addition to their own field of expertise (cf. role towards suppliers and customer service provider).
9	Empowered to deal with and finalise certain tasks and correspondence independently and on their own	91,96%	This significant inference depicts the importance of communication and multi-skilling that unavoidably result in stronger relationships of trust as well as empowering employers to focus their attention on core functions (cf. Table 3: majority of KPIs specified).

Nr	Variable	Result (mean)	Analyses and interpretations
10	Involved in recruitment of employees	35,27%	About one third of AMs are involved in recruitment of new employees, which infers that their aptitude also evolves into the HR and labour relations fields (cf. role towards colleagues).
11	Responsible for training new office workers	60,27%	More than half of subjects have the responsibility of training that also involves them in HR in a different dimension than inferred in Table 2:10 (cf. role towards colleagues).
12	Important to possess strong leadership qualities	94,64%	This significant result infers a quintessential requirement in terms of the AMs managerial responsibilities (cf. Table 3:8,2,22,23,27,29,30,33,34,35,37,43,44,45,46,47, 53, 55,59,64,64,68,69).
13	Provide input for decision-making	84,38%	This result supports the inference in Table 2:12 that is supplementary to the AMs managerial aptitudes.
14	Involved in research and referencing	61,16%	The fact that more than half of the subjects are involved in research and referencing clearly support the inferences in Table 2:1-5 (cf. Table 3:64).
15	Initiate and manage change	84,37%	A significant majority of AMs infer that they act as change agents within their respective organisations – again supporting the multi-skilling and multi-disciplinary environments in which they operate (cf. Table 3:29,33,37 and Introduction).
16	Act as marketers	86,95%	Again, a significant inference indicating the multi-disciplinary environment of the administrative management function (cf. Table 3:7).
17	Analyse and interpret information	75,00%	This result is concomitant with the inference in Table 2:14 that supports the KPIs in Table 3:33,68, evolvment and role towards managers.
18	Problem solving	92,86%	A significant majority of AMs are involved in problem solving that again emphasises their required managerial aptitudes (cf. customer service provider and Table 3:16,22,27,30,38,69).
19	Managing and distributing resources (finances, space, labour, equipment, stock)	76,79%	A significant majority of AMs have responsibilities towards procurement that is concurrent with Table 3:23,24,34,51,57,59, 60,61 and roles towards management and suppliers.
20	Motivational task	81,70%	The AM as motivator clearly supports several inferences in their role towards colleagues.
21	Work with external clients	95,10%	This result is concurrent with the public relations role of AMs as analysed in Table 2:8.
22	Contact with and responsibilities towards suppliers	77,68%	This result significantly supports the inferences depicted in Table 2:8,19,21.

Nr	Variable	Result (mean)	Analyses and interpretations
23	Knowledge of labour relations	71,88%	Especially in the contemporary workplace with its many laws, requirements and prescriptions (cf. Table 3:11).
24	Strategic management activities	67,41%	This result is concurrent with the managerial competencies required of AMs as inferred in 13 of the 24 variables listed in Table 2 as well as 23 KPIs depicted in Table 3 (cf. Table 2:12).

The inferential analyses in Table 2, column 4 clarify why the status of the profession is often a cause of disagreement. The results clearly indicate that the qualifications of AMs are a concern and that the spectra of responsibilities are vested in a multi-disciplinary/multi-skilling approach in addition to broad ICT and managerial interfaces. This depicts a dynamic profession that cannot operate efficiently if it is not aligned and restructured to accommodate these multi-dimensional requirements as clearly depicted by trade and industry (cf. Table 3).

Gap analysis results

The gap analyses (Marcus 2003:200) that focused on the establishment of an ideal IAM profile produced the following findings:

- The IAM fulfils a multi-disciplinary role.
- It is evident that an interactive, transparent and mutual understanding exists between the manager and the IAM.
- The IAM and the manager are interdependent, although the IAM works without close supervision concurrent with the individual role and responsibilities of the line manager.
- In addition to KPI requirements, the IAM must have a suitable personality profile that should be clarified and appropriately contracted during the appointment process. The profile should outline a dynamic, ICT-interfaced, multi-skill, multi-disciplinary, managerial application.

Top administrative management job title profiles

Supporting the dimensions enconced in an AM profile as previously discussed in this section, Table 3 (intermediate gap analysis, Hoffmann, Marcus and Joubert, 2008) provides a verbatim synopsis of the three top-career administrative management job titles, namely secretary/administrative officer (AO); assistant administrative director (AAD); and AM. Concurrent with these three top titles, 69 required KPIs are provided concomitant with remuneration packages (all-inclusive) as advertised in the media by public sector offices (Anon:8-13 2007).

Table 3 Top career administrative manager operational profiles

Nr	KPIs: qualifications, competencies and experience	Secretary/ AO	AAD	AM
		R 137 022	R 194 982	R 339 825
1.	Grade 12	1. ✓	1. ✓	1. ✓
2.	Certificate/Diploma	2. ✓	2	2
3.	Diploma/Degree	3	3. ✓	3. ✓
4.	Postgraduate	4	4	4
5.	Public Administration or related field	5. ✓	5. ✓	5. ✓
6.	Extensive administrative management experience	6. ✓	6. ✓	6. ✓
7.	Networking experience – private and public sectors	7	7	7. ✓
8.	Knowledge of executive office management	8	8	8. ✓
9.	Well-developed administrative and management skills	9. ✓	9. ✓	9. ✓
10.	Relevant departmental and legislative knowledge and experience	10. ✓	10. ✓	10. ✓
11.	Knowledge of relevant labour relations	11. ✓	11. ✓	11. ✓
12.	Promote service delivery options and activities	12. ✓	12. ✓	12. ✓
13.	Promote, showcase and collate best practice case studies	13. ✓	13	13
14.	Organise awareness campaigns	14. ✓	14	14
15.	Self-motivated and motivational skills	15	15. ✓	15. ✓
16.	Assertiveness	16	16. ✓	16. ✓
17.	Innovative thinking	17	17. ✓	17. ✓
18.	Delegation skills	18	18. ✓	18. ✓
19.	Reliable/trustworthy	19	19. ✓	19. ✓
20.	Function efficiently under pressure – stress management	20	20. ✓	20. ✓
21.	Excellent organising, supervisory and leadership skills	21	21. ✓	21. ✓
22.	Monitoring and evaluating abilities	22	22. ✓	22. ✓
23.	Manage financial resources and processes	23	23. ✓	23. ✓
24.	Thorough knowledge of budgeting and strategic planning	24	24. ✓	24. ✓
25.	Good written and verbal communication skills	25. ✓	25. ✓	25. ✓
26.	Good report writing skills	26	26	26. ✓

Nr	KPIs: qualifications, competencies and experience	Secretary/AO	AAD	AM
27.	Sound interpersonal relations	27. ✓	27. ✓	27. ✓
28.	Computer literacy essential (MSOffice, internet, e-mail, etc.)	28. ✓	28. ✓	28. ✓
29.	Exercise control over objectives and activities	29	29. ✓	29. ✓
30.	Coordination skills and experience	30	30. ✓	30. ✓
31.	Willing to travel	31	31. ✓	31
32.	Determine work procedures and methods	32	32. ✓	32. ✓
33.	Advise management on policy matters	33	33. ✓	33. ✓
34.	Interpret and apply prescripts	34	34. ✓	34. ✓
35.	Liaison with government and non-government departments	35	35. ✓	35. ✓
36.	Compile memoranda and submissions	36	36. ✓	36. ✓
37.	Monitor and evaluate strategic/operational plans	37	37. ✓	37. ✓
38.	38. Deal with and manage difficult clients	38. ✓	38. ✓	38. ✓
39.	Manage production and control of document flow	39	39. ✓	39. ✓
40.	Experience in customer relations	40. ✓	40. ✓	40. ✓
41.	Experience in client liaison	41. ✓	41. ✓	41. ✓
42.	Good telephone etiquette	42. ✓	42. ✓	42. ✓
43.	Administrative management and organisational skills	43. ✓	43. ✓	43. ✓
44.	Time management skills	44. ✓	44. ✓	44. ✓
45.	Able to work without supervision	45. ✓	45. ✓	45. ✓
46.	Understand core functions of line management	46. ✓	46. ✓	46. ✓
47.	Manage diary	47. ✓	47. ✓	47. ✓
48.	Receive and screen telephone calls	48. ✓	48. ✓	48. ✓
49.	Handle telephone enquiries	49. ✓	49. ✓	49. ✓
50.	Arrange internal and external meetings	50. ✓	50. ✓	50. ✓
51.	Arrange catering, venue bookings, programs, etc.	51. ✓	51. ✓	51. ✓
52.	Prepare documents for meetings	52. ✓	52. ü	52. ✓
53.	Manage correspondence	53. ✓	53. ü	53. ✓
54.	Draft correspondence	54. ✓	54. ✓	54. ✓
55.	Manage records	55. ✓	55. ✓	55. ✓

Nr	KPIs: qualifications, competencies and experience	Secretary/AO	AAD	AM
56.	Distribute incoming and outgoing correspondence	56. ✓	56. ✓	56. ✓
57.	Receive and assist clients	57. ✓	57. ✓	57. ✓
58.	Make travel and accommodation arrangements	58. ✓	58. ✓	58. ✓
59.	Manage equipment and stationery	59. ✓	59. ✓	59. ✓
60.	Process subsistence and travelling claims	60. ✓	60. ✓	60. ✓
61.	Deal with procurement issues	61. ✓	61. ✓	61. ✓
62.	All other administrative duties that may be assigned	62. ✓	62. ✓	62. ✓
63.	Any other general secretarial duties that may be assigned	63. ✓	63	63. ✓
64.	Research	64	64	64. ✓
65.	Management information services	65	65	65. ✓
66.	Archiving	66	66	66. ✓
67.	Maintain confidentiality	67	67	67. ✓
68.	Analytical, innovative and creative thinking	68	68	68. ✓
69.	Conflict management	69	69	69. ✓
Total		38	55	64

Source Hoffmann, Marcus and Joubert, 2008, in Anon:8-13, 2007

Analysing the holistic result outlined in Table 3 (Hoffmann, Marcus and Joubert 2008) it is significant to note that, at the highest rank in the administrative management profession and a substantial remuneration package of about R400 000 per annum, the incumbent is not required to have a postgraduate qualification. Especially analysing the required KPIs that include top management level duties and responsibilities such as organisational, supervisory and leadership qualities in addition to working without supervision, doing research and advising management on policy issues contained in this profile, it clearly delineates the managerial sphere of the IAM profession. This corresponds with the fact that the value-adding dimension of the profession is not afforded its well-deserved status and recognition, as outlined in the problem stated and the theoretical framework.

At all three top levels, **extensive administrative management experience** is required, although at the first two levels such a requirement could be viewed as not realistic, especially in terms of approximate annual remuneration packages of R137 000 and R195 000 respectively. This interpretation could be more meaningful should comparisons be possible with other fields such as human resources managers and managerial positions in other fields in trade and industry.

Consequentially, the generic nature of the administrative management profession is clearly depicted whereby networking experience is required within both the public and private sectors, where incumbents also regularly deal with citizens and private sector entities on a daily basis. Supporting this interpretation, only 4 out of the 69 (5.79 percent) KPIs (*cf.* Table 3, numbers 5, 34, 35 and 61) are exclusively public administration related of which 34, 35 and 61 could also be generic to the private sector. This inferentially concludes that private and public sector administrative management discrepancies are significantly limited.

Generally, a total of 69 job specifications and KPIs is clearly self-explanatory:

- an AO, at the third highest rank has to comply with 38, which is more than half (55.07 percent);
- an AAD at the second highest rank with close to all at 55 (79.71 percent); and
- an AM at the highest rank with 64 (92.75 percent), which is nearly all-inclusive.

A significant 11 (15.94 percent) KPIs relate to service delivery and customer relations management and a cumulative 11 (15.94 percent) relate to a multi-disciplinary approach (22 = 31.08 percent). A total of 23 (33.33 percent) KPIs relate to required managerial dimensions.

Inferences of the information depicted in Table 3 prove the validity of the findings that support the problem and objectives stated and the literature survey. A matter of serious concern is underpinned in KPIs 62 and 63 that respectively state “All other administrative management duties that may be assigned” and “Any other secretarial duties that may be assigned” (*cf.* specific objectives). In support of this inferential analysis, Marcus (2003:135) reports that 30.36 percent of AMs have not been appointed concomitant with job description contracts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to act as successful partners in addition to advancing their careers, IAMs within a new e-paradigm should have access to a multi-disciplinary approach. This should contain advanced knowledge and training including multi-skilling, ICT, virtual office management, emotional intelligence, marketing, knowledge management, customer and public relations management, business process outsourcing, research, financial analysis and labour relations legalities, to name but a few. This clearly outlines the environments in which AMs in private and public sectors operate within its new e-paradigm. Therefore, IAMs should be mission-orientated rather than position-orientated. Within both these sectors, they should focus progressively on the development of leadership and management competencies and promote

the holistic interests of the information and administration management profession within a restructured and contemporary e-paradigm whereby HE instructional programs are aligned to industry requirements.

It is essential that HE should ascertain whether the AM position profile is adequate and that IAMs are suitably empowered and equipped to add the required value to their organisations and industry. Clearly, the contemporary IAM can be described as a multi-professional who safeguards the employer's effective managerial functioning. The following aspects therefore need further attention in terms of the three specific objectives in this article:

- Present AM training programmes should be urgently restructured according to industry operations and requirements in the public and private sectors in order to allow general managers to focus on their respective roles.
- The position profile of the AM should be scrutinised and rationalised – not only locally, but also in collaboration with international professionals in order to ensure that IAMs function within the specified new e-paradigm with revised parameters.
- Empowerment of a South African representative council to facilitate the previous two recommendations in collaboration with educational collaborations should be a priority. This should be aimed at collectively establishing a profile of the ideal IAM aligned to HE instructional programs within this new IAM e-paradigm.

Both the public and private sector administrative management environments should brace themselves for a future of extreme global competition. Incumbents must understand how powerful changes in previous distinctly demarcated operational environments are aggregating towards restructured product and geographical markets, enhancing market-clearing efficiency and increasing specialisation in the supply chain. They should respond by adopting a new approach to administrative strategy that combines flexibility, speed, efficacy and forward-focused thinking grounded in appropriately designed preparation within the education sector. Managers need to be in contact with their administrators at lower levels of the organisational hierarchy as this is where IAMs have the advantage of forming a vital link between the different levels in the organisation. Mature industrial environments must learn to be young at heart and to remain within the circuit of embracing change. Managers must be aware of the important value that IAMs add to industry and that, quite often, it is not appropriately acknowledged and valued, in both monetary and intellectual terms (*cf.* problem statement). The findings presented in this article prove that AMs must also introspectively evaluate whether their academic qualifications contribute to elevating the administrative management profession and take ownership own career advancement within a new e-paradigm: that of **information and administration manager**.

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Organizational culture and the implementation of performance management

A case study of a South African municipality

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ABSTRACT

Part of the transformation of local government in South Africa has been the promotion of a culture of performance and the introduction of performance management systems to ensure that government is more responsive to the needs of the local communities that they serve. The literature indicates that internationally, implementing performance management systems at a local government level is affected by a number of factors, including the organizational culture of the institution. In-depth interviews were conducted with senior employees who were directly responsible for implementing performance management within a South African municipality. The findings of this research describes the impact organizational culture has had on the implementation process of the performance management system, and how the system further reinforced a dysfunctional culture of fear. The implementation of the performance management system had also been negatively affected by the dichotomy between the political and administrative leadership, resulting in non-implementation of council resolutions, the lack of an organizational strategy, poor institutional arrangements and inadequate resource allocation. However, the most important finding was the identification of the adverse impact that a culture of fear, that had been created by toxic leadership. Implications of these findings are discussed, and recommendations to change the leadership approach and organizational culture are made.

INTRODUCTION

Local Government in South Africa has undergone much transformation since 2000. The change has partly been to correct imbalances, inequities and disparities existing within local communities that have resulted from previous Apartheid policies. In addition, in line with what is happening in governments internationally (Barnhart 1997; Parker and Bradley 2000), the change has been motivated by National Government's realisation that there is a need to modernise and reduce the costs of all spheres of Government (Calitz and Siebrits 2002).

A central aspect of this transformation in South Africa has been to ensure that municipalities become more responsive to communities' needs and to give effect to participatory democracy (Ismail, Bayat and Meyer 1997). The guiding principles for this transformation are contained in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) and the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper 1997). These Papers have informed the *Municipal Systems Act: Act 32 of 2000*, Chapter 6 of which determines that municipalities will have a performance management system so as to promote a culture of performance management amongst the political structures, political office bearers, councillors and administration. The performance management system must ensure that the municipality administers its affairs in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable manner.

The transformation has required that government becomes more accountable, which in turn has required a fundamental shift in the way local government exercises its role. The shift is evident in a more transparent budgeting process, and more efficient tax administration. One of the biggest shifts has been in the area of human resource management and administration, effected through the introduction of the *Municipal Systems Act* Number 32 of 2000 and the *Municipal Structures Act* Number 117 of 1998. Section 44 of the *Municipal Structures Act* provides guidelines for the development and implementation of mechanisms to monitor strategic performance with respect to the implementation of the municipality's Integrated Development Plan, while in terms of Section 57 of the *Municipal Systems Act*, the written contract for senior managers or Directors – commonly referred to as Section 57's – must consist of a performance agreement. This agreement must contain performance objectives and targets with indicators derived from the municipality's Integrated Development Plan.

In June of 2003, the municipality that is the focus of this study, embarked on a process of institutionalizing a performance management system in an attempt to uphold this new legislation. Towards the end of 2003, the council of the municipality formally adopted a performance management process plan. It was anticipated that by the end of June 2004, scorecards for the Institution as well as the Directors (Section 57's) and their departments would be completed. It was

recommended that during this first phase, only the Institution as a whole, and select individuals – the Executive Mayor, the Mayoral councillors, the Municipal Manager and his Section 57's – be measured, monitored and audited. Once the system was workable at these levels it would then be cascaded throughout the municipality. However, according to the Auditor General's report of 2003/2004 the implementation and cascading of the system to all levels within the organization has not progressed well and Directors (Section 57's) had not been successful in entrenching performance management.

Elsewhere within South Africa there have been difficulties in implementing performance management in local government. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995:3) described the public service as being "immensely centralised, hierarchical and rule-bound", making it quite difficult to hold employees accountable for their performance. Furthermore, because of the inward-looking, inflexible attitude of the public service, the service is thus "at odds" in the servicing of the people. In a study of the Cape Town Municipality, Cameron and Sewell (2003:259) reported that the performance management system was not "effectively operationalized" and did not achieve "real management ownership, accountability, motivation and commitment." Furthermore, Price Waterhouse Coopers (2003) have listed some of the typical difficulties that municipalities in South Africa have encountered when implementing performance management systems. These include: (1) preparing the organization for change and getting all on board to understand why performance management is necessary; (2) countering perceptions that performance management is a mechanism to get rid of people within the system; (3) allaying concerns that salaries and bonuses will be negatively affected; (4) and encountering difficulties in trying to embed performance management into the management processes.

The difficulties of implementing a performance management system at a municipal level do not appear to be a problem unique to South Africa. International experience indicates that factors such as political interference, scrutiny by outsiders, a shift in performance expectations, leadership difficulties, and the prevailing organizational culture all hindered similar performance-enhancing transformation efforts (Buch and Rivers 2001; Mwita 2000; Nutt and Backoff 1993).

For a performance management system to be effective in improving the total effectiveness of local government, it would appear that the bureaucratic culture of local government would need to be developed into a more appropriate organizational culture. The desired organizational culture envisioned by the legislation is partly detailed in Section 51 of Act 32 of 2000, where the focus is on the development of a culture of accountability and the aligning and organizing of the administration in such a manner that it is flexible and responsive to the

needs of the community. However, a review of the literature also indicates that the impact that the organizational culture has on the implementation of performance management at a municipal level in South Africa is not well documented. The goal of this research is therefore to describe the interaction between the organizational culture and the implementation of a performance management system within a local government context. Specifically it examines both the impact that organizational culture has had on the process of implementing performance management in a municipality, as well as the effect of the introduction of such a system on the organizational culture.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND CULTURE

Wilkins and Ouchi (1983) observe that many economists and organizational theorists believe that culture is irrelevant to organizational performance. However, Lamond (2003) and Denison and Mishra (1995) are of the view that culture is one of the most powerful and stable forces operating within organizations and it is pivotal to their success and effectiveness. Therefore, to fully comprehend or understand any organization, a thorough understanding or description of the culture of that organization is necessary. Parker and Bradley (2000:125) state that: "a lack of understanding of organizational culture in the public sector is of concern because research on organizational culture is central to the change process and to the attainment of strategic objectives."

To successfully implement a performance management system, writers such as Medonca and Kanungo (1996) argue that the cultural values of the organization need to be identified and examined to ensure that there is a fit between the organizational culture and the values being entrenched by the performance management system. Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, and Sanders (1990), suggest that organizational culture not only plays an important role in influencing the overall effectiveness of an organization but it also influences individual behaviour and the willingness of these individuals to welcome and implement change. This view is supported by writers such as Sorenson (2002), who claims that research demonstrates that corporate culture can improve a firm's performance by ensuring internal behavioural consistency among the employees. The organizational culture ensures that there are strong norms and values, which lead to enhanced co-ordination and control with improved goal alignment between individuals as well as consistent performance within the organization. It can thus be concluded that to develop a complete understanding of the efficacy of performance management initiatives on organizational performance, the impact that organizational culture has on the implementation of performance management at a local government level must also be understood.

Marcoulides and Heck (1993), argue that organizational culture is a relatively new concept and a review of the literature (Lamond 2003, Denison and Mishra 1995, Schein, 1984, Wilkens and Ouchi 1983, Pettigrew 1979) indicates that there are varying definitions of organizational culture. From one perspective, Schein (1984:112) states that there are three levels at which organizational culture is manifested. The first level is that at the most visible, namely artefacts and creations, (such as the dress code, company records, statements of philosophy, annual reports), then the level of values, (namely the espoused norms, ideologies and charters) and lastly, basic assumptions (namely thought processes, feelings and behaviour). According to Schein (1984), organizational culture can only be fully understood if both the observable and unobservable aspects of the culture are studied. Schein (1984) also notes the contribution of organizational culture in guiding employees as to how they should perceive, think and feel when faced with new problems that arise in an organization's adaptation to the external environment, while concurrently ensuring internal integration of its members.

