



VOLUME 19 ISSUE 2

Administratio Publica



ASSADPAM

Journal of the Association of
Southern African Schools and Departments
of Public Administration and Management

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (ASSADPAM)

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ISSN 1015-4833

About the Journal

Administratio Publica is a peer-reviewed journal accredited with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET) and produced four times a year and aims to promote academic scholarship in public administration and management and related fields. Analytical articles in the form of original theoretical and empirical articles, debates, research viewpoints, review articles and book reviews in English will be considered for publication (only contributions of paid-up members of ASSADPAM will be published).

Page fees and Journal subscription

Individual and institutional subscription 2011: Local R500.00 per volume (postage of R128.00 per volume excluded) or R125.00 per issue (postage excluded); Foreign - \$100.00; €77.00 (postage of \$45 or €35 per volume excluded).

Authors are required to pay a fee of R250.00 per page as well as R100.00 per graphic for any manuscript printed in the Journal. (Excluding the costs of language editing where needed). Payment is due on receiving confirmation from the Editor that a contribution is to be published in a specific issue of the Journal. Payment should be made directly to the University of Johannesburg, but proof of payment must also be submitted to the Editor to avoid any possible delay in the publication of a contribution.

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Editorial

Christelle J Auriacombe

University of Johannesburg

This second issue of the 2011 journal contains diverse contributions about the results of research into developmental project management, leadership competencies, issues regarding ethical responsibility, training and teaching methods and local government. In the first category Gerrit van der Waldt assesses the requirements for more adaptive project management as a tool for more realistic municipal planning, while Vain Jarbandhan summarises the evolution of leadership competencies for the South African public sector. In the second category, Mike van Heerden and Xolile Thani focus on the role of universities to play their rightful role in the delivery of efficient and responsive public services. They provide guidelines for ethically responsible decisions in scholarly research whereas Chris Hendriks links Public Administration and Management theory and practice for an integrated approach to training public servants. Rochelle Wessels motivates the need for a case study teaching method and applies her findings to a pilot case study at Unisa.

Mogie Subban, Henk Theron, Walter Shaidi, Pregala Pillay, Kishore Raga, John Taylor, Chris Thornhill and Onkgopotse Madumo in the third category provide different case studies about local government: Subban and Theron, on the sustainability of Integrated Development Planning (KwaZulu-Natal Province) Shaidi, Pillay, Raga and Taylor, on the link between ward committees, development and community participation (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality), and Thornhill and Madumo on the utilisation of ward committees as an effective tool for improving service delivery (Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality).

These scholarly contributions deal with a wide range of issues, and are focused inter alia on the implications of current project management challenges, leadership, ethics, training, teaching and local government service delivery problems and how to address them – through redesigned planning, appropriate competencies, scholarly research challenges, the alignment of theory and practice, teaching methods at higher education institutions, municipal structure and policy content. It is clear there are major challenges that have to be addressed, particularly in translating theory and policy into practice and more importantly ensuring efficient and effective implementation of policies, processes and programmes. It is imperative that all these developments and strategies should have a positive qualitative impact on public management and governance by improving effective and efficient service delivery.

Adaptive Project Management

A Tool for more realistic municipal planning?

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ABSTRACT

Municipal developmental projects are typically embedded in complex, dynamic environments that involve many unpredictable components with diverse stakeholders and are characterised by a high degree of uncertainty. Most projects fail—largely because conventional project management methodology cannot adequately adjust to a dynamic environment. In a rapidly changing environment a highly adaptive model for planning and managing projects is required.

Managing projects under complex and uncertain conditions challenges the project team to be creative and adaptive. This requires a shift in thinking about projects and how they should be organised and delivered. Also known as “agile” Project Management, Adaptive Project Management (APM) is an approach to projects for which traditional methods are inappropriate. The fundamental concept underlying APM is that scope is variable, and that continuous customer input is the key to success.

This article aims to explore the potential contributions of APM as a more effective and realistic tool for project planning and execution in a turbulent municipal planning context.

“Reality does not care what your project plan is” (DeCarlo, 2004)

INTRODUCTION

Planning in South African municipalities is done on different political and managerial levels and is highly cyclical in nature—following annual consultative and budgeting processes. Furthermore, planning is continuously influenced by

political input from a wide variety of stakeholders and role-players – who often change their positions mid-stream. Due to political dynamics, development complexities, resource constraints and financial risks, project managers usually find themselves in a hostile environment where detailed upfront planning and the submission of comprehensive business plans are virtually impossible. Matters are further complicated when the duration of a project transcends the annual planning cycle. Managing projects under conditions of such complexity and uncertainty challenges the project team to be creative and adaptive. This requires a shift in thinking about projects and how they should be planned, organised and delivered.

Conventional project management planning approaches are not effective in highly uncertain situations. Project managers do not have the tools they need to successfully plan and manage these projects and are trying to adapt traditional approaches with little success. Adaptive Project Management (APM) is an iterative process designed to embrace situations where the solution is not known and which require frequent change in order to find a solution that delivers maximum value. It integrates tools and techniques from both the traditional and extreme approaches to project management. The result is a hybrid approach. An adaptive approach to project planning requires a new mindset. It thrives on change rather than avoiding it, since it utilises “just-in-time” planning. It adapts tools and processes from traditional project management planning in order to adjust immediately to changing municipal conditions. The adaptive approach is more client-focused and client-driven than more conventional approaches to planning. It thus fully engages the client as the primary decision-maker in projects, which create shared partnership with shared responsibility.