Schein (1984) maintains that it is only by surfacing the underlying assumptions that a culture can be understood and the overt behaviour properly interpreted. These assumptions are themselves learned responses that originated as espoused values. Although Deshpande and Parasuraman (2001) support Schein's approach, writers such as Parker and Bradley (2000) argue that because it is so difficult to access assumptions or interpret artefacts, it is recommended that when researching organizational culture, the focus should be at the level of values. In order to make the values explicit within the informal organization, inter- and intra-group behaviour, leader behaviour, informal working relations, communication and patterns of influence must be described.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to explore the fit between the organizational culture as portrayed in the organizational values and the performance management system that was being implemented. According to Denison and Mishra (1995:205), when studying organizational culture, some culture researchers advocate a "phenomenological approach with emphasis on the qualitative understanding of meaning and interpretation". When studying human behaviour within a cultural context, quantification of behaviour and observations does not give rise to a *thick* or rich understanding. A richness of understanding can only be sought through a "constructivist case-study" (Guba and Lincoln 1994), which will ultimately allow for an interpretation of the impact of organizational culture on the implementation of performance management at a local government level. According to Yin (1981:59), the distinguishing

characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine: “a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context”. Stake (1994) argues that a case study is appropriate when detailed information on a particular case in context is sought and when the goal of the research is to describe and understand the human complexities within that context.

In this case study, data was collected through interviews. When selecting respondents for the collection of data, Spradley (1979) states that they should be thoroughly acculturated into the institution and be currently involved in the matter being studied. For this particular study, the interviewees met these criteria as all had worked for the institution for at least four years. Using a semi-structured interview process, four of the six Directors, two General Managers and the political portfolio head, were interviewed. One of the General Managers was responsible for implementing individual performance management, whilst the other was responsible for the auditing of the performance management system. The Directors constituted part of the senior management team and were responsible for implementing performance management in the municipality. Two of the six Directors were not interviewed as they had been placed on probationary suspension during the fieldwork phase of the project. Unfortunately, the Mayor and Municipal Manager did not make themselves available to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted over a three-week period and the interviews were all more than half an hour, with some exceeding an hour in length.

During the data analysis phase, the researchers allowed the emerging data and themes to speak for themselves and in developing a ‘Verstehen’, a data-driven coding process (Boyatzis 1998:31), was followed with themes being constructed inductively from the raw data.

FINDINGS

The interviews explored the organizational culture of the municipality and its relationship with the implementation of a performance management system. Views on the implementation process are briefly described before more fully describing the culture and the consequences of implementing performance management.

Failed implementation of the performance management system

The overwhelming response from interviewees was that the implementation of a performance management system had not been successful. Various non-cultural and practical factors influencing the implementation process were identified. This included the perception that performance management was

a new and complex concept that was being implemented merely to satisfy legislative requirements. Consequently, some employees saw it as serving no valuable purpose. Further factors impeding the implementation process were conflicting views between the political and administrative functionaries; a failure to implement council resolutions; a lack of decisive leadership in providing a clear organizational strategy with appropriate delegated powers; and poor institutional arrangements (For example, the various functions relating to performance management were fragmented and inadequately resourced).

There was also the view that the implementation was poorly timed, given the difficulties being experienced at the time in integrating and rationalizing municipalities. Besides these non-cultural aspects, it also emerged that the culture of the municipality had hindered the implementation of a performance management system.

A culture of fear

The most pervasive and overwhelming theme to emerge from the interviews regarding the organizational culture was the element of fear. Fear amongst the senior leadership adversely affected the work behaviour and performance of Directors. Because of fear, Directors felt unable to openly discuss problems and their possible solutions. As one Director noted “naming and blaming, [and] finger pointing” amongst senior leaders was typical. There was a reluctance to take initiatives that may be risky. The culture of fear also created mistrust, particularly amongst the senior leadership. This was evidenced by intimidation and consensus being reached through non-participation. Even amongst senior managers, there was a sense that if they did not obey, someone was “going to get you”. Given the culture of fear, the climate in the municipality was for example, not conducive to an open evaluation as required in effective performance management.

Changes within the local government legislative framework that had reached the implementation stage were creating a climate of uncertainty and anxiety amongst staff. The restructuring and amalgamation process was one instance of this. However, the culture of fear that was developing seemed to be driven by two main factors: the leadership of the metropolitan municipality, and the introduction of the performance management system itself.

Leadership

The leadership structure of the municipality promoted a high degree of centralization, resulting in just a few senior leaders holding power, with the centre of power being in the hands of the Municipal Manager as head of the administration. This centralization of power was not only structural but was

strongly manifested through informal behaviour. For example, the Municipal Manager in particular, was reluctant to devolve power to Directors and exercised insufficient and ineffective delegation of responsibility. This in turn had resulted in a “power play” being acted out between the Municipal Manager and the Directors, and between the Municipal Manager and the Mayor.

It was also reported that the culture rewarded employees by giving them resources with which to do work and to “remove resources” from those individuals who needed to be “disciplined”.

The perception by certain Directors was that they needed to protect themselves from the Municipal Manager, especially during the Municipal Manager and Directors’ meeting, which took place every Monday morning. A Director reported that the culture was not “...one of encouragement, but one which focuses more on what is wrong”. Similarly, another Director even reported that the management meetings were experienced as a form of torture. In these meetings, in front of their peers, managers are criticized for what they have done wrong, and this instilled fear. In response, one Director reported that he had learnt to act cautiously and to “keep his nose clean to avoid being chastised in front of his peers.” Directors focused more on protecting themselves when making decisions rather than making bold decisions that were thought to be in the best interest of the institution.

A significant finding of this research has been the unearthing of the culture of fear that had emerged as a result of the leadership of the municipality. In this environment a performance management system was introduced which further reinforced the culture of fear. There existed a specific fear towards the performance management system itself, which has affected the implementation of the performance management system.

Implementing performance management in a culture of fear

The culture of fear in the municipality fuelled suspicion of the performance management system. According to one interviewee, the Directors viewed the implementation of a performance management system as ‘some policeman coming to town’. That is, it was seen as intent on exposing deficiencies, mistakes and poor performance, rather than being enabling or being a tool to support their management. Consequently, leaders failed to champion the process and in fact resisted it. This perception was confirmed by another respondent who stated that there was a concern that the performance management system because the “system is going to show me up”. A third respondent stated that the performance management system would show up “inefficiencies and inabilities” of the employees. To this effect, when it came to completing the performance evaluations, a Director stated “they’re suspicious of it, they refuse to sign it or they sign it and it goes in the bottom draw”.

Suspicion by Directors of the performance management system and the culture of fear was further aggravated by the nature of their new conditions of service as per legislation. As a Director stated, under the new conditions of the contract, their appointment period more or less coincided with the term of office of the Council, and "...you can never be too confident that you will be back here again for another term." Either the same Councillors may return and not renew the contract of existing incumbents, or a totally new Council may be elected after five years and appoint new Directors.

Therefore, the perspective held by the Directors was that of a "siege mentality". They fear that if they make a wrong decision they could in the short-term lose their jobs or in the long term fail to have their contracts renewed. The impact of this was that Directors felt they needed to try and secure their future. This then impacted upon their willingness to take risks, as risk could result in failure and ultimately in the termination of their contracts. As one interviewee remarked "... people are very cautious ...very scared to put their necks out in any way".

It is thus evident that the culture of fear has impacted on the implementation of the performance management system, as the implementation process was perceived as not being sensitive to the difficulties and the feelings of fear experienced by the Directors and other employees. Furthermore, the introduction of performance management only served to reinforce the culture of fear.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Performance management is one of the instrumental management tools designed by National Government and contained within the 'new' local government legislation aimed at transforming municipalities in South Africa. Ultimately, the performance management system must assist in transforming local government to ensure that the needs of the community are met through the improved delivery of municipal services to citizens. This should be achieved through the delivery of these services in a more efficient, effective and economical manner.

The findings of this research have in some instances been similar to other findings as contained in the international body of literature. For example, and as reported earlier by, Nutt and Backoff (1993), the transformation of public organizations is often hindered by factors such as political interference, shifts in performance expectations and the limited authority of the leadership because of legislation. Similarly, this research has shown that the dichotomy between the leadership and perceived political interference into the administration of the municipality has adversely affected the process of implementation of the performance management system at the municipality.

Furthermore, in line with other studies (e.g. Buch and Rivers 2001; Denison and Mishra 1995; Medonca and Kanungo 1996; Parker and Bradley 2000; Wilkens and Ouchi 1983), this research has shown that important factors impacting municipal transformation are leadership and organizational culture. It has also demonstrated that the performance management system has not as yet become “embedded” into the management systems of the Municipal Manager and Directors and in many instances it is perceived as a legislatively “imposed” system that consumes resources. Lastly, Adler and Borys (1996:77) draw a distinction between an “enabling” bureaucracy and a “coercive” bureaucracy. Their typology underpins the notion that not all bureaucracies are necessarily rigid and authoritarian, and that depending on the context, certain bureaucracies can be experienced as enabling. However, this research has demonstrated that due to the current organizational culture prevailing at the municipality, the bureaucracy is not experienced by the Directors as an enabling bureaucracy. Rather it is highly centralized and hierarchical, and therefore does not assist in achieving the objectives of the Integrated Development Plan.

The main finding of this research has demonstrated that the culture of fear that existed amongst the senior leadership at the municipality negatively impacted the implementation of a performance management system, and that its introduction further reinforced this culture. This finding regarding the effect of organizational systems on the organizational culture is a similar finding to that of Cameron and Sewell’s (2003:256) study, which reported that in the City of Cape Town, the performance management system was perceived as being an extension of a “punitive culture.” What was a unique and surprising finding in this study was the senior managers’ description of the culture of fear, and its effect on both their performance as well as the implementation of performance management.

It was evident that top management had a significant bearing on the organization culture. The influence of senior leaders on the shaping and maintaining of organizational culture is widely recognized in the literature (e.g. Schein 2004, Trice and Beyer 1991) and can be either positive and constructive, or negative and dysfunctional (Balthazard *et al.* 2006). In this case the culture had been dysfunctional. The culture of fear that was reported had a debilitating effect on the organization and performance management. This finding illustrates the non rational nature of organizational behaviour (e.g. Fineman 2000; Jackson and Carter 2000), which is often not given enough attention when engaging in organizational development or change initiatives such as implementing performance management systems (Pors 2008).

The findings of the study also suggest that the culture of the municipality needed to change before performance management could be successfully implemented, and therefore raises the question of how to intervene so as to

change the culture. While there are some who hold the view that culture cannot be easily managed and controlled, there are others who believe that culture can be changed (Hallett 2003).

Related to the perspective that culture can be manipulated, and the question of how then the dysfunctional leadership behaviour that was evident, can be changed, is the acknowledgement of the role of leadership in shaping culture and behaviour (Daft 1999). Kane-Urrabazo (2006) recognizes four critical components of culture – trust and trustworthiness, empowerment and delegation, consistency and mentorship – that are available to individual managers to control in the creation of positive cultural traits. What is questioned in this instance is the degree of impact that such initiatives will have in this context, where the culture of fear is being instigated from the upper echelon of the municipality.

The findings pertaining to the senior leadership of the municipality resonate with some of the behavioural characteristics that tend to be associated with toxic leadership (Lipman-Blumen 2005:19-21) such as leaving followers worse off than they found them, violating the basic human rights of their supporters, playing to the basic fears of followers, stifling constructive criticism, building totalitarian regimes, failing to nurture other leaders, and identifying scapegoats. A similar perspective of leadership failure is provided by Kets De Vries (2006) who refers to the “tyrannization” of subordinates, and describes how this treatment triggers a response in subordinates to assume these same characteristics and in turn begin to tyrannize their subordinates, and so the tyranny is perpetuated and extended within the organization.

The danger therefore exists that if the culture of fear that is so prevalent among the senior leadership is perpetuated, it will ultimately be diffused within the broader organization. Similarly, Fineman (2003) has noted how bullying and management by fear creates anxiety, defensiveness, robs an organization of its energy, and ultimately inculcates a culture of fear, which in turn undermines mutual care and concern in the organization. He further notes that bullying creates apathy, acquiescence or antagonism towards the bully.

Lipman-Blumen (2005) advises that toxic leadership is effectively dealt with through speaking out and constructive confrontation. However, Fineman (2003) cautions that a culture that supports bullying is difficult to confront internally, because the victims often feel powerless. As a result he suggests that “in the absence of more enlightened senior management, change needs to come from external pressure – government, legal measures, and unionization” (Fineman, 2003:160). Appelbaum and Roy-Girard (2007) are supportive of the view that toxic leaders ultimately need to be replaced, but acknowledge the difficulty of doing so, in particular when they hold powerful positions in the organization.

At a systemic level, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2006) propose that the inculcation of “good” leadership within the public sector can be

achieved through the adoption of an appropriate leadership model (such as transformational leadership) and embedding it in the organization through a 360-degree feedback system. In the local government context McPherson (2007) provides anecdotal evidence of the success of the Lancashire City Council's management development programme as an intervention to change a culture of bullying and fear through providing managers with the confidence and competence needed to manage effectively.

As with any change initiative, senior leadership needs to actively support and lead the introduction of the performance management system, for it to be successfully implemented (e.g. Kotter 1995). As stated by Flapper, Fortuin and Stoop (1996:27), performance management systems ensure that "all noses are pointing in the same direction." However, if the direction is undecided, the performance management system is rendered useless, as it will merely monitor the disjointed daily activities of the employees and not the performance of an organization as a whole. Therefore, the success of implementing a performance management system depends upon there being consensus amongst the leadership on the direction of the institution and the role of the performance management system in contributing to the attainment of these aspirations.

CONCLUSION

This research took place within the context of local government transformation, where service delivery and performance management has become a legislative imperative. This research has highlighted how a culture of fear within a municipality has negatively impacted the performance of senior managers, as well as the implementation of a performance management system. This finding serves to illustrate the importance of assessing the ability of an organization's culture to support a systems change. Assuming that the culture can be changed to one that is more supportive of the performance management system, and that leadership plays a critical role in the shaping of culture, it has further identified a number of possible interventions that could ultimately change the culture in order to align it with the performance management requirements. These interventions include the replacement of toxic or tyrannical leadership with a more enlightened approach, even if this requires the removal of problematic individual leaders, or some form of outside intervention. Alternatively this change in leadership could be effected through systemic changes and management development initiatives. It is only after a new leadership approach has been inculcated and effective leadership is being exercised, that a performance management system will have any chance in playing a constructive role in the organization.

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The influence of strategic leadership role competencies on change

A model to strengthen the senior management service (SMS)

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ABSTRACT

The post-1994 public sector faces many human resource challenges. One of government's reactions to the human resource challenge was to introduce new approaches to manage the change from an outmoded thinking of public sector human resource management as being compliance driven, performing simple routine personnel tasks, and authoritarian, to a much more strategic approach. This strategic approach, which embodies strategic leadership, is steeped in developing a senior management service (SMS) that is service driven, globally competitive and professional.

One of the key challenges that are faced by the senior management service is to develop a cadre of leaders who are in-touch with the fundamentals of policy and implementation, and who have a sense of stewardship towards the realities and expectations of the citizenry. Strategic leadership requires leaders to reinvent themselves to be 'strategy-focused', that is, they have to understand the strategy behind political policy, and they have to plan and implement those policies strategically. Strategic leadership and public sector human resource development is therefore critical to realizing the transformational agenda as envisaged in the post-apartheid national democratic revolution.

This article will explore the role that can be played by strategic leadership competencies to manage change in promoting a sustainable pool of competent, reflective and dynamic leaders for the senior echelon of the public sector. The article will examine the use of strategic

leadership role competencies to implement change and its utility for the senior management service. The purpose is to reflect on the various views about these issues and to explore the commonalities among them. Contemporary views on leadership will also be discussed. The literature on leadership competencies and in particular those competencies associated with strategic management for change will be presented. Finally, the article proposes a strategic leadership model to illustrate the value of strategic leadership for public sector institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The South African public sector is facing tremendous challenges in an ever-changing environment. The ripples of globalization and the reconfiguration of the global order have significant consequences for the effective functioning of government institutions. It is therefore imperative for the public sector to develop a cadre of senior leaders – known as the Senior Management Service (SMS) – who can take, make and implement strategic decisions in these demanding times.

The World Competitiveness Report (IMD International 2001:303) reflected negatively on South Africa regarding management issues. South Africa was ranked 49th for skilled labour, 48th for hostile labour relations, 46th for customer satisfaction, 44th for employees who do not identify with organisational objectives and 43rd for manager's who lack strategic management skills in general. Albertyn (2001:20) reported that in the year 2000, out of 41 countries assessed, the World Competitiveness Report ranked South Africa last in terms of human resources. She claimed that the authoritative management structures of the South African workforce results in public organisations with non-initiative taking, disempowered members. Authoritative management structures imply a particular leadership style, i.e. an autocratic style. Albertyn (2001) also added that the changes brought about by globalization, politics, economics and the growth in technology result in vulnerable individuals. Her statement on authoritative South African public service organisations may be debatable, but her claim on the demands made by these multi-faceted changes seems to be supported by many (eg Rossouw and Bews 2002, Msomi 2001, Kriek 2002, and Fontyn 2001). Due to a shortage of talent for top positions in organisations there is not enough leadership competency in South Africa and leadership qualities seem to be the underlying problem resulting in autocratic organisations and structures (Fontyn 2001:20).

Msomi (2001:2) reiterated that South Africa, like the rest of the world, is undergoing perpetual transformation and that it is true for public managers

as well. Rossouw and Bews (2002:26) concluded that contemporary public organisations will always face the issue of change and the need to deal with this phenomenon on a continual, rather than intermittent basis. Kriek (2002:28) stated that in the last few decades of the previous century the speed of change picked up at a tremendous pace with the environment posing ever more challenging demands on public organisations and leaders alike. Kriek (2002) mentioned the impact of globalization, digitisation and e-government as demanding factors on leaders.

Public organisational change is a constant that requires strategic management adjustment and action. Because they need to initiate, implement and evaluate change, leadership takes a central position amid the changes. Tizard (2001:62) concluded as follows: "Those that manage change well ensure that techniques are put in place to move individuals through these stages as part of normal public management. They give individuals no other choice than change although they go to some length to explain why it is necessary as well as the impact and the benefits. They also ensure that the change produces a tangible impact on the bottom line."

Fisher (1999:7) identified a paradox regarding leadership in the sense that most professionals cannot lead, and they do not want to follow. Fisher (1999:12) also noted that it is ironic that no one knows what leadership is; yet there are scores of books on the subject.

When one considers the different views and theories available on leadership and leadership competencies (Abzug and Phelps 1998; Gaughan 2001; Dering; 1998; Trofino 2000; Bergman 1999 and Terry and Levin 1998), one can only agree with the above view provided by Fisher. Not only are there multiple and diverse views, but they often oppose and contradict one another.

Studies in government agencies over a period of time in the United States of America have indicated that leadership practices in the public sector fall on average ten to fifteen percent behind the private sector (Rainey 2003: 321). This empirical-based research was carried out by allowing subordinates to rate their supervisors on leadership criteria in both the public and private sectors.

Stone, Bigelow and Crittenden (1999) undertook a survey of empirically based research on strategic management in non-profit organisations which appeared in journal publications between 1977 up until 1999. It was found that these non-profit organisations depended heavily on external resources, however, control over these resources were limited. Multiple and conflicting constituencies can also blur the manner in which senior managers function, hence a strategic leadership approach can help ease the pressure put on senior managers in the public service. The above study of non-profit organisations also found that the important determinant of strategy implementation is the behaviour of leaders. Leadership behaviour is paramount to the successful implementation of strategy.

A study undertaken by Jones, Blunt and Sharma (1996: Internet source) in the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing in Botswana, to determine African perceptions on leadership and management revealed interesting findings. This study revealed that African leadership had its own set of roles, one that did not necessarily link itself to the western ideals of leadership and management as popularized by Kotter (Jones *et al.* 1996). The respondents saw management and leadership as one in the same. The study concluded that effective leaders were those who provide clear direction to subordinates and to a lesser extent 'inspire people, initiate/innovate, and set an example to subordinates' (Jones *et al.* 1996). Interestingly, the study also publishes findings that indicate leaders did not need to have long-term strategy, a corporate vision, and securing organisational commitment to a mission. The study had not drawn any conclusions on the success or otherwise of strategic planning on African leadership styles.

Berry (1994:Internet source) indicates that strategic planning, and more so strategic leadership, is relatively new to public sector institutions. Recent research suggests that strategic thinking has quietly revolutionized public sector institutions (Osborne and Gaebler, in Berry 1994). Poister and Streib (1999:308) also posits the argument that strategic management (leadership) has 'by no means' been addressed 'extensively' in public administration literature, the way in which strategic planning has.

The literature surveyed indicates that strategic leadership has an important role to play in public sector institutions, due to the changing political landscape, the changing goals of society and political interference. It has to be pointed out at the outset that strategic leadership had been successfully adopted in private sector institutions, and the literature are abound with the success of its usage. The public sector has however used strategic leadership at an administrative/managerial level, with limited success.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is evident that change management, strategic management and leadership are current issues within the South African organisational context. Public organisations lack employee initiative, adjustment and empowerment and experience high turnover as a result of the lack in leadership qualities. According to Tizard (2001:62) the effect of change has the greatest impact on individual performance. Tizard (2001:62) was of the opinion that loss of individual performance is a consequence of their resistance to change.

Pettigrew *et al.* (2001:698) and Kriek (2002:29) called for leaders to simultaneously display a variety of roles, in particular that of manager, leader,

facilitator and the ability to create and enhance meaning by being congruent. The following negative consequences of a lack in leadership qualities were identified in the literature survey:

- A lack of skilled labour
- Hostile labour relations and industrial disputes
- Employees not identifying with organisational objectives
- Lack of communication and understanding or organisational vision and mission
- Lack of strategic leadership competencies to manage change
- Lack of employee initiative, adjustment and empowerment
- High turnover rate
- Loss of individual performance; and
- Employee resistance to change.

The above related consequences lead to the following overarching research question: Will the allocation of strategic leadership according to strategic leadership competencies to implement change, have an influence on the outcome of the changes faced by the SMS in the developmental state?

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Leadership as a construct has been studied diligently since the beginning of civilization; this is evident when one surveys the literature that is available on the subject. The topic continues to receive explicit attention in the modern era, as academics and commentators refocus and reshape their understanding of leadership in an evolving, yet globally challenging world.

Leadership, like many other facets of public sector human resource management, has undergone many changes. In essence leadership has had to 'reinvent' and 'readapt' itself to the changing environment. This section of the article is devoted to providing a brief overview of the leadership theories that dominate the subject.

The first era of leadership was called the "Great Man" era (Daft 1999:48). This era of leadership, which was practiced in a stable environment, focused on leaders who were 'born'. This conceptualization of leadership dated to the times of Ancient Greek and Roman mythology (Wehrich and Koontz 1993:493) and to Egyptian rulers and biblical patriarchs, and included nineteenth and twentieth century leaders (Stone and Patterson 2005: Internet source). The leaders during this era who was seen as 'hero' examples include Napoleon, Julius Caesar or political leaders such as George Washington or even social leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Junior. With much

thought surrounding these 'Great Men', research propelled itself into studying what the traits of these 'Great Men' were. This led to the "Traits Approach" to studying leadership.

According to the proponents of the traits theory to studying leadership, certain traits, for example self-confidence and enthusiasm, are qualities or attributes that distinguish effective leaders from followers (Jarbandhan 2007:176). The assumption underpinning this theory was that leaders were to be made of the 'right stuff' and not all individuals have the 'right stuff' (Charlton 1999).

With the world still stable and organisations becoming larger and larger, the need for effectiveness and efficiency became more apparent. This led to the second era of leadership theory formulation which was called the "Scientific Management Movement".

This resulted in the era of the 'rational manager', one who directed and controlled operations in an impersonal manner. Leadership research during this period focused on the 'behaviour' patterns of leaders that resulted in higher productivity – this was called the 'Behaviourist School of Leadership Thought'. The 1970s saw the popularization of the "Contingency Leadership" theory which focused on 'situation(s) in which leader behaviour were contingent' (Daft 1999:49).

The third era of leadership thinking was called the era of 'Team leadership'. This emanated from a world that was unstable and chaotic. With the political upheavels of the 1970s, western models of leadership were challenged. The Japanese introduced the concept of 'team leadership', which focused on empowering employees to work effectively in teams. The focus and locus of power had shifted from the top to the middle and lower rungs of the management echelons.

The fourth era of leadership was represented by the facilitating leader (Daft 1999). Here the leader influenced others in the organization and institution through relationships, where the vision of the organization is owned by everyone involved, not only the top structures. This era of leadership was also popularized by 'transactional leadership'. Transactional leadership theory focuses on specific interactions between leaders and followers, where there is a symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers. Transformational leadership, which was also popular during this period focuses on collaborative decision-making, and by so doing get the leader-subordinate relationship to a new plane where there is shared value and vision (SALGA Handbook 2004:15).

Visionary leadership focuses on the leader who has foresight and vision, these types of leaders seek opportunities where others do not venture into, they strive to do things differently and often achieve results.

The fifth era of leadership is based on servant leadership and stewardship. The servant leader is one who actually leads, however, his/ her primary concern

is on subordinates/ followers. Followers are valued. Harvey in Stone and Patterson (2005: Internet source) describes servant leadership aptly when he states “chasing profits is peripheral; the real point of business is to serve as one of the institutions through which society develops and exercises the capacity for constructive action”.

Stewardship was popularized by Peter Block, who contended that stewards are those leaders who choose service over self-interest. The concept has gained prominence over the recent past in a wide-range of government debates over the roles and responsibilities of ‘industry, government, and citizens in various economic and partnership governance processes’ (Jarbandhan 2007:178).

In an overview of leadership development, Gaughan (2001:67) stated that the formal study of leadership began around the 1930s. A paradigm shift in leadership models from “transactional” to “transformational” occurred in the 1980’s. According to Gaughan, earlier models (situational or contingency models) focused on identifying styles and behaviours, which were dependent on a range of situational factors. The later models (post -1980) focused on change and gave rise to a “new” leadership approach.

The “new” approach involved a paradigm shift from transactional to transformational leadership. The transformational leadership style implied that leaders are only leaders by virtue of the leadership role being sanctioned by their followers. Although the focus has shifted to transformational leadership, Gaughan (2001:67) noted that most researchers agreed on the importance of both transactional and transformational leaders operating in organisations. The need for leaders to possess both transactional and transformational skills cannot be over-emphasised.

Reference was made before to research done by Tett *et al.* (2000:221) where they referred to the variety of ways in which authors conceptualised similar leadership approaches.

Transformational leadership was also called upon by Trofino (2000:232) to assist with the internalisation of total quality management processes. The two main skills or traits of the transformational leader were his/her ability to envision and to inspire. These particular abilities of the transformational leader were conceptualised by Bass and Avolio (1994:3) in terms of their four “I”s dimensions. These were “Idealized Influence”, “Inspirational Motivation”, “Intellectual Stimulation” and “Individualised Consideration”. The core of each “I” related to the leaders’ ability to inspire, to create a desire in their followers to follow their example, to generate enthusiasm and to stimulate creativity and a need for achievement. Transformational leadership, according to Parsell and Bligh (2000:199), focuses more on the process than the task, and motivates through cooperation rather than competition, considers people’s needs and feelings and encourages participative decision-making and problem solving.

Dering (1998:32) identified two distinct paths that the study of leadership took in the 1990s. One branch was the "Relational Models" and the other the "Contemporary Organisations Models". The "Relational Models" focus on the affective domain in leadership (including concepts like caring, stewardship and love). The Transformational Leader Model is an example of the "Contemporary Organisations Model". According to Dering (1998:32) the Transformational Leader Model is the leadership imperative of the 1990s. Although she claimed that no model alone informs the competencies of leaders in quality organisations, she found the Transformational Leader Model helpful in setting a framework for leadership in quality organisations. For her the Transformational Leader Model allows for three critical components of leadership, i.e. the needs of the followers, the needs of the organisation, and the needs of the organisation to change.

According to Gronn (1997:277) leadership is an emergent attributed status. This aspect has resulted in what he called the "prototypical imperial leader". The prototypical imperial leader originates from the leader attribute of greatness. There is a deeply entrenched belief in the greatness of the deeds of these individuals. Trofino (2000:236) linked the greatness of leaders like Florence Nightingale, George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King to personal characteristics of the transformational leader. Svyantek (1999:292) added Caesar as an example of an excellent leader.

Bergman (1999:15) proposed a somewhat different outlook on leadership development. He called for a "grass-roots" approach. The grass-roots approach viewed leadership as non-formal, claiming that everyone can be a leader, regardless of title or position. This approach defined leadership competencies in terms of behaviours and not as traits. Viewing leadership in terms of behaviour and not as traits implied that leadership could be taught.

Terry and Levin (1998:308) reported that contemporary literature often includes the term "new" when referring to leadership. They argued the reference to leadership in terms of "new" originated from the influence of modernism and technical rationality. The new brand of leadership is then used to characterise leadership in terms of successful strategies. "New" also relates to entrepreneurialism. Terry and Levin (1998:310) described the entrepreneurial leader as being powerful and change orientated. They saw the entrepreneurial leader as a skilled change agent who is adept at applying and exploiting the most advanced management techniques to bring about radical change.

Reference was made before to Abzug and Phelps' (1998:208) comments on the fact that new is not so new at all, and that Barnard, Taylor and Smith looked at leadership in the same way. In their critique against the new form of leadership, Terry and Levin (1998:310) came to the same conclusion. According to them, from Machiavelli in the sixteenth century to Barnard

and Selznick in the twentieth century, detailed descriptions were given on leadership strategies that make a difference. A further criticism against the entrepreneurial model was that new is not always better. For them new and unproven ways of doing things can cause more harm than good. Their last criticism related to the notion of tradition being the enemy of progress by the entrepreneurial model. For them tradition is the normative anchor that governs the rational actions of institutional leaders.

The preferred style of leadership for Terry and Levin (1998:313) was what they called the “administrative conservatorship style” or the “conservator”. The term “conservator” is derived from the Latin word *conserve* that means, “to preserve”. According to Terry and Levin (1998:313), “administrative conservatorship” refers to the active and dynamic process of strengthening and preserving institutions’ special capabilities, proficiency and integrity. They also stated that the “conservator” is not against change or that change is feared. They proposed a model “(administrative conservatorship model)” that included a continuum of leadership roles ranging from “initiating leadership” to “protecting leadership”. The initiating leadership role concentrates on strategic change (mission, values, personnel, and technologies), covering the entire institution and therefore protecting its integrity. Protecting leadership is concerned with incremental or zero change, guarding against opportunism. This model is against radical or total and fundamental transformation. Jorgensen (2001:75) shared Terry and Levin’s concern on radical change. He warned that growth and change could make an organisation forget its original mission and values. Such an organisation then becomes sidetracked from its values base and can be full of conflict and tension.

The different views on leadership (new, traditional, conservator, transformational, charismatic, prototypical, etc.) proved the contentiousness of leadership theories. There were more similarities than differences in what authors saw as “good” leaders. All of them agreed on issues like inspiring people, showing direction, communicating effectively, and solving problems. The differences were more in terms of the “how they do it” than in “what they do”. Some differences were even based on similarities where the arguments evolved around “more this than that”. It was however clear that there is not yet a single leadership model that is universally accepted. Current models will be criticised even more in future, according to Loughlin and Barling (2001:551). They focused on the young workers and the tendency to see younger people in leadership roles. The new generation, they claimed, rejects older models of authority and leadership and they (young generation) did not yet fill the gap with new models of leadership.

In comparing the different views on leadership, there are some similarities in the way leadership is explained. Inducing change, getting others to change and upholding change are at the essence of leadership. As such, leadership is linked

to transformation. It was therefore concluded that leadership cannot be non-transformational, as leadership implies change.

For the purpose of this article, leadership is defined in terms of the ability to change others' behaviour, or to move them towards taking action in line with a goal or objective.

WHAT IS COMPETENCE?

Competence was defined in a number of ways by various authors (eg Nadler 1990, Urdang 1992, Hall 1996, Letsinger 1998, Spencer and Spencer 1993). It seems as if the definitions provided by them relate in terms of the way people get to respond and fit to their environment's demands would rely upon their knowledge, skills, abilities in terms of the roles they fulfil. Only if they would acquire the necessary knowledge, skills abilities and behaviours, would they be able to "fit". Tett *et al.* (2000:212) offered a definition of "competency" that emphasised the fact that the understanding of the concept of competency is by no means firmly established. According to them, a competency "is an identifiable aspect of prospective work behaviour attributable to the individual that is expected to contribute positively and/or negatively to organisational effectiveness." They acknowledged the fact that this definition is lacking precision, in particular regarding when and how competencies might be expressed.

What is of particular interest in this definition of Tett *et al.* (2000:212) is the reference to negative contribution. That was interpreted to suggest leaders or managers not only possess competencies that will contribute positively to organisational effectiveness but also competencies that will negatively contribute to organisational ineffectiveness.

For this article, competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours that are required for success in leadership roles. The focus of this article is to link change-roles or positions for public strategic managers to specific leadership competence clusters.

WHAT IS MANAGEMENT?

Keeling in Pollitt and Bouckaert (2005:12) defines management as the "best use of resources in pursuit of objectives subject to change".

It is often a misnomer that management and leadership are synonymous terms, on the contrary each of these terms have their own distinguishable characteristics. Leaders are not necessarily good managers and good managers are not necessarily good leaders. One can however, have a manager to learn effective leadership skills.

According to Blagg and Young in Jooste (2003:26) managers are characterized as those who budget, organise and control – the leaders on the other hand are the ‘charismatic big picture visionaries, the ones who change the world’.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP?

Nutt and Backoff (1993:17) view strategic leadership as a “process of guidance that sets a new strategy in place”, in addition the aim of strategic leadership should be to realize change of a significant and enduring nature. Daft (1999:125) is of the opinion that strategic leadership is “responsible for the relationship of the external environment to choices about vision, mission, strategy and their implementation.” Jooste (2003:39) is of the view that strategic level leaders are those who occupy senior positions, including

ministers within government departments. These strategic leaders are responsible for the delivery of services, for the budgetary allocation of resources they should communicate strategic vision, and plan for present and future deliverables. Jooste (2003) also takes cognizance of environmental factors that impact upon the decision-making capabilities of strategic level leaders. Daley in Riccucci (2006:163) argues for the value of strategic leadership and planning in organisations that are “modern, and knowledge –based.” The argument is also extended that competitive advantage of institutions can be garnered from resource-based human capital.

Nutt and Backoff (1993:23) identify strategic leadership approaches based on what each type of approach wants to do. The first approach describes successful leaders, the second is based on the ‘language of leadership’, the third is based on interpreting what successful leaders do, and finally followership is offered as an explanation of strategic leadership.

- **The descriptive leader**

Kouzes and Postner in Nutt and Backoff (1993:17) describe leaders as being early ‘adopters of innovative ideas’. Basically ideas are taken from the sources of the organization, both internal and external, and then adopted into a vision. The strategy is then derived from the vision. The successful leader must be able to describe the vision using scenario –building forecasts and perspectives. The leader must then get the followers to believe in the vision. The strategy is then implemented. Essentially, strategic leaders seek ways to change institutions in an ever-changing environment.

- **The language-based leader**

Conger, in Nutt and Backoff (1994:18) looks at the “language of leadership”. Here the language-based leader uses two sets of skills. The first one is ‘framing’ where the leader presents the strategic vision. Secondly, the leader uses ‘rhetorical

crafting', where emotional language is used to create an appeal for the strategy. Here the effective leader keeps the message simple and repetitive.

- **The interpretive leader**

This theoretical approach is based on the supposition that the source of the vision in strategic leadership comes from other (Nutt and Backoff 1993:19). They obtain the vision from the practices around them, their subordinates and literature. They do not create the vision, but shape one to fit the situation they find themselves in.

- **Followership**

The work of Kelly is cited in Nutt and Backoff (1993). Kelly found that leaders 'mold and are molded by followers'. Kelly also made a point of indicating that followers look for facets of leadership before giving off their best.

Strategic leadership consists of leadership vision, mission, strategy and an implementation action plan.

The next section will focus on the competencies associated with leadership and in particular some models for leadership competencies.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Boak and Coolican (2001:212) discussed leadership competencies in terms of specific behaviours exhibited by more effective and less effective leaders. They reported on various contemporary research findings and found the behavioural approach to competencies was the best way of measuring leadership. The reason for this, they said, was the clear description of behavioural indicators. They noted however, that leadership competencies, although based on behavioural indicators, were also expressed in terms of skills or characteristics. Recent models, they claimed, also focused on "metacompetencies" which refer to abilities that underpin or allow for the development of competencies, as well as characteristics that individuals will need in addition to competencies such as motivation and cognitive abilities.

The model described above by Boak and Coolican (2001:212) was found useful and necessary for Wright, Rowitz, Merkle, Reid, Robinson, Herzog, Weber, Carmichael, Balderson and Baker (2000:1202) to determine a measurement process for leaders in the Public Health arena. They concluded competency-based instruction to be a means of achieving accountability through teaching practice-based clusters of knowledge and skills.

The above approach of expressing competencies in terms of more effective leaders and less effective leaders was called competency theory (Cairns 2000). According to Cairns, "competency theory" is based on studying successful leaders,

breaking down their behaviours, attitudes and skills into measurable bits and then putting them together to form beings demonstrating superior performance. She criticised this approach and called it “madness” and “lunacy” likely to create “nothing but inhuman monsters”. Instead she advocated the development of individuals’ own interests, own insights, motivations, and capabilities. Cairns (2000) concluded that leadership comes not from without but from within.

Cairns (2000) criticism was found to be ironic. She claimed that competency theory will create Frankenstein’s monster, and that all his (Frankenstein) problems started when the monster developed a mind of its own and stopped obeying his master. Her own support for leaders to develop to their own insights, motivations, and capacities, to be as much themselves as they are capable of being was supporting exactly what she criticised the competency theory of, i.e. creating a monster with a mind of his own that stopped obeying its master.

In a benchmarking study of best practices in leadership development, Fulmer and Wagner (1999:28) found most of the best-practice organisations have identified leadership competencies or defined the characteristics and qualities of successful leaders in general. They also kept their competencies updated through internal and external research.

Barner (2000:47) was of the opinion that leadership competencies should be identified within a specific business context. Leadership competency assessment must be designed around the current and future needs of the organisation. Although not against competency theory as such, he criticised the way competency theory is practiced. According to Barner (2000:47), the problem with competency theory is that it is applied as the driver instead of the business strategy.

The assessment of leaders’ strengths and weaknesses traditionally focused on analysing the leader as an individual rather than on the leadership team as a whole. This was the view of Kanji and Moura E SA (2001:706). They claimed contemporary organisations cannot and should not depend on the abilities of a single person. In addition to this criticism, they added that there are considerable limitations in terms of consistency and reliability of measurement scales, which make it difficult to draw comparisons across organisations and even within the same organisation. The links between a particular kind of leadership and organisational performance are therefore problematic to establish.

Research on generic leadership competencies done in the United Kingdom (UK) by Gaughan (2001:75), found the nature of leadership models in the UK to be sufficiently different to those emerging from United States leadership models. Her research also supported the views of Barner (2000:47) and Kanji and Moura E SA (2001:706) with respect to context.

The complexity of the manager’s role calls for a comprehensive performance taxonomy that is more detailed than those offered in literature. This was the view of Tett *et al.* (2000:205). For them the complexity of the managerial role calls for

greater attention to detail and they emphasised the value of greater specificity of behavioural dimensions in the analysis of leadership competencies. Like Barner (2000:47) they called for the contextualisation of leadership competencies. In addition to the context, they included the focus on behaviour and the need to capture the future-oriented nature of prediction and change in their competence model. They conducted a search for a comprehensive list of managerial competencies that would be representative for all managerial functions.

Tett *et al.* (2000:212) assembled their comprehensive list from twelve previously published performance taxonomies and ended with a master list of 109 dimensions. They eventually identified 53 competencies. They also derived at specific leadership competencies that they specified under selected leadership styles. These styles were: (1) *Initiating Structure*; (2) *Consideration*; (3) *Autocratic*; (4) *Participative*; (5) *Transactional*; and (6) *Transformational*.

Although not without shortcomings, competency theory was used by most researchers and practitioners to develop competencies. The criticisms against this approach stressed the situational nature of leadership and that one generic competence model is not desirable. Most users of this approach were well aware of these difficulties and recognised it in their models. Acknowledgement was given to the contextual nature of leadership competencies in terms of type of industry, culture, and phase of the organisation's growth as well as to the need for diverse leadership within all of these parameters. The focus of this research was on diverse clusters of leadership competence to allow for the specific nature of each stage or situation linked to organisation change.

The next section will focus on the different competencies identified for leadership reported in literature with specific focus on change management. It was concluded before that leadership cannot be non-transformational. As such leadership competency models have to be linked to leadership change management.

CHANGE- STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

A significant number of authors (Dering 1998; Scholtes 1999; Graetz 2000; Kanji and Moura E SA 2001; Bergmann 1999 and Wright *et al.* 2000) stressed the importance of 'Creating a Vision' as an important competency for leadership. Kerfoot (2000:263) called for a 'Shared Destiny' instead of a 'Shared Vision'. She claimed that the best organisations are those built on a model where mutual growth for both organisation and employees are sought. Such a model allows for the employees and the organisation to develop a mutually satisfying relationship in which both add value to each other.

Most of the above authors referred to the competencies they identified as being “key” or “core”. Beckett (1998:24) was of the opinion that the word “key” is an example of management jargon. According to him, only management consultants would use the word key, to make it sound more important. Pritchard (1999:23) however, considered “core competencies” to be those essential characteristics needed for on-the-job success.

When consideration is given to the shopping basket approach used by some authors (like Tett *et al.*'s 53 competencies), the words “key” and “core” are useful. Most authors specified those competencies that are unique or specific for leadership. There were a large number of similar competence clusters and indeed competencies described by authors as being the key or core competencies. By focusing on the similar or commonly identified key (core) competencies, the essence of leadership can be grasped.

WHY STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR?

South Africa, as with many of the global countries, faces many challenges, complexities and public sector reforms. These reforms which are discussed by Pollit and Bouckaert (2005:25) are ideal settings for the adoption of strategic human resource management (Daley in Riccucci 2006:163). Wallis, Dollery and McLoughlin (2007:136) further add that public sector reform and modernization need a leadership shift in paradigm to drive the reform agenda. In addition, the relationship between senior managers and political office-bearers seem to be reaching a point of bisection, hence the term ‘mandarins’ has been coined to describe senior managers in the public service (Pierre, in Pollit and Bouckaert 2005:50).

Senior managers face the challenge of responding to the vision and commitment that has been established by the political leadership in promoting responsive governance. Senior managers/ leaders, who understand the context and vision of accelerated service delivery, are therefore required to equip themselves with requisite skills and commitment to bring about meaningful change in the lives of the communities that they serve (Fraser-Moleketi 2005:11). Wallis *et al.* (2007:vii) warn that ‘leadership failure’ can thwart even the most effectively designed public sector reform. This view is supported by Williams in Stacey and Griffin (2006:71), who make a case for strategic leadership by supporting it with research done on strategic leadership development and the positive off-spin that has had in the Department of Education and Science in the United Kingdom (Cannon, in Riccucci 2006).

A strategic approach to leadership for senior managers is required in the face of the challenges facing the proposed seamless (single) public service reform in South Africa coupled with accelerating service delivery.

MacMaster (2004:84) amplifies the fact that a strategic management approach for senior managers leads to the concept of 'value for money', something that the public sector is striving for. In addition, senior and middle managers need to be trained in the strategic approach so that they can "effectively meet the challenges of the developmental state".

The SMS Handbook (DPSA:2003) requires that all senior managers treat "all people with whom they interact fairly, with courtesy and sensitivity. They must take pride in any advice or service they provide." The SMS Handbook also stipulates that senior managers "should also avoid unnecessary delays in making decisions or taking action". The guidelines above, implores senior managers to be accountable in their decision-making.

COMPETENCE CLUSTERS FOR LEADERSHIP CHANGE ROLES

Bowman (2000:455) referred to six change-leadership styles, each with a different set of assumptions and goals. For him the challenge was to achieve a complementary pairing between the organisation's disposition towards change and the nature of the change demands in the environment. The six leadership styles should then be critiqued against this pairing, resulting in the selection of the most appropriate style. The six change-leadership styles he referred to were: "Anti-change"; "Rational"; "Panacea"; "Bolt-On"; "Integrated"; and "Continuous".