The purpose of this article is to explore the inherent conflict between existing planning realities in South African municipalities and the more scientific nature of project management planning methodology. Furthermore, it aims to explore the potential for implementing adaptive project management methodology for more realistic project planning. Focus falls on the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process that municipalities follow to ensure that projects undertaken are in the interests of the communities they serve. For the purpose of this article, capital projects (projects that purchase or construct capital assets) are excluded.

THE CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE OF PROJECT PLANNING

Project management focuses on the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements (Elliot 2008). To this definition Young (1996) added the fact that projects should achieve some specific

results that satisfy the needs of an organisation in a controlled and structured manner. Wilson-Murray (1997) and Kerzner (2003) provide more comprehensive definitions, which state that projects are any series of activities and tasks that have a specific objective to be completed within specification; have defined start and end dates; have funding limits; consume human and other resources and are multi-functional. Successful projects entail delivering results in time, within budget, in scope, with quality and in accordance with client expectations.

Conventional project planning methodology

Since the late 1950s a body of knowledge for Project Management as a management application emerged, which is currently integrated into a Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). The PMBOK Guide®, first published in 1996 by the Project Management Institute (PMI), is the foremost internationally recognised standard for project management. There are, however, various standards with unique methodologies available, such as PRINCE2, MPMM, OPM3 and APMBOK.

The generic life cycle of projects, as proposed by PMI, follows linear, incremental phases or steps. The project life cycle serves to define the beginning and the end of a project. Project life cycle descriptions may be very general or very detailed. Highly detailed descriptions may have numerous forms, charts and checklists to provide structure and consistency. Such detailed approaches are referred to as project management methodologies (Burke 2006:56). The Waterfall model, mainly used in software development, clearly illustrates the linear approach to conventional project management. This model is a useful approach when the variables and outcomes of a project are known, where the parameters of the project are unlikely to change, and where the host organisation prefers predictability to change.

According to the PMBOK Guide® (PMI 2004:30), the project management life cycle phases can be organised into five groups, namely:

- *Initiating phase*: authorising the project (usually through a project proposal).
- *Planning phase*: defining and refining objectives and selecting the best of the alternative courses of action to attain the objectives that the project was undertaken to address.
- *Executing phase*: co-ordinating people and other resources to operationalise the plan.
- *Controlling phase*: ensuring that project objectives are met by monitoring and measuring progress on a regular basis to identify variances from the original plan, so that corrective action can be taken when necessary.
- *Closing phase*: formalising the closure of the project and bringing it to an orderly end.

Figure 1: Phases in the project life cycle

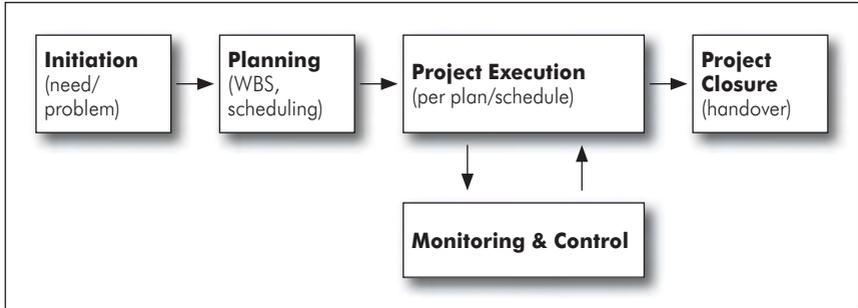


Figure 1 illustrates the linear nature of the phases in the life cycle.

The focus of this article falls on the second phase, namely project planning. It should be noted that these phases are sequential in nature. Once the planning phase is completed and a business plan is submitted for approval, there are limited interventions available to amend it. The controlling phase mainly impacts on the executing phase (to make required adjustments) as circumstances change.

Depending on its scope and complexities, various types of planning are possible in projects. These include:

- Scope planning;
- Resource planning;
- Cost estimating and budgeting;
- Risk planning (including contingency planning and mitigation strategies);
- Quality planning;
- Communication planning;
- Staff planning;
- Procurement planning; and
- Business planning.

The project manager is responsible for coordinating the contributions of all the project role-players to meet the stakeholders' needs and expectations. However, this could be highly complex in nature and could involve intense negotiations and conflict resolution, since different stakeholders could have different expectations. Furthermore, the most appropriate (i.e. cost-benefit) strategy to implement the plan might not be followed due to political ramifications and resource constraints. Due to political and other reasons, project decision-makers might not adequately take environmental impact assessments and evidence-based feasibility studies into consideration. This, of course, places a significant burden on project managers.

Project planning instruments

Over time, various planning instruments have emerged. Below is a brief synopsis of the most commonly utilised instruments or tools for project planning.

Work Breakdown Structures (WBS) are hierarchical presentations of milestones, activities and tasks associated with the project. It is a technique used to break project work into smaller and smaller pieces until the team establishes a comprehensive profile of the work that needs to be performed (Harrison 1983:20). A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is a deliverable-oriented grouping of project elements that organises and defines the total scope of the project: work not in the WBS is outside the scope of the project. It also helps to design the architecture of the project (Meredith and Mantel 2000:203) and forms the basis for estimating the time and effort needed for the project.

Another instrument used in project planning is a *Gantt Chart*, which is a graphical presentation of the main milestones and their schedule. A Gantt Chart shows a list of activities and a bar that indicates the start and end dates of each activity. The Gantt Chart is derived from the WBS and indicates the scheduling of activities. The project network schedule, also derived from the WBS, serves as the baseline to compare against actual performance. Gantt Charts are one of the typical tools used for communicating a project schedule status.

Network diagrams are further planning tools that provide a sequential presentation of project deliverables. Network diagrams are used for planning, scheduling and monitoring a project's progress. The network is developed from the information collected for the WBS and is a graphic flow chart of the project plan. The network depicts the project activities that must be completed, the logical sequence, the interdependencies of the activities to be completed, as well as the times for the activities to start and finish, along with the longest path(s) through the network – the critical path. There are two types of network diagrams, namely activity on arrow (AOA) and activity on node (AON).

In the *Critical Path Method (CPM)*, the “critical path” refers to the longest possible continuous pathway taken from the initial event to the terminal event. It determines the total calendar time required for the project. Therefore, any time delays along the critical path will delay reaching the terminal event by at least the same amount. CPM is used in planning to identify the longest duration of sequential activities, as well as “float” or “slack” time (the amount of time that a task in a project network can be delayed without causing an overall delay).

The *Programme or Project Evaluation and Review Techniques (PERT)* is a further instrument mainly used to calculate project schedule (duration of activities through optimistic, pessimistic and most likely estimates). PERT is a model for project management designed to analyse and represent the tasks involved in completing a given project. It is a method especially used to analyse

the time needed to complete each task, and to identify the minimum time needed to complete the total project.

The final deliverable of project planning is a project *business plan*, which is a formal, approved document used to manage and control project execution. It should be distributed as defined in the communications management plan. The business plan enables management to approve resources for the project, delegate authority and responsibility to the project manager and his/her team, and provides a mandate to the team to execute the plan. The effort required to plan the project depends on the amount of management information, as well as the level of detail that needs to be understood and documented.

It should be noted that all of these planning instruments or tools are aimed at getting factual, evidence-based, quantitative information to obtain management information for project planning. There are limited tools available for more abstract, “soft”, people-oriented issues in project management – issues that can derail a complex project. Both PMBOK and PRINCE2 are standards for predictive project management. These standards focus on planning the project upfront, executing project as per the plan, checking for variances and taking action where necessary (Ourdev & AbouRizk 2008:122). They work well, as long as the requirements are very stable and the technology is familiar. Although PMBOK and many text books stress the importance of soft skills, the current project management paradigm is essentially mechanistic (Cooke-Davies *et al.* 2007:51). In simple terms, this implies that the discipline is built on the assumption that future outcomes can be predicted accurately based on current information and actions. It is also implicitly assumed that human actions, interactions (and consequences thereof) can be objectively observed and then corrected or controlled (Cooke-Davies *et al.* 2007:51). Due to these limitations, Melgrati and Damiani (2002) propose that the existing project management framework requires “rethinking”, while Williams (1999) and Pollack (2007:272) argue the need for new paradigms for complex projects. Koskela and Howell (2002) even go as far as to claim that the underlying theory of project management has become “obsolete”. The question thus arises: what could be done to remedy the situation?

THE DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT OF PROJECTS – THE ADAPTIVE CHALLENGE

There is little doubt that the 21st century organisation is extremely complex and difficult to manage. A volatile mix of dynamics is triggering changes in the environment. These include political demands, economic pressures, statutory and legal obligations, growing international competition, labour unrest, as well

as rapidly evolving technologies. As these complexities increase, managers must have adequate knowledge of the processes and dynamics within the organisation, as well as their suitability to deal with these complexities.

Complexity scientists have studied the collective behaviour of living systems and have discovered that they are complex in that they consist of many autonomous agents interacting with each other in many ways. These complex self-organising Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) are adaptive in that they react differently under different circumstances and co-evolve with their environment (Lewin 1993). According to Cooke-Davies *et al.* (2007:53), complexity theory can be defined in broad terms as the study of how order, structure, pattern and novelty arise from extremely complicated, apparently chaotic systems and conversely, how complex behaviour and structure emerge from simple underlying rules. As such, it includes those earlier fields of study that are collectively known as Chaos Theory and what Lorenz (1963) labelled as the “butterfly effect” – the discovery of how minute changes can have major and unpredictable consequences in non-linear systems. The most important characteristics of complex adaptive systems are non-linearity, dynamic behaviour, emergence and self-organisation (Harkema 2003:340).

Haber (1964) traced the origins of “adaptive” management to the ideas of scientific management that took root in the early 1900s. The concept has drawn particular attention in natural resource management (Bormann *et al.* 1999). In 1978, with the publication of Holling’s *Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management*, its potential as a framework for dealing with complex environmental management problems began to be recognised. Adaptive management, as discussed in contemporary literature, stands in contrast to more conventional ideas of management. Although it shares the general premise of learning-by-doing, it contributes a deliberate and formal dimension to framing questions and problems, undertaking experimentation and testing, critically processing the results, as well as reassessing the policy context that originally triggered investigation in light of the newly acquired knowledge. Thus, adaptive management involves more than traditional incrementalism; learning derives from purposeful experimentation that, in turn, derives from deliberate, formal processes of inquiry (Lewin 1993). Continuous feedback enables change and adaption, while non-linear systems are continuously adapting when they reach a state of dynamic equilibrium, termed the “edge of chaos” (Holling 1978).