More than one style was required for any change initiative. The challenge described by Bowman (2000:455) extends throughout the course of the change initiative.

Exploring literature on leadership competencies in this article provided the basis for the competence clusters for the change roles. The leadership competencies were selected with organisation change as functional area.

Based on the discussion of "Change-Management Leadership Competencies" four competence clusters (supporting the four change leadership roles identified) were selected. Most authors discussed in the above section identified them as core change-management leadership competencies.

Initiator Cluster

- Illustrating an awareness of problems causing a need for change
- Identifying possible solutions for the problem(s)
- Providing strategic vision for the organisation
- Communicating and sharing the vision
- Obtaining support for the vision
- Gathering data before implementation of the change initiative

- Selecting the change initiative from among alternatives
- Identifying and setting of change goals to realise the vision
- Providing information on the expected change benefits

Shaper Cluster

- Inducing and reinforcing change by providing incentives and rewards
- Inducing and reinforcing change by providing authoritative measures and discipline
- Providing clarity on behavioural expectations
- Utilising personal attraction to induce change
- Developing employee competence to meet change requirements
- Empowering employees to deliver change outputs
- Utilising and building teams to achieve change results
- Utilising project management principles to achieve change results
- Aligning employee's utilisation with change activities according to their strengths

Monitor Cluster

- Allowing consultation on change progress
- Handling emotional reactions, providing compassion and care
- Addressing and eliminating resistance and conflict
- Providing frequent performance feedback during the change efforts
- Networking with various individuals and institutions on methods to streamline and expedite the change efforts
- Encouraging and energising employees during failures and periods of stagnation

Assessor Cluster

- Measuring change outcomes
- Evaluating trends, outcomes, and the impact of change
- Linking the change outcomes to the initial vision
- Providing focus areas for future change initiatives

THE RATIONALE FOR THE CREATION OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE (SMS)

It had become apparent in the new millennium that the public service was firstly facing a shortage of attracting effective leaders and secondly, those who were

in current senior management positions were not being used optimally. High staff turnover, the HIV pandemic, serious service delivery backlogs which were accompanied by community protest, and an overall stagnation indicated that all was not right within the public service.

As a result the DPSA commissioned studies in performance related issues pertaining to senior managers. The recommendations of the study was that a Senior Management Service be instituted, incorporating approximately 3000 of the most senior public servants, including administrative Heads of Departments but excluding the SAPS and SANDF managers (Levin, 2005:Speech at 5th SMS Conference). This SMS was given the full support of government, and had its own formal structures of recruitment, selection, remuneration and general labour dispensation as published in the SMS Handbook (SMS: Public Service Handbook – DPSA).

The SMS was a culmination of the realization by government that a strong leadership was essential to deliver on its mandate of “a better life for all”. The SMS dispensation was launched on 1 January 2001 by means of the promulgation of Article 4 of the Public Service Regulations of 2000 (Public Service Commission, 2008:77). The focus of the SMS dispensation was to create a sustainable cadre of middle managers who could compete for senior management positions. In 2005 a Generic Competency Framework was finalized for managers and in 2006 an Accelerated Development Programme (ADP) was introduced for middle managers (Public Service Commission 2008:77). The ADP targets middle managers from designated groups who could function in senior management positions.

To further strengthen the capacity of senior managers the Leadership Development Management Strategic Framework (LDMSF) was formally launched in September 2008, the aim of which is to ‘to provide a strategy for the development and management of SMS members as leaders responsible for the transformation of the public service to deliver a globally competitive service to citizens’ (SMS Resource Pack 2008: internet source). The LDMSF is supported by training interventions which are run by the Public Service Academy (at that stage SAMDI, but which is now known as PALAMA).

The vision of the LDMSF is: “To continually provide a steady supply of senior managers within the public service who are competent and productive leaders within their organisations, who serve with humility”. This vision is articulated as:

Availability and sustainability of a highly competent, dedicated, responsive and productive leadership cadre of the public service (SMS: Course Pack 2. DPSA).

The mission of the SMS Framework is: “*To build senior leadership for high performance and enhanced service delivery*”. The above are underpinned by ‘Core principles of action’ (SMS: Course Pack 2. DPSA).

Naidoo in Daniel, Southall and Lutchman (2004-2005:118) revealed that the Department of Public Service and Administration's (DPSA) policy statement on the establishment of a senior management service (SMS) indicated that management capacity, poor performance levels, a lack of skills and 'underdevelopment of leadership/ managerial

competencies' was a capacity constraint to effective service delivery and human resource management in the public service. In addition, the author also reveals that public service, spearheaded by a competent senior management service, needs to build capacity to extend the relationship and build trust with the recipients of public services. Furthermore, the mindset of public servants has to be development- orientated, they need to engage in project management tasks, design and negotiate resource usage and allocation and contribute widely to the realization of goals and objectives of policy implementation.

From the above it is evident that senior managers need to rethink and reinvent their leadership roles and responsibilities. In response to the challenges presented above the DPSA embarked on the development of the SMS.

Having established the need and requirements of the SMS, this article will proceed to look at the need for leaders to adopt a strategic approach to the changes faced by the public service.

A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PROCESS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

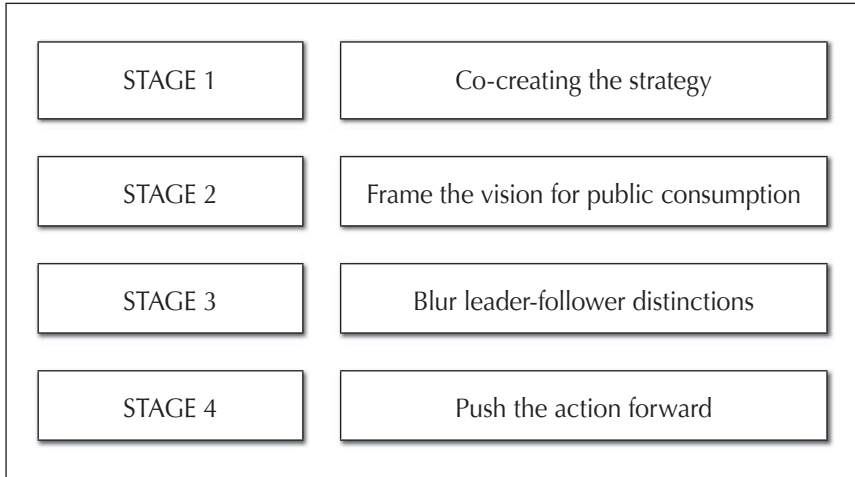
Nutt and Backoff (1993:25) succinctly point out that strategic leaders need to be concerned with "walking the vision", this is supported by the view in the SMS Handbook (DPSA, 2003) that senior managers need to "walk the talk". What is intended by these quotations is that senior strategic leaders need to obtain support from a wide variety of actors from within (for example, policies and implementation frameworks) and outside (for example, the contextual realities of local communities) the institution.

The process that will be elucidated upon is the one popularized by Nutt and Backoff (1993). The model is based on a four stage process as illustrated below.

STAGE 1: Co-Create the strategy

In this stage the leader facilitates strategy development. The strategic leader delegates strategy development to others and then sells the results. The intention is to integrate the idea of exemplary followers and to 'win over' a diversified group of individuals, so as to stem any resistance to change. It has to be noted that due to the large number of stakeholders in public institutions, resistance

Figure 1 The four stage strategic leadership process



Source Based on Nutt and Backoff 1999 'Four-Stage' Process Model.

to change can come from any quarter. In this stage the senior manager/s can extend the vision of the institution to other units.

STAGE 2: Frame the vision for public consumption

Due to the nature of public management, the strategic leader has to reframe the strategy by looking at the preferences and values that are apt to groups and individuals (Nutt and Backoff 1993). In essence the strategic leader will have to appease the needs and wants of groups very subtly by framing the strategy to suit all stakeholders. In public organisations, if any group is displeased, it could result in the delay of policy implementation.

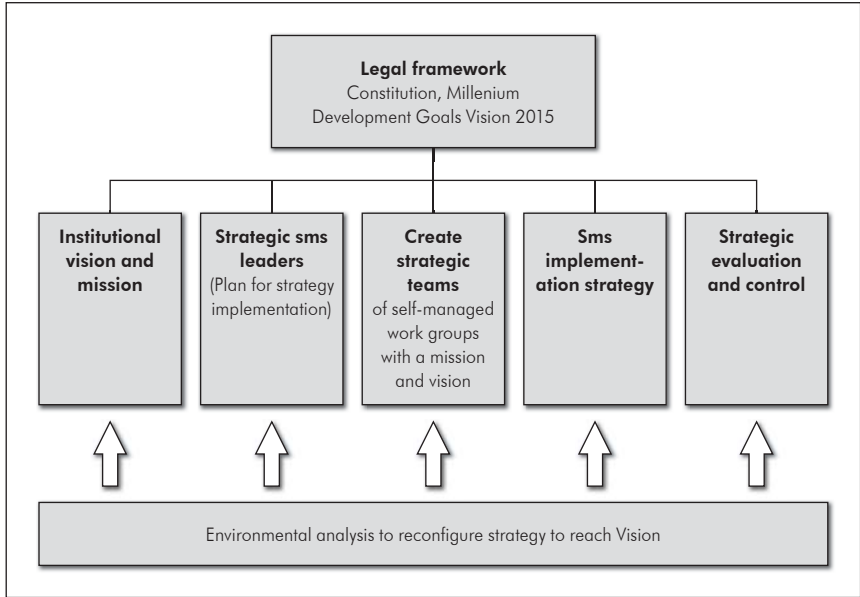
STAGE 3: Blur leader-follower distinction

Here the leader is required to empower exemplary followers. Exemplary followers can assist in bringing change to public institutions, hence the leader-follower distinction becomes blurred. This blurring helps create a sense of empowerment in followers.

STAGE 4: Push the action forward

With empowered followers the leader can now push the action forward (vision), i.e. the strategy can be implemented and action plans can be operationalised. It

Figure 2 A Strategic Leadership model for the public sector



must be borne in mind that the leader may still face obstacles from the internal and external environments, and this must be planned for.

The model that has been proposed above is an approximation of what strategic leadership should intend to achieve. It is an attempt to analyse and put into the academic domain the role and need of adopting a strategic leadership approach of what government agencies hope to achieve in their mandate/s.

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest challenges faced by the post-apartheid government in South Africa is the slow pace of service delivery, the overall implementation of government's programme of action and sustained development. If government wants to improve on its deliverables and promote 'a better life for all', it would have to develop the people who can implement its vision. As a response the Department of Public Service and Administration introduced the Senior SMS. The SMS comprised of Heads of Departments and an elite group of public servants who were mandated to improve the material conditions of all South Africans, especially the vulnerable. The SMS had its own labour relations

guidelines, it had its own strategic human resource development imperatives, and more importantly, it had the support of the government of the day.

This article argues that the SMS may benefit from using strategic leadership competencies as a tool to improve the quality of life of all South Africans. Competencies refer to the adaptation of an individual's behaviour, skills and knowledge to situations or roles. Leadership as a role is very broad and authors prefer to diversify leadership in terms of styles or approaches. This has led to debate in terms of which is preferred, ideal, suitable or relevant. Matching different competencies to specific leadership styles allows for the process of adaptation.

Most competencies "fit" the general view of leadership. Most authors favour competency theory to explain leadership competencies in terms of leadership effectiveness. There was amongst them agreement on its (competency theory) shortcomings. Amongst its weaknesses are the need for specificity and a more situational application. Most models quoted in this chapter isolated what authors believe to be the "core" competencies allowing for a generic leadership-competence fit. The core competencies were supplemented with other related competencies to allow for specificity and the requirements of specific situations.

Most definitions of leadership focus on its transformational or change nature. The core competencies that were related to in this article confirmed this. Managing change is the essence of the leadership role. The overarching definition for leadership adopted for this article define leadership as the ability to change others' behaviour, or to move them towards taking action in line with a goal or objective. Leaders who are considered to be "transactional", lack leadership competence and are therefore not competent to manage organisational change.

According to competency theory, leadership competencies can be viewed as a collection of competencies ready to be used when necessary. Some must be used most of the time while others will be used occasionally when the occasion or situation demands their application. The true leader therefore will be the one that not only possesses the best collection of behaviour, skills and knowledge, but also the ingenuity for knowing when, how, and why to apply them.

The literature study indicated that leaders had various roles to play during organisational change. These roles were investigated and it resulted in the identification of four specific leadership change roles. Based on the investigation of leadership competencies and leadership change roles, competence clusters were developed for each role. Applying specific leadership roles to the stages of organisational change allowed for more specificity in terms of competency theory. Fitting competencies to those roles will assist the leader in working out the what, when and why. It is unfortunately not a foolproof recipe as the variables in the organisational environment are too complex and varied.

Finally, a model to implement strategic leadership has been proposed. This model is an approximation of strategic leadership in the South African public service and opens the doors of discussion and debate around strategic leadership, human resource development and the SMS. It is concluded that to manage change successfully, leaders need to be developed in the competencies associated with the various change roles and; utilised in different change management roles. They should also be competent in initiating (setting a vision and communicating it) and assessing change initiatives.

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Strategies to motivate employees to increase work performance

An empirical assessment

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ABSTRACT

Motivating employees is a key factor in improving work performance. The question that arises, however, is what strategies managers can introduce to create an environment in which their subordinates can be motivated to such an extent that performance will indeed increase. In this study an attempt was made to determine through empirical research in the public sector how selected employee motivation strategies are perceived to be applicable in the work situation and how they are preferred to be applicable. The order of preference that is attached to the importance of these strategies to motivate employees to increase work performance was also determined.

INTRODUCTION

Some workers do not produce the quality of work or maintain the level of productivity they are capable of. To some extent this may be attributed to reticence on the part of the worker. However, the predominant cause is likely to be underutilisation of the potential and capabilities of workers by management. Workers are frequently bored, uninvolved and underutilised and this may contribute to their level of productivity falling below their real potential. Management often fails to present their subordinates with the necessary challenges and opportunities for achievement or to provide the type of leadership that will motivate them and direct their behaviour towards increased work performance.

The fact that the issue of employee motivation remains a crucial factor at most institutions was confirmed by an extensive survey carried out to determine the perceptions of employees and their supervisors regarding

employee motivation. It was found that the biggest weakness among managers was their inability to accurately perceive the factors that motivate their employees (Kovach 1995).

This study therefore, attempts to answer the question as to what managers in the public sector can do to motivate their subordinates to such an extent that work performance will indeed increase. In an attempt to answer this question, a number of strategies were identified¹ that are not exhaustive but none the less representative of the various methods referred to in literature that are available to managers to consider in motivating their subordinates to increase their work performance. More specifically, this study empirically investigates how these strategies, which formed the basis of this research, are *perceived to be applicable in the work situation currently*, how they are *preferred to be applicable* and, lastly, what the *order of preference* is that is attached to the importance of these strategies to motivate employees to increase work performance.

METHODOLOGY FOR COLLECTING DATA

The target group selected for the empirical research consists of the third-year and post graduate students in Public Administration at the University of South Africa (Unisa) who were registered for the various Public Administration qualifications of the former Unisa² in 2007 and who are employed in the public sector in South Africa. The study was not restricted to a single public institution – and therefore also not to the unique circumstances of a particular work situation – as the respondents come from various public institutions all over South Africa. In other words, the views of the respondents represent a number of public institutions, each probably with its own unique circumstances in the work situation – an aspect conducive to the nature of the study.

The research questionnaire was targeted at 230 respondents (questionnaires were distributed to 40% of the total number of third-year and post graduate students who are employed in the public sector). The research was based on a mail survey. Completed questionnaires were received from 95 respondents. This represents a response rate of 41,3% which, in general, can be regarded as representative of a homogeneous population such as the one selected for this survey.³

For purposes of the research, a number of employee motivation strategies were identified, based on a literature study of the subject. Structural response questions, based on the employee motivation strategies selected, were used in which respondents were asked to select one answer from a list of alternatives. Respondents were requested to indicate how they perceive these strategies to be applicable in their work situation currently (as is) and how they would

prefer it to be applicable (ideal). In addition, they were also requested to list these strategies in order of preference in terms of their importance to motivate employees to increase work performance

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

How employee motivation strategies are perceived to be applicable in the work situation currently (as is) and how they are preferred to be applicable (ideal)

The responses to this part of the questionnaire are represented in Table 1.

As far as the first part of the question is concerned, namely *“How employee motivation strategies are perceived to be applicable in the work situation currently”*, an analysis of the information clearly indicates that a significant number of respondents indicated that employee motivation in their work situation is “never” or “seldom” based on the identified employee motivation strategies. In this regard the average collective response for the options “never” and “seldom” in respect of all the strategies listed is for example 63,2%. Flowing from this, on the one hand, the deduction can be made that employee motivation at the institutions of the target group is probably based on strategies other than those identified for the purposes of the study.

On the other hand, the deduction can be made that although employee motivation is currently applied at some of the institutions, generally it does not enjoy a very high priority.

As far as the second part of the question is concerned namely *“How employee motivation strategies are preferred to be applicable in the work situation”*, it is important to note that there seems to be a need for employee motivation. The need for employee motivation in general and the application of the listed employee motivation strategies in particular are confirmed by the fact that as far as all the strategies are concerned, an average of 62,4% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer the listed strategies to be “always” applicable in the work situation, while the average collective response for the options “never” and “seldom” with regard to the preferred application was only 7,8%. The average collective response for all the strategies in respect of the options “always” and “frequently” with regard to the preferred application was 92,2% which indicates strong support for the application of these strategies to motivate employees to increase work performance.

As far as the first strategy is concerned, Steers and Porter (1991:508-511) are of the opinion that *“subordinates are more likely to perform well if managers create a situation in which there is a high probability that subordinates’*

Table 1 Strategies managers can follow to motivate subordinates to increase work performance

Views of respondents on how they perceive it to be applicable in their work situation (as is) and how they would prefer it to be applicable (ideal)												
Statements	Current (As is)					Preferred (Ideal)					Total %	
	Never	Seldom	Frequently	Always	Total %	Never	Seldom	Frequently	Always	Total %		
In my work situation, subordinates are motivated by managers by ...												
creating a situation in which there is a high probability that subordinates' efforts will produce achievement and such achievements will be noticed by management and be rewarded	11,6	51,5	31,6	5,3	100	3,1	3,1	28,4	65,4	100		
setting objectives aimed at increasing performance; in other words objectives that are unambiguous and specific rather than general or vague	8,4	31,6	43,2	16,8	100	0	0	23,1	76,9	100		
giving them feedback on what they are doing wrong and what they are doing right	16,8	34,7	36,9	11,6	100	0	3,1	20	76,9	100		
giving them adequate and sustained feedback on their performance	11,6	48,4	36,9	3,1	100	0	3,1	31,6	65,3	100		
carrying out performance measurement exercises	14,7	43,1	36,9	5,3	100	0	5,3	40	54,7	100		
communicating with them effectively, for instance ensuring that instructions to them are clear; allowing them to ask questions and being available to answer the questions; using words that are uplifting; listen actively to them	16,8	34,7	36,9	11,6	100	0	0	14,7	85,3	100		
giving them the authority to deal with a situation that requires their discretion; in other words allowing them to participate in decision making	14,7	45,3	31,6	8,4	100	0	3,1	31,6	65,3	100		
rewarding good performance	20	45,3	23,1	11,6	100	0	0	36,9	63,1	100		
rewarding good performance in such a way that there is a balance between the amount of effort required and the size or significance of the reward	31,6	45,3	14,7	8,4	100	0	3,1	36,9	60	100		

Table 1 continued on p.70

Table 1 continued from p 69

Statements	Current (As is)						Preferred (Ideal)					
	Never	Seldom	Frequently	Always	%		Never	Seldom	Frequently	Always	%	
rewarding good performance in such a way that the rewards received by others for similar achievements in similar circumstances are taken into account	28,4	43,2	20	8,4	100		0	3,1	28,4	68,5	100	
rewarding good performance immediately after achievement	51,5	36,9	3,2	8,4	100		0	11,6	25,3	63,1	100	
rewarding good performance in such a way that exceptional performers, compared to those whose performance is not as good, receive more recognition	23,1	48,5	16,8	11,6	100		3,1	8,4	31,6	56,9	100	
giving rewards with unpredictable regularity; in other words not all positive actions of subordinates are rewarded	31,6	34,7	25,3	8,4	100		20	16,9	34,7	28,4	100	
In my work situation, subordinates are motivated by ...	Never	Seldom	Frequently	Always	%		Never	Seldom	Frequently	Always	%	
developing friendship with them, for instance by treating them as equals on and off the job; by sharing interests with them; by inviting them to engage in social activities; by helping them with personal problems and concerns	36,9	31,6	23,1	8,4	100		8,4	16,8	31,6	43,2	100	
using them to train others	25,3	25,3	34,7	14,7	100		0	14,7	28,4	56,9	100	
being willing to perform self-scrutiny to see the effect of their leadership on subordinates in perspective	45,3	34,7	16,8	3,2	100		0	3,2	45,3	51,5	100	
improving the self-image of subordinates, for instance by ensuring that they will experience some success in their work; by making them aware of their strengths and weaknesses in a friendly manner; by setting them realistic expectations	31,6	20	40	8,4	100		0	3,2	16,8	80	100	

efforts will produce achievement and such achievement will be noticed by management and be rewarded". However, it should be noted that collectively 63,1% of the respondents indicated that currently this strategy is "never" and "seldom" applied in their work situation to motivate employees. This finding indicates that managers at the institutions of the target group are probably not of the opinion that effort will always pay off in terms of performance; in other words, they do not feel that effort is highly correlated with performance and that higher effort will yield better performance and reward in the end. In such circumstances the motivation of employees to increase work performance may be limited. However, the fact that 65,4% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer this strategy to be "always" applicable in the work situation while a further 28,4% indicated that it should "frequently" be the case, is encouraging and indicates a need for the strategy to be applied.