Adaptive management and project management

Although the concept of adaptive management has been used in natural resource management since the early 1970s (developed by CS Holling and CJ Walters), it has remained fairly technical and primarily within the command of

professional scientists. For this reason, its full integration into project practice has remained elusive. Applied to a project context, Cicmil (2006a:28) and Cooke-Davies *et al.* (2007:50-52) challenge the current linear paradigm of project management. They argue that recent advances in the study of complex systems suggest new ways of looking at the discipline. According to Elliot (2008), conventional or more traditional project management methodology relies on traditional management theory, which assumes that:

- Structured processes and procedures are needed to plan.
- Rigid and static hierarchical organisational structures are a means of establishing order.
- Problems are solved primarily through reductionist task breakdown and allocation.
- Projects and risk are adequately predictable and can be managed through complex up-front planning.

According to DeCarlo (2004), senior managers understandably desire predictability. They are responsible for results and they respond by establishing strict policies and procedures. Furthermore, they call for robust project management methodologies to keep control and stay loyal to the plan. The result is a loss of flexibility to adapt to new opportunities and threats. Adaptive or agile project management allows management to better balance both predictability and flexibility (DeCarlo 2004). Cicmil *et al.* (2006b) and DeCarlo (2004) propose that management need to adopt a more quantum worldview on projects, rather than dictating a deterministic methodology that does not account for the dynamics and fluidity of today's projects. Traditional project management has been said to be too rigid and slow for this fast-paced context (Elliot 2008).

Much of traditional project management is based on two theories, namely reductionism and control theory. According to these theories one only needs to manipulate the constituent parameters of a complex system in order to achieve an optimal outcomes (Cicmil *et al.* 2006c:677; Hass 2008). Only in theory can tools such as the WBS help build a solid project management plan, set a firm schedule and predict how much the project will cost. Hass (2008) argues that while a "reductionist" model may work in programmed, controlled environments (such as the building industry), it does not work for complex projects. Since complex projects have complicated, unpredictable interrelationships and interdependencies, they require a much more flexible and adaptive approach to project management. As DeCarlo (2004) convincingly puts it: "Projects that are characterised by high uncertainty, high speed and high complexity, both technical and political complexity, do not fit the traditional reductionist mould". What is required is a new mindset to plan projects in a dynamic environment.

Adaptive management has thus become a powerful framework for project management. It is a structured and systematic process to continually improve decisions and practices by learning from the outcomes of previous decisions (Virine 2008:9). Therefore, the main benefit of APM is that it provides a framework for better management, since the project team can systematically test assumptions and strategies.

Adaptive versus predictive, conventional project planning

In a highly turbulent environment the solution to issues is often not known during the project-planning phase. This requires frequent adjustments and changes during project execution in order to converge on a solution that delivers maximum results (Schwaber & Beedle 2002).

Many factors can affect the chosen project planning approach. When evaluating which approach to take, the team should consider whether the project is familiar territory with a predictable path, or a new frontier with uncertain outcomes. Lang (1990) offered a typology of uncertainty that could assist the team decide whether adaptive or more conventional project planning approaches will be followed:

- Uncertainty concerning the specific problem (need for the project) and its context.
- Uncertainty about how to address the problem, with respect to both ends and means.
- Uncertainty concerning what others might do about the problem. (This means that dealing with uncertainty must also incorporate collaboration and coordination).

“Certain” or known projects can usually rely on a predictive method of planning. Predictive planning provides a linear, specific development plan structured around producing a pre-determined end result within a specific timeframe (Baccarini 1996:202). Evolving projects that face changing conditions are best suited for adaptive planning. Adaptive project planning involves breaking a project into small components over an undetermined timeline to allow ultimate flexibility in directing the course of the project. DeCarlo (2004) strongly supports this by stating that the dynamics of extreme projects are “... simply not compatible with traditional project management, which attempts to plan everything up front and then tries to control what happens later to keep it within the confines of the plan. In most cases, the plan is obsolete as soon as it is printed.”

Adaptive project management (APM) is a new way of thinking. It is a dramatic paradigm shift from traditional project management methodology,

such as PMBOK's reductionist theory, control theory and traditional change management. APM immediately adjusts to change. In fact, it thrives on change rather than avoiding it. It utilises just-in-time planning and adapts tools and processes from traditional approaches (Wysocki 2003; Shenhar & Dvir 2007). It thus deviates from linear project management methodologies, such as Waterfall, PMBOK and PRINCE2 that are more predictive schools of thought. Predictive methodologies promote the creation of chronological stages or phases for up-front business planning, detailed documentation and budgeting. Conventional methodologies are rather prescriptive and tie project teams down to a fixed sequence of phases in a project life cycle and offer limited flexibility (Sommer & Loch 2004:1337).

A key practice that will help the project succeed is educating the customer at the onset of the project as to why APM will benefit them (Walters 1986:9). Establishing a clear process for feedback and change management in the contract and with the client at the beginning of the relationship will also help foster a successful relationship; thus ensuring more successful project delivery (Margoluis & Salafsky 1998). The process includes the iterative and incremental delivery of project milestones, the feedback loops that ensure continuous improvement, as well as a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of both the team members and the customer. This constant adjustment means that an APM project's course is constantly corrected to ensure the delivery of maximum value (Wysocki 2003; Ourdey, Xie & AbouRizk 2008:121-125).