In contrast to the relative limited application of the other employee motivation strategies in the work situation currently, it is encouraging to note that there are respondents who responded rather positively to the current application of the strategy, *"managers set objectives aimed at increasing performance; in other words objectives that are unambiguous and specific rather than general or vague"*. With regard to this strategy, collectively 60% of the respondents indicated that it is currently "always" and "frequently" applied in their work situation. It is also the only strategy where more than 50% of the respondents responded in this way. However, it is distressing to note that 40% indicated that the strategy is currently "never" and "seldom" applied. Managers need to take note of the fact that under such circumstances employees cannot be expected to be successful if success is not clearly defined. In fact, the aim of objectives is to provide employees with a clear sense of direction and purpose. Objectives focus on the future and help to give meaning to the actions of employees (Daniels 2000:121). However, a need clearly exists for the application of this strategy, as 76,9% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer it to be "always" applicable in the work situation and a further 23,1% indicated that it should "frequently" be the case.

As far as the strategy on feedback on work performance is concerned, Hagemann (1992: 57) states that "A lack of feedback is the biggest killer of motivation at work. Nobody wants to be overlooked." According to Capozzoli (1997:17), feedback is often only given on what an employee is doing wrong and not on what he or she is doing right. If employees are always criticised, they will soon get the impression that it does not make any difference what they do, as only the things they do wrong will be recognised. Too much criticism, no matter how good management's intentions, can erode a subordinate's will to achieve. Based on the findings obtained from the study, however, it appears as if feedback on performance at the institutions of the target group currently

occurs in conflict with the points of view of Hagemann (1992) and Capozzoli (1997) – an aspect that is rather distressing. The majority of the respondents (collectively 51,5%), for example, indicated that the strategy *“managers give feedback to their subordinates on what they are doing wrong and what they are doing right”* is currently “never” and “seldom” applied in their work situation. In addition, the majority of respondents (collectively 60%) also indicated that the strategy *“managers give subordinates adequate and sustained feedback on their performance”* is currently “never” and “seldom” applied in their work situation. It is encouraging, however, to note that in respect of both these strategies, collectively 96,9% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer it to be “always” and “frequently” applicable.

On the strategy *“managers carry out performance measurement exercises”*, Daniels (2000:103-104) states that management should develop means of relatively frequent performance measurement and feedback. Biannual measurement of an employee’s performance should be coupled with weekly if not daily observations and feedback on performance. Such action will indicate management’s seriousness about performance measurement and lead employees to realise that rewards can indeed be tied to performance. Unfortunately, an analysis of the findings of the study indicates that measurement of performance does not occur at the majority of the institutions of the target group. 57,8% of the respondents, for example, indicated that this strategy is currently “never” and “seldom” applied in their work situation to motivate employees – an aspect that requires urgent attention. It is, however, encouraging to note that collectively 94,7% indicated that they would prefer this strategy to be “always” and “frequently” applied.

The respondents displayed a particular sensitivity towards the strategy *“managers communicate with their subordinates effectively, for instance by ensuring that instructions to them are clear; by allowing them to ask questions and being available to answer the questions; by using words that are uplifting; and by listening actively to them”*. Although 51,5% of the respondents indicated that this strategy is currently “never” and “seldom” applied in their work situation, 85,3% indicated that they would prefer it to be “always” applicable in the work situation while a further 14,7% indicated that they would prefer it to be “frequently” applicable. Thus, collectively all the respondents (100%) indicated that they would prefer it to be “always” and “frequently” applicable which emphasises their sensitivity to the importance of effective communication in motivating employees to increase work performance.

“To motivate their subordinates, managers give them the authority to deal with a situation that requires their discretion; in other words allowing them to participate in decision making.” However, it should be noted that collectively 60% of the respondents indicated that this strategy is currently “never” and

"seldom" applied in their work situation to motivate employees. If subordinates, for instance, are not allowed to participate in determining *what* level of achievement is expected of them and *when* achievement is expected, it is not very likely that they will be motivated. If they do not have the autonomy to plan their *own work* and to solve *their own* work problems; in other words if the feeling of "it belongs to me" is lacking, they will not always be committed to make their plans succeed and to increase their work performance. However, a need clearly exists for the application of this strategy to motivate employees to increase work performance, as collectively 96,9% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer it to be "always" and "frequently" applicable in the work situation.

An analysis of the information shows that currently no particular attention is paid at the institutions of the target group to the rewarding of good performance. In respect of the strategy "*managers reward good performance*", it is noticeable that collectively 65,3% of the respondents indicated that the strategy is currently "never" and "seldom" applied in their work situation, 11,6% indicated that it is "always" applied, while 23,1% was of the opinion that it is "frequently" applied. In a work environment where successes are not recognised and rewarded at least frequently, one cannot expect high-performance work to prevail as every individual and every group of individuals wants to feel appreciated. Collectively all the respondents (100%) indicated that they would prefer this strategy to be "always" and "frequently" applicable in the work situation which clearly indicates a need for the strategy to be applied.

As far as certain crucial factors are concerned that can influence the rewarding of good performance either positively or negatively, a similar tendency as mentioned in the previous paragraph, was observed. For example, collectively 76,9% of the respondents indicated that the strategy, "*managers reward good performance in such a way that there is a balance between the amount of effort required and the size or significance of the reward*", is currently "never" and "seldom" applied in their work situation, while collectively 96,9% indicated that they would prefer it to be "always" and "frequently" applicable. In respect of the strategy "*managers reward good performance in such a way that the rewards received by others for similar achievements in similar circumstances are taken into account*", collectively 71,6% indicated that it is currently "never" and "seldom" applicable in their work situation, while collectively 96,9% indicated that they would prefer it to be "always" and "frequently" applicable. In respect of the strategy "*managers reward good performance immediately after achievement*", collectively 88,4% indicated that it is currently "never" and "seldom" applicable in their work situation, while collectively 88,4% indicated that they would prefer it to be "always" and "frequently" applicable. On the strategy "*managers reward good performance in such a way that exceptional performers, compared to*

those whose performance is not as good, receive more recognition", collectively 71,6% indicated that it is currently "never" and "seldom" applicable in their work situation, while collectively 88,5% indicated that they would prefer it to be "always" and "frequently" applicable. In respect of the strategy *"managers give rewards with unpredictable regularity; in other words not all positive actions of subordinates are rewarded"*, it is significant to note that although collectively 66,3% indicated that it is currently "never" and "seldom" applicable in their work situation, a larger number of respondents in comparison to the other strategies indicated that they would prefer it to be "never" and "seldom" applicable in the work situation. Collectively 36,9% of the respondents responded in this manner which indicates less support for the strategy compared to the other strategies. In view of this particular finding, however, officials should be aware that rewards that are given with predictable regularity will lose their impact and may even cause employees to stop producing the desired behaviour immediately after their performance has been rewarded. Instead of serving as an incentive, employees may eventually come to regard rewards as part of the compensation to which they are entitled. Nevertheless, the fact that such a high percentage of respondents indicated their support for the various strategies that relate to the rewarding of good performance here, is encouraging and quite promising for the future.

It is also significant to note that the respondents, in comparison to most other strategies, did not lend that much support to the strategy *"managers develop friendship with their subordinates, for instance by treating them as equals on and off the job; by sharing interests with them; by inviting them to engage in social activities; and by helping them with personal problems and concerns"*. Only 43,2% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer it to be "always" and "frequently" applicable in the work situation, while collectively 25,2% indicated that they would prefer it to be "never" and "seldom" applicable. Officials should in this regard, however, bear in mind that subordinates are more likely to listen to a manager who is a friend, to accept directions from such a manager and to be motivated because of the friendship (Grant 1990:80). Friendship builds trust and respect as no one likes to disappoint a friend. If a manager is a friend of his or her subordinates, they are more likely to perform well, as they do not want to feel that they have let him or her down.

In comparison to most other strategies, the strategy, *"managers use their subordinates to train others"*, also did not gain much support from the respondents. 14,7% of the respondents, for example, indicated that they would prefer it to be only "seldom" applicable in the work situation. However, it should be noted that this strategy was allocated the second most responses of all the strategies by the respondents as being applied "always" and "frequently" at their institutions. In this regard collectively 49,4% of the respondents indicated that it is currently "always" and "frequently" applicable in their work situation. The fact that the application

of this strategy has already been experienced by a relative large number of respondents may have contributed to some of them not supporting this strategy that much due to the fact that they simply do not like it to train others.

A significant number of respondents indicated that the strategy, *“managers are willing to perform self-scrutiny to see the effect of their leadership on subordinates in perspective”*, is currently “never” and “seldom” applied in their work situation. Collectively 80% of the respondents responded in this manner. Managers need to take note that if they are not willing to scrutinise their own conduct before blaming subordinates for poor performance, they will only with difficulty have a positive influence on the motivation of their subordinates. In this regard McIlroy (1997:44) states: “When you (management) don’t show your enthusiasm to them (subordinates), they show less enthusiasm to you and your ideas. When they don’t think that you are being fair and just, they don’t see why they should be either. When they think you don’t trust them, they start to distrust you. If they don’t think you care for them, they stop caring for you and sometimes stop caring altogether.” The fact that collectively 96,8% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer this strategy to be “always” and “frequently” applicable in the work situation, however, is encouraging.

For employees to be able to perform exceptionally well, it is important that they are self-confident and believe that they have the ability to render such performance. However, for any employee to display these characteristics, he or she must have a positive self-image. The extent to which managers will succeed in inspiring their subordinates to increase performance will depend to a large degree on their ability and willingness to create a positive self-image among their subordinates. From the study, however, it appears that the majority of the respondents (collectively 51,6%) are of the opinion that the strategy *“managers improve the self-image of subordinates, for instance by ensuring that they will experience some success in their work; by making them aware of their strengths and weaknesses in a friendly manner; and by setting them realistic expectations”* is currently “never” and “seldom” applied in their work situation. The fact that collectively 48,4% indicated that the strategy is currently “always” and “frequently” applied is encouraging. In addition, the fact that collectively 96,8% indicated that they would prefer it to be “always” and “frequently” applicable, proves to be quite promising for the future.

Order of preference that is attached to the importance of strategies to motivate employees to increase work performance

The responses to this part of the questionnaire are represented in Table 2.

The information obtained with this question indicates that there is some difference of opinion amongst the respondents. In this regard it should, for

Table 2 Order of preference of strategies that managers can follow to motivate subordinates to increase work performance as indicated by the respondents

Strategies	Order of preference as indicated by the respondents										Total	Overall order of preference	Relative weight %
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
Managers must ...	52	14	14	0	11	0	2	2	0	0	95	1	100
set objectives aimed at increasing performance													
communicate effectively	22	33	16	14	8	2	0	0	0	0	95	2	95,6
Allow subordinates to participate in decision making	5	19	24	19	11	8	3	5	0	1	95	3	81,1
give adequate and sustained feedback on performance	0	3	14	27	11	27	3	5	5	0	95	4	67,5
develop an effort/achievement and achievement/reward probability	0	14	5	8	24	16	14	5	3	6	95	5	63,1
Reward good performance	8	5	3	5	8	19	16	8	14	9	95	6	53,9
improve the self-image of subordinates	3	3	5	3	14	3	16	27	16	5	95	7	47,6
perform self-scrutiny	5	0	0	11	3	8	14	27	11	16	95	8	43
build friendship with subordinates	0	3	11	8	3	3	8	3	14	42	95	9	37,6
use subordinates to train others	0	3	3	0	3	8	19	11	33	15	95	10	35,7

example, be noted that six of the ten strategies were allocated first places, while the strategy *"managers must reward good performance"* obtained the third most first places (8), but only obtained the sixth place in the overall order of preference, due to the significant number of lower order allocations it received. In addition, the strategy *"managers must perform self-scrutiny"* obtained the fourth most first places, but could only obtain the eighth place in the overall order of preference owing to a significant number of lower order allocations. These differences of opinion amongst the respondents on the order of preference of the selected strategies can probably be ascribed to the unique circumstances that exist at the various institutions of the respondents.

However, from the information obtained it is very clear that the respondents generally have a very strong preference for the strategy *"managers must set objectives aimed at increasing performance"*. Not only was it awarded by far the most first places (52); in the overall order of preference it also obtained the first place with a relative weight of 100%.

It is also significant to note that the respondents regarded the strategy *"managers must communicate effectively"* as particularly important in the work situation to motivate employees to increase work performance. The second most first places (22) were allocated to this strategy, while it came second in the overall order of preference with a relative weight of 95,6%. Although this strategy was not allocated as many first places as the strategy *"managers must set objectives aimed at increasing performance"*, it was allocated a significant number of second places indicating that both these strategies enjoy a particular high premium amongst the respondents. The fact that the strategy that obtained the third place in the overall order of preference, namely *"managers must allow subordinates to participate in decision making"*, obtained a relative weight of only 81,1% in comparison to the high relative weight that the first two strategies obtained, is confirmation of the fact that the first two strategies are regarded as being very important to motivate employees to increase work performance.

If taking into account that the strategy that obtained the fourth place in the overall order of preference, namely *"managers must give adequate and sustained feedback on performance"*, obtained a relative weight of only 67,5% in comparison to the high relative weight of the first three strategies, it is clear that the first three strategies are by default regarded as the most important by the respondents.

The strategy *"managers must build friendship with subordinates"* obtained the most last places (42) and came second last in the overall order of preference with a relative weight of 37,6%. The strategy that came last in the overall order of preference with a relative weight of 35,7% and is therefore regarded as the least important by the respondents, is *"managers must use subordinates to train others"*. The low rating that this strategy obtained generally, however,

does not indicate that it should be completely disregarded as an employee motivation strategy, as sometimes there is no clearer form of recognition of quality performance than to show faith in an employee's abilities by asking him or her to provide help in training someone else on the job. When subordinates realise that managers are willing to use them as role models and to entrust the development of others to them, they are likely to perceive their ability levels as being high. The person being trained will often identify with a fellow worker more readily than with a superior. This can contribute to reduce tension, stimulate more open discussion of problems during the training and provide the trainee with greater certainty that the appropriate skills will be developed.

CONCLUSION

From an analysis of the study it was particularly found that collectively the majority of respondents indicated that employee motivation in their work situation is currently "never" and "seldom" based on the selected strategies. In general a significant number of respondents indicated that they would prefer these strategies to be "always" applicable in the work situation which indicate clear support for their application. The strategy, "*managers must set objectives aimed at increasing performance*", enjoyed the highest preference in the overall order of preference attached to the importance of the strategies selected. The high order of preference allocated to this strategy indicates that the respondents regard the importance of objectives, namely to focus on the future, provide employees with a clear sense of direction and purpose, and to help give meaning to the actions of employees, as significant.

Although the study for specific reasons, such as the vastness of the public sector and the high costs involved in a study of this nature amongst a representative sample of the public sector, focuses on only a specific segment of the public sector and does not represent the public sector in general, the findings obtained indicate a strong trend that should be noted. On the one hand, the results of the study indicate that the employee motivation strategies selected for this study, are not currently widely applied at the institutions of the target group. On the other hand, the results indicate that the general opinion of the respondents is that the strategies can be extremely valuable to motivate employees to increase work performance. This trend is so strong that it can be expected that a similar trend would probably be discovered should the study be expanded to include the total public sector. Therefore, in spite of the fact that the study does not represent the public sector in total, managers should be aware of this trend and should attempt to display the required sensitivity for the identified strategies in an attempt to motivate subordinates to increase work performance.

However, the order of preference in which the strategies selected was listed, should not be interpreted as if it is at *all* times, under *all* circumstances, the alpha and omega that would necessarily result in higher employee motivation. This is mainly due to individual differences and perceptions that exist. In order to be successful when applying the various strategies to enhance employee motivation, managers should always bear in mind that a given strategy may have a different motivational impact on different people. Therefore, it is not a given that the strategy that obtained the first place in the overall order of preference in this study, will *at all times* be the answer to motivate employees to higher work performance. Due to the uniqueness of the working circumstances and the diversity of the group involved, it may happen that one of the strategies with a lower order allocation in the overall order of preference, may at times have a greater motivational value – an aspect for which managers should display the necessary sensitivity. However, in general the results of this study serve as a useful guideline for managers as to what strategies are regarded as the most important to motivate employees to increase work performance.

NOTES

- 1 For a theoretical exposition of these strategies, see Ströh 2001: 59-74.
- 2 Former Unisa refers to Unisa before the merger with the Technikon of South Africa (TSA) took place and of which the Public Administration qualifications are still in place.
- 3 Robinson (1969: 164-166) indicates in this regard that "... mail survey ... of a sample of a homogeneous population may be a sufficient reason for the researcher to make the practical assumption that returns of 30 percent are at least representative enough for the information to be used".

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Research in Public Administration and Management

The tool to objectivity in knowledge management

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ABSTRACT

The creation and use of new knowledge is imperative to ensure a competitive edge for any institution. In the subject field of Public Administration and Management this knowledge is necessary for the understanding of government institutions and processes, but necessitates continuous research to create and manage new knowledge. Institutions of higher learning as custodians to generate new knowledge, transfer this knowledge and apply the knowledge to play a meaningful role in the enhancement of the knowledge society and the development of communities.

Research is seen as an action by which problems are solved in an endeavour to extend the boundaries of knowledge. It, however, goes hand in hand with the building of a research culture where an institutional environment and ethos supportive of the research are created with emphasis been placed on a more practical, community-based approach to research. Research has a special role in a practitioner-orientated field such as public administration and management by serving not only to guide needed theory development but also to influence the practices and even the decisions of managers and policy-makers. However, the important issues facing public administration and management are complex and involve phenomena not easily identified, isolated, manipulated, or even directly observed. In this article these aspects will be addressed with particular criteria suggested in doing research to close the gap between research, reflection and realities of services and state action.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is widely understood as a necessary and sustainable source of effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness. In an era characterized by rapid change and uncertainty, successfully institutions are those that consistently create new knowledge, disseminate it through the institution and embody it in technologies, products, and services. It can then even displace capital, natural resources and labour as the basic economic resource.

Knowledge management can broadly be defined as encompassing any processes and practices concerned with the creation, acquisition, capture, sharing and use of knowledge, skills and expertise. It is about harnessing the intellectual and social capital of individuals in order to improve organizational learning capabilities, recognizing that knowledge, and not simple information, is the primary source of the innovative potential of an institution.

As an academic field, Public Administration and Management is obligated to advance theoretical and pragmatic understanding of governmental institutions and processes. Such understanding, however, cannot be advanced solely by the explication of current knowledge through education and service, but it also requires the generation of new knowledge through research and managing this knowledge.

In this article attention will be focused on the importance of research and research development to ensure that knowledge management can be optimally utilized, creating a research culture, what knowledge management entails, and how research and knowledge management can be applied in the subject field, Public Administration and Management.

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

The word research was derived from the French word ‘recherchier’ meaning to search again or investigate thoroughly. However, definitions of research tend to emphasize the basic or pure and quantitative approaches to research and it is therefore necessary to focus on the characteristics of research rather than on highly theoretical definitions. Research is essentially a way of thinking about accumulated facts and data to understand what the data means and what the facts say (Leedy 1989:4–8). Research can therefore be described as a method of action by means of which people solve problems in an endeavor to extend the boundaries of knowledge and is based on the following assumptions:

- research is regarded as a diligent, protracted investigation of some phenomenon or a series of phenomena;

- research should have some utility;
- all research is based on scientific fundamentals in order to establish facts to reach new conclusions; and
- research can therefore be distinguished from other human activities by its systematic nature (Hutchinson 1992: 669).

The following procedures are inherent in research and further emphasize the systematic nature thereof:

- research starts with a *question or problem statement* which contributes to the relevance and quest for truth. This will be divided into manageable sub-problems;
- research requires *planning* which should be needs orientated and should consider the goals and objectives that are to be reached;
- research seeks direction through an appropriate *hypothesis*, that is central theoretical statements founded on realistic presumptions. The interpretation of the facts discovered through the research process will either confirm or reject the hypothesis; and
- research forms a *spiral* as more questions and problems are discovered with the answering and solving of existing questions and problems. In this manner the process of expanding and improving knowledge is continuously addressed (Brynard *et al.* 1997:297 and Chen 2004:164).

Research thus supplies relevant knowledge in a controlled manner to address problems and will enhance the appropriateness of goals and objectives and the effective and efficient utilization of scarce resources. In this regard, the National Science and Technology Strategy (2001) emphasizes that research has a role to play with regards to the creation of wealth and the improvement of the quality of life of all citizens. This strategy employs the idea that research embodies much more than simply basic or pure and applied research – it should ultimately be product-orientated. This means that it should lead to a product such as a publication, an artifact, a patent, or a new system. In achieving this, it is imperative to realize that research as knowledge production contributes to more than the combination of qualitative/quantitative research and should be understood in a broader context. In the South African higher education landscape, research should

- contribute in building a new South African intellect. As part of the knowledge economy, new knowledge should be developed through a new understanding of research. Research should explore new forms of indigenous knowledge (IK) and should apply solutions found to societal, business, industrial and governmental needs;
- represent all communities and people it serves; and

- as part of the tri-partheid band of teaching/learning, research and community service learning, take on new forms to serve the knowledge economy in a global society (Lategan *et al.* 2005:3).

These expectations call for the building of a research culture through capacity building which cannot be removed from a learning community and its accompanying notion of scholarship, that is the exploration, integration, communication and appliance of knowledge.

BUILDING A RESEARCH CULTURE

A research culture may be defined as an institutional environment and ethos supportive of research. According to the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF) (www.nrf.ac.za 2005) cognizance should be taken of the following pertaining to the development of a research culture:

- sustainable research policy is a long-term activity;
- each institution should consider the extent to which and the areas in which it wishes to get involved;
- each institution should take ownership of its own research endeavour as only continuous commitment from the institution will guarantee success. Supportive leadership is essential in this regard;
- a research program cannot be sustainable without a critical mass of effective and committed researchers. This can be attained through well-focused, goal-orientated research, general and infrastructural support, and an enabling environment that allows time to do research.

Setting up such a culture requires an **environmental scan** and the management of research to be supportive of the research ethos. There are a number of ways to conceptualize scanning. According to Morrison (2005:1) four types of scanning can be identified. **Undirected viewing** consists of reading a variety of publications for no specific purpose other than to be informed. **Conditioned viewing** consists of responding to this information in terms of assessing its relevance to the institution. **Informal searching** consists of actively seeking specific information but doing it in a relatively unstructured way. These activities are in contrast to **formal searching**, a proactive mode of scanning entailing formal methodologies for obtaining information for specific purposes.

Morrison (2005:2) argues that the four types can be simplified as either **passive** or **active** scanning. **Passive scanning** refers to the reading of journals and newspapers. However, the institutional consequences of passive scanning are that the information is not systematically used as strategic information for

planning, with the consequence that many ideas that signal changes in the environment are not detected. **Active scanning** focuses attention on information resources that span the macro-environment where changes in the social, technological, economic, environmental, and political (STEER) sectors affect institutions directly and indirectly. In active scanning, it is important to include information resources that represent different views of each STEER sector.

In every society a balance should be struck between a demand-led and an opportunity-driven approach when undertaking the environmental scan. An appropriate research methodology should form part of this scanning process which will ensure that the environmental scan becomes an applied form of research. In building a research culture, there is a shift in emphasis away from pure knowledge (science for the sake of science) to a more practical, community-based approach (Choo 2001:5 and Lategan *et al.* 2005:6). It therefore boils down to the creation of an environment where new knowledge can be developed.

THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

In society, institutions of higher learning are for example regarded as a major role-player in the global economy, the enhancement of the knowledge society and the development of communities. The three core functions of such an institution, namely the generation of new knowledge (research), the transmission of new knowledge (teaching) and the application of knowledge (community services) are therefore directed at meeting these challenges. The importance of research is thus closely related to the search for knowledge and the understanding of the phenomena (Brynard *et al.* 1997:1 and Lynch *et al.* 1997:475).

According to Alavi and Leidner (2001:110) "... knowledge is about belief, truth, and commitment, thus differentiating it from information. Knowledge is perspective, context and intention dependant". There are various types of knowledge, and harnessing, developing and sharing the different kinds of knowledge require different tools and techniques. For purposes of this article, a distinction will be made between **tacit** and **explicit** knowledge. Rooted in action, experience, and involvement in a specific context, **tacit** knowledge is comprised of both cognitive and technical elements. The cognitive element refers to the mental models of an individual, consisting of mental maps, beliefs, paradigms, and viewpoints, whereas the technical component consists of concrete know-how, crafts and skills that apply to a specific context. **Explicit** knowledge is articulated, codified, and communicated in symbolic form and/or language. An example is an owner's manual which contains knowledge on the appropriate operation of the product accompanying the purchase of an

electronic product. Knowledge should therefore create better understanding, allow useful predictions to be made and enable strategic actions to be undertaken (Fraser 2004:60).

Managing this knowledge consists of a dynamic and continuous set of processes and practices. Aspects such as benchmarking, knowledge audits, best practice transfer, and employee development point to the realization that managerial practices have become more knowledge-focused in recent years (Botkin *et al.* 2001:18). It is about harnessing the intellectual and social capital of individuals in order to improve organizational learning capabilities, recognizing that knowledge, and not simple information, is the primary source of the innovative potential of an institution (Abell 2001:24).

Knowledge management is therefore concerned with the **creation, retention, sharing** and **application** of knowledge, skills and expertise. Knowledge **creation** involves new content, or replacing existing content, within the tacit and explicit knowledge of an organization. Through social (for example creative dialogue, organization culture) and collaborative processes (for example communities of practice) as well as an individual's cognitive processes (for example reflection), knowledge is created, shared, amplified, enlarged, and justified in organizational settings (compare CCMD 2005:6). However, while organizations create knowledge and learn, they also forget (for example do not remember, or lose track of, the acquired knowledge). Thus, the storage, organization, and retrieval of knowledge – **retention** – constitute an important aspect of effective knowledge management. Organizational success is furthermore inextricably tied to the ability to **share** and leverage knowledge in order to provide predictable high quality service delivery to clients. Knowledge management begins with processes to share and create knowledge and is sustained by a knowledge-friendly culture. An important aspect of the knowledge-based theory is that the source of competitive advantage resides in the **application** of the knowledge, rather than in the knowledge itself (Bukowitz *et al.* 1999:25). Scarbrough *et al.* (1999:56) describe this process as **exploitation** (that is where existing knowledge is captured, transferred and deployed in other similar situations) or **exploration** (that is where knowledge is shared and synthesizes and new knowledge is created). The purpose of exploitation is to reduce problems of 'reinventing the wheel' by using existing knowledge more efficiently, whereas exploration through knowledge sharing allows for the development of genuinely new approaches. Auriacombe and Brynard (2005:4) add to this phenomena the issue of the description of events.

Aligned to the focus on knowledge management, Wessels (2002:2) notes that the modes of knowledge production are changing from the conventional Mode 1 disciplinary-based model to a Model 2 model where knowledge is produced interactively at the point of application among heterogeneous groups. As such,

institutions of higher learning find themselves in a changing and challenging environment which offers new opportunities for the improvement of education and training processes by means of research. This also applies for the subject field, public administration and management.

APPLICATION OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

There is a growing realization, particularly with the public services themselves, that the waves of change sweeping across the public services are more than the manifestations of policies of particular governments or ideologies. Within national boundaries, a series of pressures being brought about by globalization are also present, for example increasing demands for services, changing employment and demographic patterns, the need to find innovative solution to complex, multi-faceted, obdurate social issues, productivity and pressures to change professional skill boundaries, demarcations and skill mixes (Wilkinson 1997:505 and Oluwu 2002:350). However, little thorough research which seeks to understand the factors which help or hinder the implementation of complex change in practice has been undertaken.

As an academic field, public administration and management is obligated to advance theoretical and pragmatic understanding of governmental institutions and processes. Such understanding, however, cannot be advanced solely by the explication of current knowledge through education and service; it also requires the generation of new knowledge through research (Liebman 1963:168). Research has a special role in a practitioner-orientated field such as public administration and management by serving not only to guide needed theory development but also to influence the practices and even the decisions of managers and policy-makers. Unfortunately, the research questions important to public administration and management do not lend themselves to scientific study in the same way found in the natural sciences. Rather, the important issues facing public administration and management are complex and involve phenomena not easily identified, isolated, manipulated, or even directly observed. Consequently, the generation of new knowledge in public administration and management is a difficult and tenuous process. A good question is not enough; good answers are needed (Wright *et al.* 2004:748).

To provide good answers, scholars must not only determine “what should be the focus of research” (Behn 1995:323) but also “what data and methodology would be most helpful in answering the field’s questions” (Behn 1995:315). At issue is not the respective legitimacy of qualitative or quantitative methods;

rather, it should be about when and how to apply such methods in ways that build confidence in research findings. As Lan and Anders (2000:150) suggested, the field needs to move beyond arguments as to which research (quantitative or qualitative) is more legitimate, toward discussions as to whether the methods have been appropriately used. Although attempts to evaluate the identification and selection of research problems in public administration and management typically have been biased toward the standard of quantitative analysis (Box 1992:65 and Wessels 2003:3), scholars have begun to recognize the fundamental differences in the two approaches and focus on standards specific either to quantitative (Cozzetto 1994:338) or to qualitative (Brower *et al.* 2000:374) methods. Previous studies have raised concerns regarding the quality of several facets of quantitative research in public administration and management suggesting that the vast majority of studies are neither guided by an explicit theoretical or conceptual framework, nor engaged in hypothesis testing or theory development and, generally, are characterized by an infrequent use of sophisticated research designs and inappropriate or flawed statistical techniques (Cozzetto 1994:341, Perry and Kraemer 1986:222 and Adams and White 1994:569).

To address this situation, Wessels (2003:5) suggests that the following criteria should be applied in doing research:

- Is the *topic* (a) central to the knowledge base of the field, or (b) on the cutting edge of the existing knowledge base?
- What is the *research purpose*? Is it to (a) explore, (b) describe, (c) explain, (d) produce knowledge and empower, (e) understand, or (f) reflect?
- What is the *research design* of the study? Is it (a) an empirical (using primary data; analyzing existing data), or (b) a non-empirical (philosophical analysis/conceptual analysis/theory building/literature reviews) study?
- What is the *impact* of the study? Does it (a) strengthen or weaken an existing theory or establish conditions under which the theory operates, (b) test an hypothesis or develop or test a model, (c) determine causal relationships, (d) improve the practical relevance of research, or (e) develop new questions or create new experiences?

Latib and Semela (2004:64) are of the opinion that public administration and management conceptual reflection, theory construction and research have, in many respects, not reflected sufficient responses to the actual practice and experience of public administration and management. Whilst this pattern might be shared worldwide, it is particularly evident in Africa, where economic and resource realities prohibit investments into building substantive reflective and research capacities in public administration and management. It is recommended that in an effort to respond to this reality, a process to enhance debate and understanding

on the 'knowledge' leadership challenge that confronts public administration should be initiated and to develop a framework for building a research and reflection agenda. To facilitate this agenda, researchers must, according to Wright *et al.* (2004:750) provide the scholarly community with sufficient information to interpret, evaluate, and accept the research finding provided.

The conceptual, theoretical and research work that emanates from especially African institutions in public administration and management reflects, according to the authors, a pre-occupation with imported "generic" managerial templates. This pre-occupation often translates into a fixation with managerial jargon and optimal internal operational practice. The obsession is reflected in the overt focus on issues such as strategic planning, performance management, leadership, customer focus and e-government (compare Wessels 2003:11 and Kodama 2005:35). It is often driven by the need to find immediate solutions to make the institutions of government work for their intended purpose. However, in most instances this managerial fixation brings about various problematic consequences:

- firstly, it often removes the willingness of academics and practitioners to move beyond the use of consultant templates and normative best and better practice approaches to complex and dynamic real world challenges; and
- secondly, it overtakes practice to the point where academics and practitioners lose sight of the initial rationale for introducing certain frameworks or tools for improving public administration and management.

As a result, these frameworks and tools become ends in themselves and concurrently result in a failure to recognize the intended or unintended consequences of their introduction (Latib and Semela 2004:65).

At another level, the African development challenge, the anti-globalization mass movement and anti-neo-liberal contestations have given rise to some critical analysis of African public administration delivery realities (Adamolekun 2002:375). These contestations often take place outside of mainstream engagements on public administration and management and the ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity of the state as a vehicle for collective co-existence and development within African countries. In this regard, the role of the state is recognized, but the institutional operations of the public administration and management systems tend to be relegated to a point of insignificance. The consequence is that those involved in the actual practice of public administration and management fails to derive any benefit from the analysis of development and service delivery realities within communities. Having made the policy point, the reflections and theory process often fail to engage with the matters that tend to pre-occupy those involved in actual institutional processes and the actual practice of service delivery. In view of the above threads, there

is generally an absence of critical and engaging reflections and research on African public administrations. What one finds are normative and unsubstantive reactions to reality and critical and empathetic disengagements with public administration and management. The central problem with this is the absence of reflection, research and theory that looks at the critical relationship between public institutions and their operations, as experienced by the institutional actors and the realities of services and state action, as experienced by nations and communities. The challenge is to find ways to interact with this relationship and close the gap between research, reflection and reality (Latib and Semela 2004:65 and Adamolekun 2002:382).

Whilst the existence of the different traditions may be good for open debate, its value is lost because of the absence of a critical dialogue that has meaning when choices are made on the allocation and utilization of resources. Building the content bridge would go a long way in building a common coalition of societal actors supporting efforts directed at enhancing the capacity of the public administration institutional system, that is on the institutions established to enhance collective co-existence and development. A critical element is to deepen the research on the articulated gap and to seek and establish a framework for reflection and research. In the absence of a collective frame of understanding institutional realities and the critical linkage between these realities and service delivery experiences or lack thereof, the ability to transform and enhance public administration and management will be limited because of conceptual limitations, rather than the administrative or political will to transform and change (compare Wilkinson 1997:508 and Adamolekun 2002:383).

CONCLUSION

In building and generating substantive knowledge and research in public administration and management, it is necessary to focus both on the process of building research and knowledge engagements and on activities that would enhance the content agenda through active knowledge infusion. At the level of process, this requires a broader and feasible strategy of ensuring that academics and practitioners from the divergent traditions are brought together. Academics and practitioners should bridge the gap by initiating a needs analysis whereby research can generate knowledge which could lead to objectivity in the application in the public administration and management. This will ensure effective and efficient management *per se*. If the above-mentioned issues are applied, a situation will be created whereby research will lead to objectivity in knowledge management.

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Information management and good governance

A focus oriented approach

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ABSTRACT

Information is a fundamental resource to both government and the private sector organisations. Information is necessary to monitor the execution of plans to ensure that the original goals of an organisation are met and realised. Public sector organisations need both financial and non-financial information to analyse and monitor the extent to which goals are achieved. There must be an important contribution to the debate and dissemination of information on good governance. The increasing use of reliable information, including the networking of public sector organisations, promotes the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of services to the public. The manner in which information is collected, used and managed can enhance or impede good governance. Good governance necessitates that the democratic process prevails at all times. The aim of this article is to review the role of information in enhancing good governance. It examines the relationship between provision of information, information management and good governance. A new focus-oriented approach has to be adopted if information is used and managed for the efficient and effective functioning of public sector organisations.

INTRODUCTION

Information is classified as relevant or transformed data which managers of public and private sector institutions require so that they can use their experience and skills to convert it to knowledge. It reduces uncertainty, has meaning and has managerial value. In contemporary societies, information is an important factor

in the process of government, administration and management. In the process of decision-making, information is also extremely important. In this regard the argument is that “the relevant information at hand empowers governments, administrators and managers to decide and to take action, and information provides them with a complete picture of situations about which decisions have to be taken” (Du Toit, Van der Waldt, Bayat and Cheminais 1998:25).

Information provides a basis for action. To be useful, information should be accurate, timely, complete and relevant. Accurate information provides a valid and reliable reflection of reality. Timely information should be available for appropriate managerial action. Complete information gives managers all the facts and details they need. If it is less than complete, they are likely to get an inaccurate or distorted picture of reality (Van Niekerk in Van der Waldt, Van Niekerk, Doyle, Knipe and Du Toit 2002:144).

The problem addressed in this article is how one acknowledges the link between the management of information and good governance. A key element of good governance is ensuring that citizens are informed of the activities of government and are given accurate information to make informed decisions. The major challenge is that the accuracy of information and the difficulty of attaining adequate information affects how programmes are carried out, and how they should be accomplished and how they affect governance.

INFORMATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

For the purpose of this article Knipe (in Du Toit *et al.* 2002:45) defines information as the knowledge obtained by processing collected data into something meaningful, something that gives a full picture of a specific event, incident, tendency and so forth. Van Niekerk (in Van der Waldt *et al.* 2002:144) points out that information is simply data that has a particular meaning within a specific context.

Information management is concerned with the management of information resources. It focuses on the use of information, the roles and responsibilities of those using information resources (knowledge workers), the controls, the performance measures, the business processes and the objectives related to their use. Information is managed in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the institution (Van Niekerk in Van der Waldt *et al.* 2002:129-130). On the other hand information management involves the storage, retrieval and use of information. The guiding principle is that information must be readily available at the time it is required and in the appropriate form. In order to utilise the information in the system effectively, the data must be accurate, reliable and informative. Information management can thus be defined as data (raw, unsummarised material) that is meaningful and that alters the receiver’s understanding (Du Toit *et al.* 1998:229).

According to Pauw, Woods, Van der Linde, Fourie and Visser (2002:195) the following is a list of items critical to managers for their management responsibilities when dealing with information management:

- the ability to define the information required to analyse, monitor and evaluate activities;
- identification of the required data;
- identification of the source systems containing the data;
- data analysis environments and tools; and
- reliable operational systems.

Information must satisfy *four criteria* if it is to be of value in the development and implementation of plans in public institutions. These criteria, according to Du Toit *et al.* (1998: 230) are:

- *Relevance*: Information is considered relevant if it is required by an individual in a particular decision-making or problem-solving situation;
- *Completeness*: Information is considered to be complete if it provides everything a person must know in order to solve a certain problem or reach a decision;
- *Timeliness*: Information is timely if it becomes available to a manager when it is required and if its value has not been affected negatively because of a delay in its transmission; and
- *Verifiability*; Information is verifiable if its accuracy can be confirmed. Managers usually compare information with other pieces of information known to be accurate. Reliability of information thus pertains to the degree of accuracy of the information collected.

The value of information is said to increase with its use. In other words the more it reaches the people who need it in order to guide their decisions and actions, the more value it adds to those individuals and to organisations as a whole. Oyomno (in Olivier, Smit, Kalula and Mhone 2005:423) reasons that the flip-side of this statement is that as the number of people with access to information grows, the more likely it becomes that such information may fall into the wrong hands.

THE CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE

Governance, according to AAPAM (2000:12), is the totality of how people organise and manage the way they co-exist with one another in a mutually beneficial way. It is about institutionalising appropriate combinations of culture, structures and mode of behaviour that society needs for effective co-existence.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines good governance as denoting the minimum or acceptable standards which those who

govern must apply in order to satisfy the legitimate aspiration and needs of their people (AAPAM 2000:13). Since governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making. This also focuses on implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision.

Good governance has eight (8) major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society (UNESCAP 2002: Online).

Participation

Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance (UNESCAP 2002: Online). Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision-making. Participation needs to be informed and organised. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organised civil society on the other hand.

Rule of law

Rule of law/supremacy of law signifies a state of government and administration under which the executive institutions and political executive functionaries do not have too wide and unchecked powers allowing them to act arbitrarily against the citizens (Cloete, 1995:68). Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force (UNESCAP 2002: Online). This can be achieved if people are informed about the activities of government departments.

According to Bayat and Meyer (1994:37-38) the rule of law concept would allow for the powers of a government to be conditioned by law. All citizens must be equal in the eyes of the law and be subordinate to the law. Courts of law should function separately from both the legislature and the executive. Judges should act as impartial protectors to ensure that the rights and freedom of individuals are guaranteed.

Transparency

Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media (UNESCAP 2002: Online). Van der Walddt's assertion in Van Niekerk *et al.* (2002:119) is that transparency concerns the extent to which the functioning of government institutions is open to public scrutiny. This requires mechanisms to ensure that all public processes and programmes are open to the public.

Responsiveness

Good governance requires that institutions and processes aim to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. The responsiveness of public institutions to individual problems, needs and values, as well as those of specific groups, should be increased and secured (Bayat and Meyer 1994:38). A new set of norms in the field of public administration is required to provide a satisfactory response to the needs and demands of society, especially in socio-economic fields such as housing, education and urban infrastructure. Responsiveness can best be achieved by providing relevant and accurate information.

Consensus-oriented

There are several actors and as many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from reliable information and an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society or community (UNESCAP 2002: Online).

Equity and inclusiveness

A society's well-being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, to have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being (UNESCAP 2002: Online). According to Clarke (1996:128) equity is about evenness of access and ensuring that there

is no discrimination inherently built into service provision. The importance of equity has grown as it has been recognised that there are a number of ways in which discriminatory practice creeps in.

Effectiveness and efficiency

Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of the resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment. Effectiveness, according to Pollitt, Birchall and Putman (1998:10), is the extent to which the original objectives of a policy, programme or project are achieved. Efficiency is the ratio between inputs and outputs. To be efficient is to maximise output for a given input whilst maintaining a specified output (Pollitt *et al.* 1998:10). Use of information can promote efficiency and effectiveness in the functioning of institutions.

Accountability

In its broadest sense, accountability is described by Van der Waldt (in Van Niekerk *et al* 2002:119) as an obligation to expose, explain, and justify actions. Public accountability demands that the actions of public institutions be publicised to encourage public debate and criticism. According to UNESCAP (2002: Online) accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organisations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Who is accountable to whom varies depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organisation or institution. In general an organisation or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law, and this requires institutions to use, disseminate and manage information properly.

According to the AAPAM Report there is no complete consensus on a comprehensive list of indicators of good governance. The following is the agreed compromise list of indicators of good governance, although it is by no means exhaustive (AAPAM 2000:49):

- transparency;
- equality of citizens;
- active civil society and participation in public affairs;
- the right of access by the public to information;
- the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs;
- promoting openness in government; and
- equal access to education and information.

INFORMATION AND BATHO PELE

Information plays a crucial role in public sector programmes. The accuracy of information and the difficulty of attaining adequate information affects how programmes work, their level of accomplishment or effectiveness. Lane (2000:10) maintains that information enters production costs, transaction costs and social costs. He further argues that whereas the first refers to the tangible outlays for employing factors of production within the public sector and the second covers all the intangible costs in reaching and implementing contracts, the third refers to the costs to society of inefficient public programmes.

In terms of White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997 *Batho Pele* principle no 5 prescribes that: "Citizens should be given full and accurate information on the service delivery to which they are entitled" (Fox and Bayat in Fox *et al.* 2006: 23).

According to Du Toit *et al.* (1998:153) the White Paper expresses the premium placed on transparency and the availability of government information as follows:

'Where customers (the public) have little or no choice about the services they receive. Information is one of the most powerful tools... that they have to exercise their right to good service. In future, national departments and provincial administrations must work harder to make sure that citizens/customers can use the tool of information. Implementing the Principles of Public Service delivery calls for a complete transformation of way in which national departments and provincial administrations communicate with those who use their services.'

Translating this principle into practice implies that:

- national and provincial departments must provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about their services, and about who is entitled to them;
- information must be provided in media and languages which meet customers' needs;
- a name and contact number for further information should always be provided on all communications; and
- information about services must be available at the points of delivery. Special arrangements must be made to reach those who are remote from the point of delivery (Fox and Bayat in Fox *et al.* 2006:24).

Du Toit (in Du Toit *et al.* 2002:108) maintains that an important implication of this principle is that, should the standard of service drop for whatever reason, citizens must be informed why this happened, and when the situation will be remedied.

Information is one of the most powerful tools at the public's disposal for exercising its right to good service delivery. Government institutions must provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about their activities. According to Gildenhuis and Knipe (2000:132) the consultation process should be used to find out what the public wants to know, and then to work out where and when the information can best be provided. Information should be provided in a variety of media and languages to meet the different needs of different customers.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC MANAGERS IN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information management can be defined as the systematic control of information by public managers in order to achieve the objectives of the public institution. Thus, Du Toit *et al.* (1998:230) reason that information management is necessary to enable managers of public institutions to understand their institution's external environment and to develop the internal relationships and structures necessary to reach and implement decisions that will allow their institution to achieve success in the external environment.

There is an argument advanced by Du Toit *et al.* (1998:230) that serious mistakes can be expected when managers of public institutions manage information poorly. Managers need to evaluate the risks of avoiding managing information in the light of three important considerations:

- *Firstly*, managers make decisions in public institutions whose functions and activities are controlled by government regulations. Failure to comply with such regulations can result in negative consequences such as a poor public image.
- *Secondly*, the cost of operating an institution continues to rise, increasing the importance of efficiency in the management of information.
- *Thirdly*, even small public institutions are not immune to socio-political and other forces in the environment. Because of these conditions, the risks associated with poor information management are too great. Failure to manage information effectively under these three conditions will eventually lead to a chaotic situation as the institution grows.