APPLYING APM TO MUNICIPAL PLANNING

The guiding question for purposes of this article is: What are the current realities and practices associated with municipal planning and how can adaptive project management planning methodology contribute to make it more effective? In order to successfully answer this question, it is first crucial to provide a brief overview of the current realities and practices associated with municipal planning.

Municipal planning – current realities and practices

Municipalities can be regarded as complex systems that function in a continuously changing environment. The objectives of municipalities, as required by Section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* (Act 108 of 1996), is to provide sustainable services, to promote social development, as well as to promote a safe and healthy environment. Municipal

planning in this broad sense is also an essential component of a municipality's developmental duties, as laid down in Section 153 of the Constitution, in terms of which its administrative, budgeting and planning processes must give priority to the basic needs of the community and promote social and economic development. The Legislature deemed the planning aspects and developmental objectives of Local Government functions so important that they were lumped together and singled out for treatment in Chapter 5 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000* (Act 32 of 2000) (MSA) under the heading "Integrated Development Planning" (IDP). A municipality must undertake developmentally orientated planning to ensure that it strives to achieve the objectives of Local Government. Once adopted by the Council, the IDP is the principal strategic planning instrument that guides and informs all planning and development, as well as all decisions with regard to planning management and development within the municipality.

Accepted municipal planning practices, supported by theorists such as Silberstein and Maser (2000) and Phahlamohlaka (2008), indicate that planning can – and should – be done on various managerial levels or hierarchies, in various time horizons, as well as in various functional fields. As far as the first is concerned, authors differentiate between strategic planning (senior management cadre), tactical planning (middle management) and operational planning. From a functional planning point of view, one could differentiate, for example, between financial planning during the budgeting cycle, human resource planning, urban or city planning, infrastructure development planning, and so forth. There are therefore various layers of planning: the top (strategic) layer can be seen as the Council in conjunction with the IDP Unit, which are responsible for long-term planning (spatial, infrastructure, development, economic, etc.) and the alignment of service delivery projects to the IDP. The middle (tactical) layer can be regarded as the heads of department who use Service Delivery and Budget Implementations Plans (SDBIPs) to operationalise the IDP. It is also typically this layer of functional managers who act as project managers and perform project planning. The bottom (operational) layer consists of functional managers in municipal departments who execute planning for the implementation of the SDBIP.

Planning in South African municipalities is highly cyclical in nature and follow an annual process that is congruent with the Cabinet Lekgotla (January), the State of the Nation Address (February), the Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance (February), the Government's Programme of Action, the Medium Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as well as the Medium Term Planning Framework (MTPF). The cycle is furthermore synchronised with provincial planning where Budget Management Local Government Units (BMLGU) at the respective Provincial Treasuries assist municipalities in planning efforts.

Integrated Development and Community-based Planning

The annual IDP cycle commences in August with the start of the financial year in July. During August three processes are critical: needs assessments of the municipal community, developing community profiles, as well as community meetings to help enrich the pool of process-based information and to legitimise municipal actions. Following these processes, in October municipalities are expected to perform a spatial development and economic development analysis. In November councils refine their strategic priority areas and obtain public input. In December councils formulate sectoral development plans through the work of a technical IDP committee. Once the municipality has identified the best methods to achieve its development objectives, specific projects are identified. For this reason, the IDP should provide the basis for effective project management. Project management should be seen as the “doers” of implementation. Project planning is necessary to ensure that the appropriate capacity and resources are in place to implement the plan.

Section 152, of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996* states, that Local Government should provide “democratic and accountable Government” and encourages the “involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of Local Government”. The *White Paper on Local Government, 1998*, also established the basis for a new developmental Local Government system. This new system is committed to working with communities to meet their social, economic and material needs. Furthermore, the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (MSA) of 2000* includes participation as a central concept of IDP. Chapter 4 of the MSA outlines processes, mechanisms and procedures for community participation. For example, Section 16(1) states that a municipality must “develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative community”. Section 29(b) of the Act discusses the process to be followed in developing an IDP. It specifies that the local community must be consulted on the development needs and priorities of the IDP, as well as participate in its drafting.

Section 16(1) of the MSA introduced Community-Based Planning (CBP). This form of planning has a number of benefits such as planning based on outcomes and not problems. Ultimately, this could lead to more realistic and creative planning. A further advantage is that plans are more targeted and relevant to addressing the priorities of all groups, including the most vulnerable. CBP is an effective way of promoting ward-level plans to promote community action. CBP is based on participation and principles of political democracy. For true participation to take place all stakeholders – Government, communities, business, labour and other sectors of civil society – should be invited to participate.

Although the municipality initiates and coordinates the planning process, to be effective the plan needs to be owned by the ward, represented by the ward committee. Municipalities empower their ward councillors and committees to facilitate a planning process that will “enable each committee to generate a mandate for its term of office”. The MSA further stipulates that a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representation. Kovacs (2009:54) refers to this as “cultural mapping”. This means that a municipality must create conditions for the local community to participate in its affairs – including preparation, implementation and reviewing the IDPs. This requires a thorough and systematic community-based approach to ensure that its voice is heard.