There are several good reasons as to why organisations, especially government organisations, should manage their information assets as strategic resources (Oyomno in Olivier *et al.* 2005:434-435):

- *Firstly*, in the context of the South African public service, the need for information management arises from the fact that this is a public service requirement. This is also stipulated in the Public Service Regulations of January 2001.

- *Secondly*, the need for information management also arises from the Promotion of Access to *Information Act, No 2 of 2000*. The Act gives effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by the state or by anybody else, which information is required for the exercise or protection of any right.
- *Thirdly*, information management also becomes important in the light of “revolutionary developments” in society. Information economy is becoming a knowledge economy, where information and knowledge are required and used to produce more information and knowledge.

Usefulness of information

A point to note is that managers in public sector organisations obtain information for use both in management control and decision-making. According to Dockery (in Willcocks and Harrow 1992:275) decision-makers have been viewed to select information from those sources perceived to provide the highest quality information. Information quality would be high if the information was relevant or specific to problems being addressed, accurate, reliable and timely. He further contends that quality of information merely allows a decision-maker to justify the basis of the decision to others by arguing that if the information used is timely, accurate and reliable, then any decision made, based on that information, is likely to be an informed one. The usefulness of information is by all accounts an important and timely issue. This is because computerised management information systems are being increasingly relied upon to improve the quality of management decision-making.

Dockery (in Willcocks and Harrow 1992:291) argues that the importance attached to the usefulness of information “stems primarily from the contribution it makes to the co-ordination and control of finance-related and other administrative activities”. Oyomno’s view (in Olivier *et al.* 2005:435-436) is that information is useful since the functions of information management include planning, sourcing, acquisition and maintenance, definition and description, organisation and accessibility, quality and integrity controls, using and accounting for use, protection and security, and recovery, restoration and update.

ACCOUNTING, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

According to Van Niekerk (in Van der Waldt *et al.* 2002:128) information technology (IT), which is linked to information management, is slowly beginning to govern the way people work, think and interact socially. Another argument is

that information technology, which is the application of computer technology, is known to hasten the process of information, improve its access and improve the efficiency of the public sector (AAPAM, 2000:43).

The development of IT in the South African public service has contributed tremendously in improving the efficiency and efficiency of the public service through the improved processing of files and reduced duplication of data.

Some of the major IT projects which the South African government has put in place to promote good governance include the following:

- **PERSAL (Personnel Administration System):** This is basically a computerised nominal roll of the public sector, is administrated centrally (by each department/province) and contains all posts, position of entry, salary range and post number. Fourie (in Kuye, Thornhill and Fourie 2002:119) contends that although PERSAL is not an accounting system, it provides information on human resources expenditure to other systems (i.e. FMS and BAS) for control of personnel expenditure. The purpose of PERSAL is to provide information on the various personnel practices as directed in the Public Service Act, No 103 of 1994.
- **PAYROLL:** The computerised payroll system calculates the salaries and allowances of all public sector employees. In this way posts can be identified by an identity number and this prevents payment of bogus allowances or the existence of ghost workers.
- **BAS (Basic Accounting System):** BAS provides for the capturing of payment transactions onto the system as well as periodic payments to creditors on a regular basis. It also provides information about debts that are owed to the government to be kept and maintained accurately to integrate with other systems and the calculation of interest on a daily basis (Fourie in Kuye *et al.* 2002:118-119).
- **LOGIS (Logistical Administration System):** This is a provisioning, procurement and stock-control system which is highly adaptable to the requirements of a department (Visser and Erasmus 2002:369). LOGIS enables departments to control and regulate stock levels and movable assets, while at the same time satisfying internal user demand (Fourie in Kuye *et al.* 2002:119).
- **GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS:** Government accounting is standardised and allows for the monitoring of government expenditure on a monthly basis to ensure that expenditure is within the limits allocated. The accounts are produced within reasonable time.
- **NATIONAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE:** Business and personal tax division and customs division have been computerised which makes the collection of revenue easier and evasion of taxes more difficult (SARS). Visser and Erasmus (2002:371) simply put it as including funds collected from the public from the taxation authority of government.
- **NATIONAL STATISTICS:** Various statistics are compiled from various databases (Statistics South Africa). The information obtained from these

databases is then used to make decisions about services to be provided to communities.

- **FMS (Financial Management System):** This provides rationalised budget information, support the recording of accounting transactions, identify areas of over- and under-spending, enables the calculation of cost, provides additional financial and statistical information, and establishes standard procedures (Visser and Erasmus 2002:369). The FMS provides an accounting system to ensure that moneys spent are in accordance with the objectives as approved by Parliament.
- **PAS (Provisioning Administration System):** The PAS is based on an analytical technique for provisioning. This technique determines the stores items to be held and the quantities to be kept (Fourie in Kuye *et al.* 2002:119).
- **LAN (Local Area Network):** Government departments now have local area networks which make for a more efficient use of resources.

CREATING A DEMAND FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Bad information is the worst enemy of good governance, given the fact that information is used as a basis for decision-making. According to the AAPAM Report (AAPAM, 2000:47) it is, therefore, important to examine the efficacy of the information sector in an effort to improve performance in all aspects of governance. Any information that is produced requires the interplay of various variables notably data, information technology and the people.

All countries need good governance which is affordable. This can be achieved by making it difficult for bad governance infiltrate and corrupt the society. Provision of the right information is key to this process. "Such knowledge base requires the continuous provision of reliable information which is timely, relevant, accurate and comprehensive" (AAPAM, 2000:47).

Van Niekerk (in Van der Waldt *et al.* 2002:157) reason that information is pivotal to the performance and capacity of government services, governance mechanisms and South Africa's economic competitiveness. According to him "at issue is whether information technology can be used effectively to empower government, the private sector and citizens alike". The complexity of today's world demands that "the public and private sectors not only learn to master this tool, but also to work co-operatively to maximise the national benefits".

Noting that public servants are sometimes guilty of retaining vital information from the public, the AAPAM Report (AAPAM, 2000:47) stressed the need for them to recognise that good information ensures good planning and actions, and hence the public service should lessen its hold on such information and improve its accessibility to the public.

INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION AS A PUBLIC MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

Insufficient relevant management information

Managers are dependent on reliable and relevant information to be able to make decisions. Management information systems have a role to play in decision-making. Formal organisational measures should be taken to make the continuous provision of information possible.

According to Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1999:393) information should be evaluated on the basis of its utility which, apart from its accuracy, will facilitate or delay its use. The following four utility factors have been established:

- Utility of the form or format: this is the format in which information is presented to the decision-maker;
- Utility of time: information must be available when it is required;
- Utility of availability: information must be physically accessible and it must be easy for the user or decision-maker to gain access to it as required; and
- Utility of possession: the favourable organisational placement, control and distribution of information.

The quality of information is determined by the degree to which it enables managers to take action and makes a positive contribution to effective decision-making. The value of information can theoretically be measured by its worth in bringing about a change in decision making behaviour. The quality of information may be considered in terms of the following:

- The utility of information;
- The extent to which the need for information is satisfied; and
- The extent to which it is possible to track down errors and whether there is sufficient information for corrections to be made (Van der Waldt and Du Toit 1999:393).

Insufficient time in which to analyse information

Changes in the provision of services and products and the addressing of crises take place at a rapid rate. Managers seldom have the time to analyse environmental trends and issues thoroughly. It is important for the manager to analyse trends in order to make medium- to long-term planning possible. If the manager cannot hold such sessions him/herself, organisational provision must be made for others to do this and/or systems according to which this can be undertaken.

In economic terms Black (in Black, Calitz and Steenekamp 2004:21-22) reasons that consumers and producers do not always have at their disposal the information

necessary to make rational decisions. Producers may be unaware of the existence of certain resources or of the latest technologies available in their own lines of business. Similarly, consumers may be ignorant of the fact that certain goods are available at lower prices than what they are currently paying for them. The cause of this may be lack of information or insufficient information.

INFORMATION, SECURITY AND FEEDBACK

Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1999:122) contend that the systems approach made it clear that it is very important to have feedback and information so that adjustments can be made. If the community, as the client receiving a certain service or product, reacts unfavourably to this service or product, this reaction should be given as feedback to managers in the form of management information. Public managers should provide for management information systems (MIS) that are maintained by environmental scanning.

The coordination of activities of activities within an institution largely depends on how effective communication is in that institution. Decision-making, control and evaluation also depend mainly on effective information and feedback.

Information provides a basis for decision-making. Providing relevant, adequate and accurate information on possible alternative views of a given problem permits a decision-maker to “evaluate the problem by mapping each option onto the reality surrounding the problem and to select the one that provides the best solution under such conditions” (Oyomno in Olivier *et al.* 2005:426). This can only happen after receiving feedback about information sent out.

Section 32(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) prescribes that everyone has the right of access to any information held by the state. It also states that everyone has the right of access to any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights. Section 32(2) of the Constitution even provides for the enactment of national legislation to give effect to section 32(1) of the Constitution (Du Toit in Du Toit *et al.* 2002:302). The outcome of this provision is the Promotion of Access to Information Act, No 2 of 2000 which substantiates everyone’s right of access to any information

Du Toit’s view (in Du Toit *et al.* 2002:303) view is that information security implies that measures must be taken to ensure that information remains secret. It also implies that the logical sequence of information is preserved in its original form and context. In other words this means that the information is not modified in one way or another.

The article has highlighted the fact that serious mistakes can happen if public sector managers manage information poorly. To ensure that information is

managed better, the South African government has instituted specific IT projects designed to promote good governance. The article has also put forward the fact that bad information is not good for proper governance. This is because information is used as a basis for decision making which ultimately improve performance in all aspects of governance.

CONCLUSION

The world is undergoing an information revolution. Thus it is generally accepted that information is one of the assets that public institutions possess. Like other assets and resources, such as people, finances, infrastructure and products, information must be well managed if the success of the institution is to be ensured. The conclusion is that there is a need for information and that information is readily available to governments, administrators and managers. Information is thus available to almost anyone, provided that a person has the means to retrieve and use it fruitfully. The information must be meaningful to those who will use it when making decisions. The effectiveness and efficiency of management control can be enhanced through better flow of information.

Management information includes information that is timely, accurate and relevant and that represents key variables of a particular situation. Without access to relevant information, many institutions would lose their comparative advantage over others. Information is a critical resource that requires proper management by public sector organisations. If there is an improvement on how information is managed, this will ultimately lead to an improved effectiveness on governance. New governance paradigms built on terms such as accountability, transparency and responsiveness have emerged. The public sector needs to safeguard the information at its disposal. This can then be used to improve government co-ordination.

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Multi-Stakeholder Processes towards establishing Water Management Agencies in South Africa

A Case Study¹

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Abstract

The multi-stakeholder approach reflects some of the most frequently and fervently debated issues in discussions on governance, democracy, equity and justice in recent years. The term multi-stakeholder is used to include all role-players, government institutions, stakeholders, clients, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations. It is generally accepted that sustainable development requires a process and ultimately consensus-building among all stakeholders as partners to build relationships and knowledge that will enable them to develop sustainable solutions to new challenges. It is against this background that the processes leading up to the establishment of new decentralised regional water management institutions in South Africa is described and analysed. The process in the Olifants-Doorn Water Management Area to draft the required proposal for the establishment of a catchment management agency is used as a case study (hereafter referred to as the Olifants-Doorn process). The authors argue that the Olifants-Doorn process up to the formal establishment of the Olifants-Doorn Catchment Management Agency (CMA) is a considerable success story evaluated against the principles of good governance. This is evaluated especially in terms of improving stakeholder equality through capacity building,

achieving representation, the exchange of information, time, human and financial resources committed to the process, and building consensus, while allowing the process to progress at its own pace. Although the enabling constitutional and sectoral policy frameworks facilitate good governance practices and behaviour, the key success factor was largely the professional commitment of the public administration technocrats who are responsible for activating, orchestrating and modulating the process.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that sustainable development requires a process and ultimately consensus-building among all stakeholders inclusive of all role-players, government institutions, stakeholders, clients, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations as partners who together define the problems, design possible solutions, collaborate to implement them, obtain specific products, and monitor and evaluate the outcome. Through such activities stakeholders can build relationships and knowledge that will enable them to develop sustainable solutions to new challenges (Hemmati 2002:40). In fact, the multi-stakeholder approach reflects some of the most frequently and fervently debated issues in discussions on governance, democracy, equity and justice in recent years.

The aim of the research was to analyse the multi-stakeholder processes leading up to the emergence of new decentralised environmental governance systems for water resources management in South Africa utilising a 'good governance' perspective. For this purpose '*public governance*' is defined as the way in which stakeholders interact with each other in order to influence the outcome of policies and '*good governance*' as the implementation by multiple stakeholders of quality of life improvements through agreed principles and processes of working together (Governance International 2006).

In this article the focus *firstly* fall on the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the emergence of new collaborative models for environmental governance through multi-stakeholder processes; *secondly*, the scene is set for discussing the particular case study of the Olifants-Doorn process which forms the focus of this article by contextualising the historical background, policy framework and institutional landscape for water resource management in South Africa; *thirdly*, the multi-stakeholder process leading towards the establishment of the Olifants-Doorn Catchment Management Agency will be described; and

finally, some reflections on the prospects and challenges of involvement in water resource management on local level and the lessons learned in promoting good governance is offered.

GOOD GOVERNANCE: SOME POINTS OF DEPARTURE

From governing by hierarchy to the 'new governance' paradigm

Because citizens expect to have a greater say today in the decisions that impact upon their communities, the participation of non-state actors has become an essential component of success, and people's participation in good governance for sustainable development – from policy design to decision-making and implementation – is leading to better long-term outcomes (Küpçü 2005:90). Salamon (2002:600) also expressed the view that there is a clear recognition that the task of public problem solving has become a team sport that has spilled well beyond the borders of government agencies and now engages a far more extensive network of social actors – public as well as private, for-profit as well as non-profit – whose participation must often be coaxed from them and not commandeered and controlled.

According to Salamon (2002:600), the realisation that the complex systems of public action are not self-executing, pose immense management challenges which differ from those characteristics of direct government. Increasingly, forward-thinking public managers are sanctioning the involvement of task-oriented less formal groups in environmental management. As governments look for ways to deal with the challenges, their role is changing from one of direct service provider to one in which they must 'engage and manage partners'. Governing by network instead of bureaucracy relies on the ability to leverage cross-sector partnerships to implement innovative funding and management relationships. The participation of key interest groups from civil society and business is seen as essential to creating lasting public value. It is also based on the belief that involving new actors in decision-making improves the ultimate outcome by creating shared responsibility, improving transparency, and targeting services to community needs more effectively (Küpçü 2005:91). These groups define environmental problems in a more holistic and practical fashion, and work to develop consensus on the way forward (Carley and Cristie 2000:176).

The process of working with new partners, according to Küpçü (2005:91), offers tremendous potential and presents enormous challenges. Cross-sector relationships must bridge vastly different organisational cultures, find common

objectives and create trust. The question therefore is how to manage such complex webs of relationships without getting tangled?

The strategic role of government

So what is the (new) role(s) of government in this 'new governance' paradigm? Government has an important overall societal role (Carley and Cristie 2000:171). This is a strategic role – the proactive attempts to throw light on present action by looking at possible positive futures. It begins with some sense of the possibilities of the future, call it a vision, and uses this vision to initiate the sub-processes of innovation: the agenda for the future – what kind of society we might want to have – and commitment to implementation based on a desire to realise this future and not some other, less satisfactory one. According to Bovaird (2004:208-209), the strategic management literature prepared the ground for the public governance paradigm that evolved during the 1990s. The driving force for public governance was not the need to make public institutions and public services more efficient. It is rather the need to solve 'wicked problems' (such as, for example, environmental problems) which clearly cannot be tackled by public agencies acting alone. It requires public agencies to be prepared to work with a wide range of other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The mode of strategic management in public governance has to change from attempting to impose strategic control on multi-stakeholders towards the negotiation of meta-strategy frameworks within which the decisions of partners will mutually influence each other. Rather than enforcing a fixed strategic vision, strategists must give strategic direction, but then encourage strategic experimentation and diversity in pursuing this direction. The partnerships and networks within which public institutions must learn to operate successfully have some self-organising characteristics and may behave as complex adaptive systems.

Principles of good governance in partnerships/networks

The working of collaborative structures must, apart from solving the 'wicked' problems with which they are faced, also be based on principles of good governance (Bovaird 2004:211). The following criteria have been selected by Bovaird (2004:210-211) from approaches to good governance which have been advocated by major international and multi-national agencies in recent years:

- citizen engagement: participation of citizens and other stakeholders in decision-making;
- transparency: open-book working in respect of all partners (including user and citizen representatives where appropriate) as a critical element of building trust;

- accountability: partners are prepared to account to each other for their actions and performance on all issues which arise – and must be prepared to account to other stakeholders for the overall performance of the partnership;
- equalities and social inclusion: accepted as core values in the working of the partnership – partners must actively seek innovative ways of improving performance against these principles;
- ethical and honest behaviour: accepted as core values in the working of the partnership – partners must actively seek innovative ways of improving performance against these principles;
- equity (fair procedures and due processes): accepted as core values in the working of the partnership – partners must continuously seek innovative ways of improving performance against this principle;
- willingness and ability to collaborate: critical success factor for all partners;
- ability to compete: critical success factor for the partnership as a whole (incorporating both cost consciousness and customer focus);
- leadership: necessary at all levels of the partnership as a whole, in each of its constituent organisations and in the communities which it serves; and
- sustainability: partners must continuously seek improved ways of increasing the sustainability of policies and activities.

Multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs) as instrument towards good governance

Multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs) have gained momentum during recent years as governments seek ways of involving stakeholders that are compatible with their pre-existing institutional arrangements and strong norms. These processes take numerous forms, including informal consultations, thematic panel presentations, side events, working groups, high-level discussions and ‘multi-stakeholder dialogue’ (Küpçü 2005:93). According to Hemmati (2002:66), in a dialogue of stakeholders, representatives not only state their views, but listen to each others’ views for the purposes of developing mutual understanding, including each others’ value-base, interests, goals and concerns. Dialogue requires the willing participation of all participants; even one person whose primary orientation is towards getting her or his way can destroy the dialogue.

While multi-stakeholder dialogues have become a regular feature of policy preparatory processes, many factors influence their success and impact. Successful MSPs work with clear objectives and thematic focus, advanced planning, pre-established ground rules, trained facilitation and resources to assist follow-up efforts (Küpçü 2005:93). At a local level, participation according to Küpçü (2005:102), requires developing capacity and integrating local multi-stakeholder processes within sub-national, regional and national processes.

Where successful, this has led to more effective, rapid delivery of services to the intended beneficiaries. It has promoted both upstream coordination (linking community policy objectives to fiscal arrangements) and downstream coordination (linking governance to service delivery). It has also forced accountability among international organisations and government authorities – especially at the local sphere.

Küpçü (2005:103) comes to the conclusion that government's changing role and citizens' demands for greater participation are transforming traditional governance structures. New structures and methodologies, especially those such as multi-stakeholder processes developed at the global level, are starting to infuse governance at all spheres. But many questions, especially about the impact, accountability and equity of cross-sector relationships, are yet to be answered. The justification for supporting better multi-stakeholder participation is that it can create better and longer-lasting results. Strengthening the social dimension of governance requires not only creating the institutions, norms and willingness to hear new perspectives, but the ability to translate this dialogue into action for sustainable development.

SOUTH AFRICA: THE POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Historical background

The political issues relating to water in South Africa are best understood in the historical context which, in 1994, left an inheritance of profound inequalities in respect of access to water as a resource and in water service provision (Muller 2001:4-5). The policies and legislation in respect of water regulation in the apartheid era mostly benefited the white minority and their economic interests in agriculture, developing urban commerce and industrial endeavours. With this inheritance, the intention of the post-1994 democratic government is that benefits should be redistributed from a previously advantaged, mainly urban white minority, to an all-inclusive community, including the relatively poor and powerless black rural communities. The *National Water Act*, Act 36 of 1998 was preceded by intense discussion and consultation lead by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (hereafter referred to as DWAF). A series of key fundamental principles and objectives for a new water law in South Africa were formulated that underpin the eventual National Water Act (DWAF 1997). These include the basic principle that the state is the custodian of water that is a public resource to which all citizens have a right of access and that the management and utilisation of water resources has to be for the benefit of society as a whole.

It is clear that the purpose of the legislation is to ensure the effective, efficient and economic management of the water resources, the equitable distribution of water, and the promotion of social and economic development, while also focusing on the protection and conservation of this precious resource.

Policy framework and institutional context

South Africa has an enlightened constitutional framework which lays the foundation for grassroots participation and good environmental governance based on the recognition that, apart from fundamental socio-economic human rights. Section 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996, hereafter referred to as the Constitution, specifically addresses the issues of the right of access to sufficient water. Section 24 of the Constitution states that the environment needs to be protected and all decisions must have a sound environmental basis (*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996*).

It is of particular importance for environmental management in general and water resources management in particular that the Constitution recognises that responsible governance requires co-ordination in all spheres of government. The principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations are set out in Chapter 3 of the constitution. Integrated water resources management (IWRM) cuts across all three government spheres, and legislation governing these functions may either prescribe concurrent obligations or may be assigned to one specific sphere. The institutional framework created in this way is not necessarily harmonised as a whole, while the legislative system potentially opens the door to potential inconsistencies and duplication in the implementation of water resource management functions.

The objective of South Africa's public water policy is the management of the quantity, quality and reliability of the nation's water resources to achieve optimum, long-term, environmentally sustainable social and economic benefit for society from their use (DWA 1997). In the preamble of the *National Water Act, 1998* (Act 36 of 1998), the need is recognised "for the integrated management of all aspects of water resources and, where appropriate, the delegation of management functions to regional or catchment level so as to enable everyone to participate". With the introduction of integrated water resources management, the National Water Act requires a paradigm shift in the way water resources are managed. In particular, this requires *firstly* equity, sustainability and efficiency in the protection, development and utilisation of water resources, as well as the institutions that are established for water resource management; and *secondly* decentralisation of decision-making through the establishment of catchment-based institutions, based on a participatory approach to water resources management through the involvement of stakeholders (DWA 2001a:2-3). The

approach combines the notions of co-management, involving a sharing of management between the state and responsible user-group organisations and decentralisation of management through the regionalisation to water catchment level (Symes 1997:110-112).

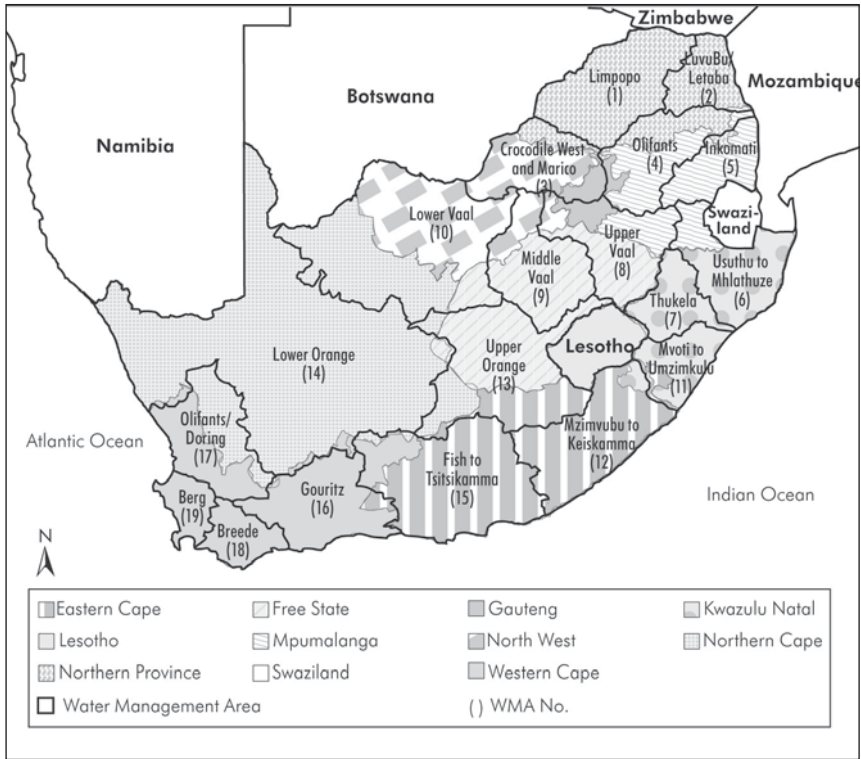
Establishment of Catchment Management Agencies

The *National Water Act, 1998* requires the establishment of catchment management agencies (CMAs) for the 19 water management areas (WMAs) throughout South Africa to “enable the public to participate in managing all water resources within its water management area”. All water resources, including surface and groundwater will be managed by the CMAs. A map indicating the 19 Water management areas in South Africa, based on surface water drainage areas, is included as Map 1.

As the primary management institution in each water management area, each CMA is a unique legal entity and must be representative of role-players and stakeholders (water-user groups, other water-interest groups and various local and national government institutions) in its particular WMA. It may have a wide range of potential duties, powers and functions relating to the “protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of water resources” (*National Water Act, 1998*: Section 9). Apart from CMAs, the Act also makes provision for the establishment of a number of different water management institutions to facilitate local participation, including, water-user associations (WUAs) and advisory committees (ACs). All of these institutions must give effect to the principles outlined in Section 2 of the Act, and in particular must ensure that they have “appropriate community, racial and gender representation”.

The process leading up to the establishment of a CMA therefore requires an extensive process of multi-stakeholder consultation and public involvement to ensure optimum local participation and the expected timeframe for this process was set at 5 to 8 years from 1999/2000 (DWAF 2002:19). In the establishment phase of a CMA, a proposal outlining the water resources, functions, institutional arrangements, organisation structure and viability of the proposed CMA (as prescribed in terms of Section 77 of the *National Water Act, 1998*) was developed. This was done through a consultative process utilising representative catchment forums and overseen by a CMA Reference Group, and finally submitted to the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry for approval. A CMA will become operational, once a Governing Board has been appointed by the Minister based on the formal recommendations of an Advisory Committee, set up by the Minister specifically for this purpose. When a CMA comes into operation, it automatically has certain inherent powers and certain initial functions, which the Act gives to it. These “initial” functions revolve around the investigation and advice on water

Map 1 Map of country of South Africa indicating the 19 water management areas

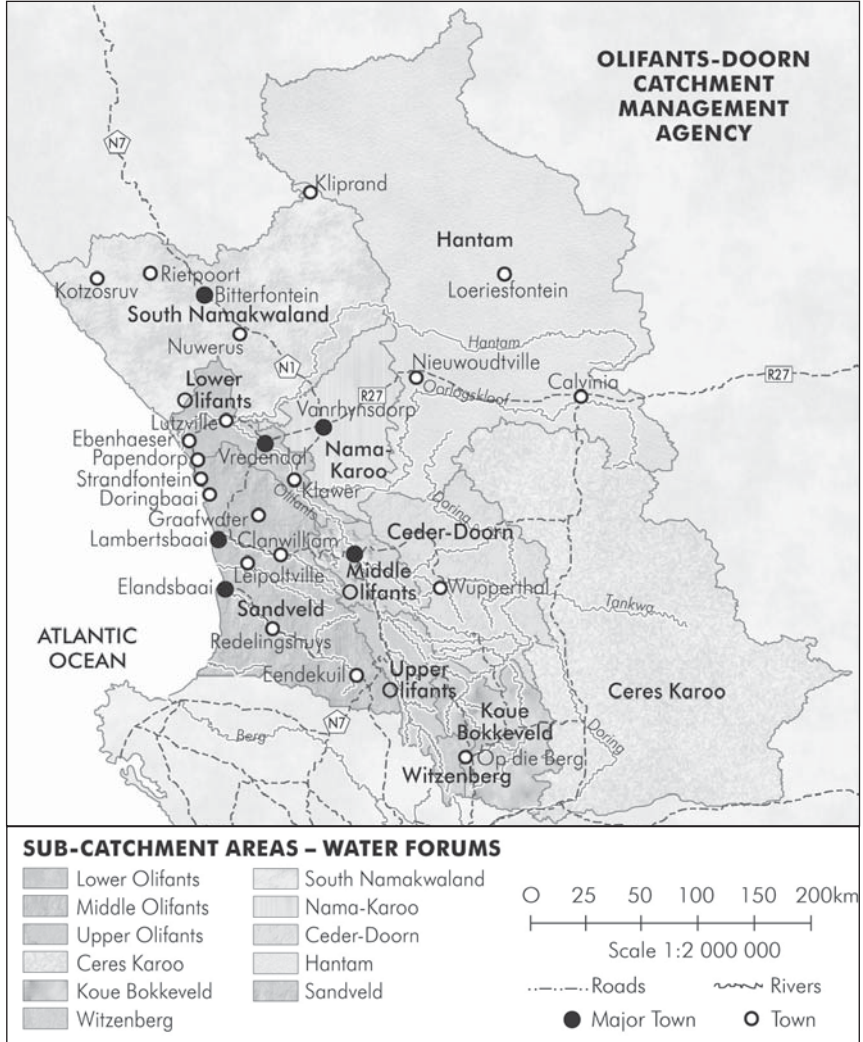


resources management, the development of the catchment management strategy, institutional coordination, cooperative governance, stakeholder communication and administrative activities. All other powers, duties and functions of a CMA are transferred to it by the Minister at the rate at which the CMA will develop and build capacity to perform the respective functions.

THE CASE STUDY: ESTABLISHING A CMA IN THE OLIFANTS-DOORN WATER MANAGEMENT AREA

It is against the above background that the South African government initiated the first multi-stakeholder processes in 1999 with the aim of establishing CMAs in each of the 19 WMAs. The next section will focus on the process towards establishing a CMA in the Olifants-Doorn Water Management Area.

Map 2 Olifants-Doorn WMA indicating location of catchment forums



Orientation

The Olifants-Doorn Water Management Area (WMA) – which derives its name from the river draining it, namely the Olifants River and its main tributary the Doorn River – is located on the west coast of South Africa, extending from about 100 km to 450 km north of Cape Town (see map below: from

DWAF [2005b:10]). According to an “*Olifants-Doorn WMA Internal Strategic Perspective*” report produced by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), the south-western portion of the WMA falls mainly within the Western Cape Province, and the north-western section of the WMA is located within the Northern Cape Province (DWAF 2005a:i).

The agricultural sector (5% of South Africa’s **gross domestic product** (GDP) contributes far more to the local economy (43%) than any other sector and is therefore very important for the regional economy of the WMA (DWAF 2005b) . The significance of the agricultural sector can be attributed to the variety of products cultivated in the area, mostly under irrigation. Apart from agriculture, important conservation areas include the Tankwa-Karoo National Park, the Verlorenvlei estuary and wetland in the Sandveld (which enjoys Ramsar status), the Cederberg Wilderness Area, the northern section of the Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area and the Olifants River system itself with its endemic endangered fish species and the estuary, which is considered to be in the top ten South African locations of importance for the conservation of water birds (DWAF 2005a:iii – v).

Map 2 indicates the area of the Olifants-Doorn WMA and the location of the catchment forums (DWAF 2005b).

The establishment process

The formal process in the establishment of the Olifants-Doorn Catchment Management Agency was initiated in February 2001 by a number of public meetings which involved a wide range of interested and affected parties. The public meetings served two functions: *firstly* the public was informed about the functions of the CMA and the requirements of the establishment process, and *secondly* individuals, stakeholders, role-players and interested and affected parties in the CMA establishment process were identified (DWAF 2005b:11). These meetings culminated in the establishment of eleven Catchment Forums in the Olifants-Doorn WMA. One committee for each area based on groupings of quaternary surface water drainage areas as per map was formed. The Water Catchment Forums were formally constituted during 2002, with each forum electing a chairperson and vice-chairperson. At the catchment forum meetings, participants were reminded that the objective is to bring water resource management to community level for everyone to understand and participate in the process; communities were encouraged to identify issues, seek solutions and make recommendations to DWAF or relevant institutions related to water management in their sub-catchment (DWAF 2005b:11-12).

In November 2001 all members of the catchment forums, as well as all other interested parties, were invited to a meeting in Clanwilliam for the stakeholders

in the entire Olifants-Doorn WMA. The aim of the meeting was to select a CMA Reference Group on which all sectors are represented to ensure that the respective interests of all multi-stakeholders are accommodated. During this meeting, representation in the Olifants-Doorn CMA Reference Group was discussed and elected to represent the various sectors and organisations in the area (see next section on *Representation*). Representation was not based on volume or extent of water use or on the size of the organisation (DWAF 2005b:12).

The CMA Reference Group meetings were aimed primarily at the development of the formal Proposal for the establishment of a CMA for the Olifants-Doorn WMA as required by law. The proposal was developed in accordance with the process agreed upon at the public meeting held in November 2001 and is based on discussions and agreements reached at subsequent CMA Reference Group meetings. A total of 8 meetings were held (up to May 2003) with the CMA Reference Group to compile and finalise the proposal for the establishment of the Olifants-Doorn CMA. Subsequent meetings of the CMA Reference Group were held on different aspects of water resource management and CMA functioning such as Advisory and Governing Board composition (DWAF 2005b:19).

Representation of multi-stakeholders

In line with the requirements of inclusiveness, participation and transformation as indicated in the Constitution, great care was taken in the process of achieving representation on catchment forums and the CMA Reference Group. The catchment forums would typically be representative of all the sectors, interest and user groups, NGOs and community-based organisations and national, provincial and local government institutions. After agreement was reached on the representation of the *CMA Reference Group* during the public meeting held in November 2001, the following division of representation was accepted: sectoral (34%), geographical (catchment forums) (30%), local governments (11%) and overarching bodies (:25% – a national NGO, national departments, conservation agencies, provincial departments) of the total number of 73 people forming the CMA Reference Group (DWAF 2005b:19). In order to address the issue of gender representivity, the secretaries of the catchment forums (consisting of 10 women) were co-opted onto the Olifants-Doorn CMA Reference Group (DWAF 2005b:19).

Information exchange

As a result of an initial analysis of the communication needs done in October 2001 by seven of the eleven catchment forums, newsletters, followed by

pamphlets (fact sheets), meetings/workshops, newspaper articles and radio were identified as the priority communication vehicles (DWAF 2005b:14-15). Based on this information a brochure was compiled that provided a simplified explanation of the CMA Establishment Proposal and process; the brochures were handed out at forum meetings to provide background information for the public meeting held in Clanwilliam on 13 November 2001, where the Olifants-Doorn CMA Reference Group was elected. The first WMA newsletter for the area was compiled during February 2002 (others followed in 2002 and 2003) disseminating information on integrated water resource management in general and the Olifants-Doorn WMA in particular. Other media were also used for communication and a number of press releases were compiled for publication or broadcasting by the local radio station during the period October 2001 – March 2002 (DWAF 2005b:16).

Support

A support team under the auspices of DWAF: Western Cape and the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) project met with forum members to record issues and encourage participation right through the process (DWAF 2005b:11). The IWRM project was financially supported by the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) for three pilot WMAs in South Africa with the aim of promoting and building capacity regarding the importance of integrated water resource management. Staff from DWAF, as well as the consultants appointed for the public participation process, was assigned to mentor and support those forums that struggled to convene meetings and/or identify issues. An action plan was drawn up for each forum area, which includes the frequency of meetings to be held by each forum (this could range from once every three months to twice per year – depending on the issues and needs of the area). To enhance the sustainability of and provide administrative support to the forums, a secretary (their remuneration funded by Danida) was appointed for each forum and a temporary post of administrator/secretary to co-ordinate the overall activities of the forum secretaries was also created and filled in February 2003 (DWAF 2005b:16).

Engagement, capacity building and empowerment

One of the aims of the CMA process was to capacitate forum members so that they are able to participate actively in all discussions relating to water management matters and to address issues at grassroots level and maintain continued community support. The members of three forums identified water resource management, and process management and administrative skills as

focus areas for capacity building at a needs analysis workshop held in April 2002 (DWAF 2005b:16-17). These needs were found to be generic amongst the other forums and three capacity-building programmes were initiated from 2002 to empower forum members and other stakeholders to actively participate in IWRM issues, as well as in the process of developing the CMA establishment proposal (DWAF 2005b:14). In general, public engagement was obtained by instituting as many interactive discussions and opportunities for sharing information via a variety of communication media as described above.

Because of the demographics of the Olifants-Doorn WMA, Afrikaans was the predominant language used at all meetings (especially forum meetings). Since a few English-speaking persons often attended the CMA Reference Group meetings, these meetings were conducted in English and Afrikaans. All participants were encouraged to use the language of their choice and all English input was translated into Afrikaans. All documents were prepared in English, but were translated into Afrikaans to enable stakeholders to understand and actively participate in the discussions (DWAF 2005b:12).

Consensus building

During the public Reference Group meeting in May 2003 where the final draft of the Proposal was discussed, the group unanimously agreed that those people who initially participated in the CMA process without any prior knowledge on water matters were adequately capacitated so that they could, over a period of time, understand and actively participate in discussions. There was also consensus that the CMA process in the Olifants-Doorn WMA was truly consultative and representative. The meeting felt strongly that this culture of discussion and involvement should be pursued once the CMA is in place and that the integrated structures established during the CMA process should be used to resolve pressing issues such as land reform and the dire need for additional capacity-building programmes (DWAF 2005b:19).

EVALUATION: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

As the multi-stakeholder approach reflects some of the most frequently and fervently debated issues in discussions on governance, democracy, equity and justice in recent years, the following observations of the factors that influenced the success and impact of the multi-stakeholder process in the Olifants-Doorn WMA case study are offered for reflection:

- Government fulfilled its strategic role by clearly formulating the vision to achieve sustainable, equitable and efficient water resource management in

South Africa, with the National Water Act recognising that the participation of all stakeholders and decentralisation of water resource management to the appropriate level are essential to achieve this vision successfully. Although decentralising environmental governance structures is in line with current international trends, it could be seen as somewhat surprising, given the historical context in South Africa where the transformation project of society as a whole might favour a more centralised approach. Linked to this is the challenge of land reform as another national priority as the ownership of water rights and expertise in water resource management is to a large extent still vested in the previously advantaged (white) group.

- It might be argued by critical observers that the implementation process of establishing the water management institutions as prescribed in the national legislation is nothing more than a top-down process designed with clinical engineering precision and carefully managed by technocrats. However, in the authors' opinion great care was taken in following 'best practices' of public participation and applying the principles of good governance.
- An important characteristic of multi-stakeholder processes is the assumption of stakeholder equality in terms of a stakeholder's right to participate and have power over decision-making and implementation; however, participation in the Olifants-Doorn process by historically disadvantaged individuals was often hampered by the fact that they do not always have the necessary knowledge and understanding of water-related issues. These challenges were addressed by capacity-building programmes which are geared to equip forum members from historically disadvantaged backgrounds with certain skills to enable them to participate meaningfully in forums.
- As representation was not based on volume or extent of water use or on the size of the organisation, the forums and Reference Group were constituted to be representative of all the sectors, interest and user groups, NGOs and community-based organisations, and national, provincial and local government institutions active within the Olifants-Doorn WMA. The process of achieving representation on catchment forums and the CMA Reference Group in the Olifants-Doorn WMA has been quite successful, especially with regard to racial representivity. Gender representivity, however, remains a problem, despite concerted efforts to engage women in the CMA establishment process. A possible downside is the large size of the CMA Reference Group (73 initial members in the case of the Olifants-Doorn WMA) in terms of manageability and dynamics.
- Ideally a multi-stakeholder process should be allowed to progress at a pace which is politically and culturally sustainable given local conditions. It is therefore interesting to note that DWAF does not prescribe any process or deadlines for the establishment of a CMA apart from the requirement of

stakeholder participation in the development proposal. CMA establishment processes could therefore vary between different geographical areas. The Olifants-Doorn process was initiated in the beginning of 2001 and it took 2½ years to get to the milestone where the proposal to establish a CMA was ready to be submitted to the Minister – the first CMA in South Africa was established in 2005 after a 6-year process, although DWAF envisaged three years as the average time frame required. The Olifants-Doorn CMA was formally established with a notice in the Government Gazette in September 2006.

- To be done well, multi-stakeholder processes require time, human and financial resources, and the political will to conduct them and to value their outcomes. The continuous involvement of all stakeholders in the Olifants-Doorn process was to a great extent made possible by means of the financial support provided through the IWRM project funded by Danida. It is also an expensive process, as many previously disadvantaged individuals and communities do not have the financial capacity to travel to meetings at their own cost, or take time off from work (and lose some income) to attend meetings. The forums were also supported by DWAF staff as well as the consultants appointed for the public participation process, while a secretary was appointed for each of the eleven forums to provide administrative support to the forums and thereby enhance their sustainability. It is an interesting question, though, to consider whether the participation process would have been as successful if the external donor funding had not been available?
- Crucial for transparency, empowerment and building trust is the exchange of information between the stakeholders. It would seem that adequate attention was given during the Olifants-Doorn CMA establishment process to the communication needs and vehicles of communication to reach the stakeholders, taking the characteristics of the audience into account (i.e. newsletters, pamphlets, meetings/workshops, newspaper articles and radio were identified as the priority communication media over some more technically sophisticated media such as television or the internet). All official documentation was also made available on DWAF's website.
- The question of language can be a serious stumbling block for the ability of stakeholders to actively participate in multi-stakeholder processes and can disempower people in itself. Although constitutionally, in SA all eleven languages are official languages, in practice English is the major language all South Africans share, mostly as a second or third language, and it therefore became the *de facto* official communication language. Based on the demographics of the Olifants-Doorn WMA, Afrikaans was predominantly used at all meetings and all English inputs at meetings as well as official documentation were translated into Afrikaans to enable

stakeholders and role-players to understand and actively participate in the discussions.

- A key expectation of multi-stakeholder processes is an emerging consensus over the real nature and extent of the problem at hand, and a consensus about, and commitment to, the means of resolution. It is therefore worth noting that every person present during the public Reference Group meeting in May 2003, where the final draft of the Proposal was discussed, unanimously agreed that the Olifants-Doorn process of CMA establishment was truly consultative and representative.
- Because of the successes achieved in the establishment of the Olifants-Doorn CMA, the IWRM project management decided to allocate more funds to the Olifants-Doorn area than originally approved. Despite being the smallest (in terms of water availability) of the three WMAs (including Crocodile-West/Marico and Mvoti WMAs) supported by the IWRM project, it eventually received most of the funding because of its successful implementation of all objectives of the project.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

South Africa has an enlightened constitutional framework which lays the foundation for grassroots participation and good governance. These principles are also embedded in the country's public water policy with an emphasis on equity, sustainability and efficiency, and the decentralisation of public decision-making through the establishment of water catchment-based institutions. A participatory approach to water resources management through the involvement of stakeholders is fundamental to this policy (DWAF 2005b). The first multi-stakeholder processes to establish a catchment management agency were initiated in 1999. Five CMAs were established by 2007 and it is envisaged that most of the other CMAs will only be established by 2012. This presents unique case studies to evaluate the multi-stakeholder processes in terms of some of the core values of good governance systems such as participation, transparency, accountability of public decision-makers to the public and key role-players, stakeholders, justice and equity.

In the case of the Olifants-Doorn water management area the formal process for the establishment of the Olifants-Doorn Catchment Management Agency was initiated in February 2001. Because CMAs are still in the process of being established and still to take on all water management functions, it is not possible to draw concrete conclusions on whether the involvement of new actors in public decision-making improved the ultimate outcome by creating shared responsibility, improving transparency, and better targeting integrated

water resource management to serve community needs. However stakeholder equality was improved through capacity building, achieving representation, the exchange of information, time, human and financial resources committed to the process, and building consensus while allowing the process to progress at its own pace. It is generally acknowledged that this led to a considerable success story and could serve as an example for other water management areas. Finally, although the enabling constitutional and sectoral policy frameworks facilitate good governance practices and behaviour, the key success factor is the professional commitment of the public administration technocrats who are responsible for activating, orchestrating and modulating the process of capacitating and developing the proposals for the establishing the CMAs.

NOTES

- 1 This article is based upon research supported by the National Research Foundation and is a partly adapted version of a paper titled "Building Trust through Transparency: Multi-Stakeholder Processes towards establishing Water Catchment Agencies in South Africa – A Case Study" delivered at the *IIAS Conference Transparency for Better Governance*. Monterrey, Mexico, 6-20 July 2006.

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