The above reasons for participation are virtually not negotiable to maintain vibrant citizenship and to foster local democracy. However, it places an additional burden on managers who are involved in developmental, IDP-aligned projects and who often lack the time, will and skills to facilitate participation in municipal projects. Time is money in project management and the project manager wants to see to it that milestones are implemented, as per approved schedule. However, community participation could frustrate this through prolonged discussions, political debates, and power games. As a result, councils often shift the blame on project managers if projects are over-schedule or over-budget. In cases where projects are outsourced to third parties, it further places a burden on contract administration, service-level agreements, and payments to service providers. Often, external service providers are unable to execute projects on schedule and to produce the contracted deliverables due to prolonged community consultative processes.

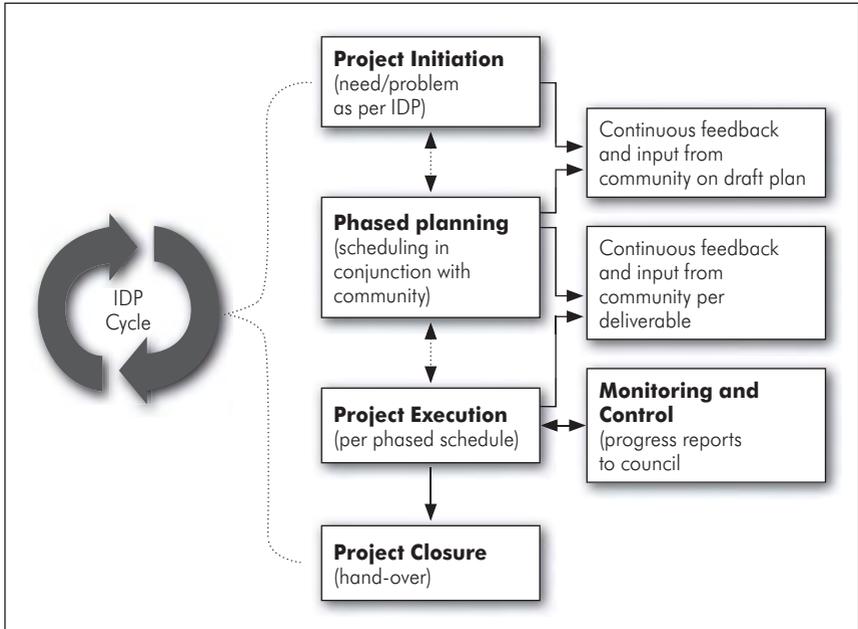
Feedback is important, so that the community is kept up to date with progress and challenges. CBP requires continuous feedback and interaction, so that everyone is updated on the progress and, if necessary, to find solutions to challenges. Feedback is important at all stages:

- The pre-planning phase – to increase community awareness and to elicit questions and suggested improvements, interest and participation.
- Community meetings – to set and agree on priorities and project deliverables.
- Regular public meetings – to report back and monitor implementation.

It can be argued that this feedback process can only be effectively incorporated into the life cycle of projects if APM principles are applied. Figure 2 below illustrates how APM life cycles could be incorporated into municipal planning cycles.

During the public participation processes of the IDP, and particularly during Phase 3 (Projects), project input should as far as possible be aligned with initiatives such as community and stakeholder meetings, surveys and opinion

Figure 2: Adaptive project life cycle for municipal planning



polls, the IDP Representative Forum, as well as public debates. To obtain the necessary detail, project formulating task teams design project proposals and draft sector plans. In applying adaptive project principles, a municipality should keep these consultative mechanisms active throughout a project's entire life cycle to continuously gauge opinions and perceptions. Ultimately, the aforementioned should not be restricted to the appropriate phases of the IDP cycle.

POTENTIAL VALUE OF APM IN MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Based on the *State of Local Government Report* (Cogta 2009:34-36), it seems that most municipalities are relatively effective at establishing and executing processes during the project selection and approval phase of annual planning. This phase determines which projects are approved, when they are sequenced and the service delivery outcomes that are expected to be realised. Where many municipalities fail, however, is that they seldom revisit those formative processes and decisions unless fundamental changes occur.

What is unique about the APM approach is that, rather than merely continuing with developing the next milestone of the project, an adaptive team

will bring the service/product-to-date to the community as project beneficiary for feedback. Adaptive teams seek their customer's acceptance of the deliverable after an iteration of development is concluded. It could be argued that because the APM-approach is so customer-centric, the project team should seek their acceptance on a regular basis. This will in all likelihood advance political acceptance and the project's overall legitimacy. With adequate governance structures and participation mechanisms the community could indicate that something is wrong, which could enable proactive adjustments to the original plan.

It should be noted that each type of municipal project has its own set of management challenges. Some of the potential challenges associated with the utilisation of APM in municipal planning may include the following:

- *Organisational inertia*: Hannan and Freeman (1989:86) suggest that organisational inertia constrains adaptation (i.e. to move from more conventional to more adaptive project planning practices), and that early learning during the founding period is a cause for inertia. Research by Beyer *et al.* (1997:718) further suggests that managers' functional backgrounds may also lead to selective imperception – that is, managers' failure to perceive stimuli related to areas other than their areas of expertise. Therefore, project managers may ignore other sources and types of information they receive, and they may only use information relevant to their project.
- *Consultant-driven municipal projects*: Project team must be responsible for performing effective adaptive management. Consultants may not appreciate local conditions. As a result, the project may not fit local conditions.
- *Municipal legitimacy*: Distrust between the community and the municipality may negatively impact on APM, since input cannot adequately be obtained.
- *Consultative processes*: A lack of adequate mechanisms to facilitate community feedback during project implementation to ensure continuous interaction, testing of assumptions, etc. may seriously influence the APM's success. There are also significant time and budget implications associated with continuous consultation, which could delay project delivery. APM requires an investment of money, resources, and especially project time. It is expensive to hold community meetings.
- *Low literacy rate of communities*: Especially in rural areas the low literacy could further hamper the quality of community input to projects. They may not have access to all the planning information and there may also be unintended consequences of certain demands and wishes. Political factions within communities who have conflicting demands may further complicate things
- *Guilt of indecisiveness*: Municipalities expect project managers to make decisions – even if they do not have the information required to make these

decisions. Instead of collecting information and analysing data, which may give the appearance of indecisiveness, project managers make irreversible decisions on an intuitive level.

CONCLUSION

APM is based on the admission that there are various unknown variables at the start of a project. Even more certain aspects are subject to revision as the project is implemented. APM adds value by providing a framework for project managers to utilise when processes are not stable; when outcomes cannot be predicted within sufficient tolerance; and situations where more conventional planning techniques that rely on predictability are not effective. Due to the dynamic nature of municipal projects, and to adhere to statutory obligations for participation, it is vital that communities review project plans – even when projects are well underway. Bad decisions at this level (or the failure to make a decision) can have profound financial and political implications for the municipality's performance and ultimately, much needed service delivery.

Back to the title of this article: Could APM add value to current more conventional municipal planning practices? The correct answer would probably be a qualified "yes". It must be recognised that the capacity of adaptive management to resolve value-based (socio-political) conflicts might not prove to be more effective than traditional planning approaches. It must first be tested in practice. However, based on the theoretical orientation one could deduce that it will at least facilitate a change in mindset. This will help create a more realistic project management environment and a more forgiving attitude towards project failures due to unpredictable variables and political dynamics. It could further add value by incorporating the customer (community) in developmental IDP-projects, but a municipality needs to address potential challenges associated with it. In applying it in a municipal environment, it is recommended that project managers sensitise all stakeholders with regard to the potential benefits associated with APM. Hereafter, it is recommended that an evolutionary, incremental or trial-and-error model for implementation should be followed.

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The evolution of leadership competencies for the South African public sector

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ABSTRACT

The current world of the public sector senior manager/leader is complex. The rapid pace of globalisation, democratisation, change and public sector modernisation has forced many public sector organisations to develop competency frameworks for their senior managers/leaders in order to promote effective governance. Many countries, especially those in the western world, have favoured a move towards developing a senior management competency framework for the public sector, which was linked to a performance management framework. A competency approach to understanding leadership has to move from an outmoded thinking of public sector leadership as a compliance-driven environment, to one that promotes a call for a vision, the ability to identify and seize opportunities, anticipate crises and cope with environmental constraints. This article aims to outline the various definitions linked to the term “competency framework”. Furthermore, it provides an overview of the international experience surrounding competency frameworks and outlines the competency framework that informs leadership development in the South African public sector, with a specific focus on the senior management service.

INTRODUCTION

Effective leaders are essential for the success of public sector organisations. With the ever-evolving global environment, senior leaders in Government organisations need to possess the relevant competencies to manage these organisations in order to promote effective and efficient service delivery.

Notably, a well-planned leadership competency framework promotes professionalism and effectiveness within public sector organisations (Horton 2000:25; Bhatta 2001:194 and Charih *et al.* 2007:25).

The post-1994 South African public sector realised that the challenges of globalisation and rapid change required leaders who could shape the direction and influence the outcomes of public sector organisations. In addition, these leaders had to garner the support of the citizenry by promoting effective public organisations that could deliver on the mandate of the Government of the day. However, the May 2000 Baskin Report (in Department of Public Service and Administration 2005) indicated that all was not well in the senior echelons of Government. Among the challenges highlighted in the report was poor performance of senior managers who acted as leaders, which ultimately resulted in poor service delivery. A key recommendation of the report was that there was a need for a competency-based employment framework for senior managers who fulfilled leadership roles. As a result of the leadership challenges, this article will focus on the evolution of a leadership competency framework for the South African public sector, and its relevance to enhance organisational performance.

The article aims to find out:

- What is the state of current research in developing leadership competency frameworks internationally?
- What is the current South African reality?
- What is the legal framework for the South African public sector competency model?
- What are the parameters of the Strategic Capability and Leadership competency for the Senior Management Service (SMS)?

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Leadership as a construct has been diligently studied since the beginning of civilisation. This is evident when one reviews the literature that is available on the subject. Kanji and Moura (2001:701) indicate the frustration of defining the term leadership, by suggesting that there are “almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are researchers who have attempted to define the concept”. Leadership, according to Hellriegel *et al.* (2010:295) involves “influencing others to act towards the attainment of a goal. It is based on interpersonal relationships, not administrative activities and directives.” A leader has to be influential and effective. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) (2003 and 2005) lists the following four key elements that are central to effective leadership: personal character, emotional intelligence, social intelligence and cultural intelligence. For the purpose of this article, a leader will be one who has the requisite competencies to influence the behaviour of others.

Management involves the activities of planning, organising, leading and controlling organisations (Hellriegel *et al.* 2010:9). The DPSA (2005) views management as roles played in creating suitable conditions for organisational and individual performance. The DPSA (2005) also points out that, “effective managers are usually influential leaders in equivalent roles.”

OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

From a historical point of view, the concept of “competency” could be traced to early medieval guilds in which “apprentices learned skills by working with a master and were awarded credentials when they reached standards of workmanship associated with and set by the trade” (Horton in Schwella and Rossouw 2005:763). The 1980s saw a rapid move towards managerial competence in both the private and public sector reform and development, as a result of the declining competitiveness in the United States. This resulted in the American Management Movement commissioning McBer Associates to undertake research on the subject and to recommend and identify the *attributes* and features of what constituted a “competent manager” (Horton 2000:308; Charih, Bourgalt, Maltais and Rouillard 2007:25). The McBer Group, whose key consultant was Richard Boyatzis (many now know him as the foremost academic in competency management), concluded that, “there was no single factor, but a range of factors that differentiated successful from unsuccessful managers” (Horton 2000:308). The term *attributes* was summarily replaced by “competency” or “competencies”, which is the plural. The term, as described by Boyatzis (1982) includes “...an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to effective or superior performance in a job”. The work of Boyatzis further concluded that there were nineteen generic competencies that outstanding managers possessed. However, not all managerial jobs require all nineteen competencies, and some may require even more than the nineteen competencies.

With the reforms of the New Public Management (NPM) movement of the 1980s and its business-like approach to public sector reform, the United States and the United Kingdom (UK) have been vigorously promoting the development of skills and competencies (Charih *et al.* 2007:25; Horton 2000:308 and Bhatta 2001:194-5). These skill sets or competencies were central to running public sector organisations like business units (Carmeli 2006:156). As it was accompanied by rapid globalisation, the NPM reforms have set the agenda for a new type of leader in order to meet these challenges (World Public Sector Report 2001:106-7). The type of senior manager who could provide leadership and who is required

to drive the changes proposed by globalisation and public sector reform is encapsulated in the 2003 Silguy Report. Commissioned by Ecole Nationale d'Administration de France (ENA), the report set out to identify the competencies required by public sector senior managers and leaders. This report indicated that, besides the public administration traditional abilities, there was a need for senior public sector managers/leaders to search for new skills, such as managing change, human resources, multi-lateral negotiations and risk (Charih *et al.* 2007:25). This is further strengthened by the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) Technical Group Report of 2001, which identified leadership development and the formulation of a leadership competency framework as a critical challenge for Commonwealth countries – especially those in Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific (Draper 2002:4).

WHAT ARE COMPETENCIES?

A diverse review of literature indicates the following as some of the popular definitions of the term “competency”. Woodruffe (in Du Gay, Salaman and Rees 2005:49) defines competency as a “dimension of overt, manifest behaviour that allows a person to perform competently”. Horton (2000:354) sees the term as involving and identifying the “competencies that distinguish high performers from average performers in all areas of organisational activities”. Hirsh & Strebler (in Winterton and Winterton 1999:25) view competency as the “context of a particular job and the organisation in which it exists”; they go on to add that, “competencies are associated with superior performance”. Finally, Charlton (1993:35) defines competence as “the exhibition of specific behaviour and attitudes being clearly demonstrated and therefore measurable, and is distinguishable from the inherent potential to perform”. From the above definitions it emerges that the concept of “competence” has the following commonalities and characteristics, namely:

- It is related to performance.
- It distinguishes “average” from “high” or “superior” performers.
- It has an impact on organisational effectiveness.
- It involves behaviour/attributes that can be measured.
- It is skills-based.

From the above discussion it is clear that the term “competence” is open to diverse interpretations. Winterton (in Boxall *et al.* 2007:334) summarises the challenges surrounding the conceptual clarification and definition of the term, by concluding that, “there is such confusion surrounding the concept that it is impossible to identify or impute a coherent theory or to arrive at a definition

capable of accommodating and reconciling all the different ways that the term is used". However, it is clear that the term competence focuses on adequate qualifications, or capability and specific knowledge and skills to perform a task according to a set of standards.

It must be pointed out that adopting a competency framework cannot be seen as a solution to the leadership dilemma. It has to be understood in conjunction with the organisation's culture, internal strategy and processes. In addition, it must be noted that the sole implementation of a competency framework to cure management ills within public organisations will not achieve the desired results. After all, capable managers or senior leaders are the glue that holds organisations together.

Therefore, effective leadership competencies can include the ability to

- locate and interpret relevant information from written, electronic and human resources and to apply it to solve complex, multi-dimensional problems using problem analysis skills, synthesis and systemic thinking;
- communicate effectively with diverse groups;
- apply scientific, mathematical and technological thinking;
- to work effectively in multi-faceted teams;
- be effective in time management;
- manage tasks within one's own personal backdrop of career, family and community life (Meyer in Schwella and Rossouw 2005:763).

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCY MOVEMENTS – AN OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP

The development of leadership competency frameworks became central to government thinking in the 1980s. To date, leadership competencies are one of the many central themes in modern Public Service development. The competency approach is seen as a strategic and integrated approach to leadership development. This section will provide an overview of the research undertaken to develop leadership competency frameworks in selected countries. An extensive overview of literature dealing with a leadership competency framework for senior public sector leaders/managers revealed only a few articles and conference proceedings. This view is supported by research undertaken by Charih *et al.* (2007:26).

The application of a public sector senior management leadership competency framework was first adopted in the United States (Bhatta 2001). Hereafter gained currency in the UK, New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands. A survey of the literature also indicates that the African continent was quick to

learn from their European counterparts the importance of identifying competent senior managers/ leaders, as in the case of Tanzania and later South Africa.

The United States (US)

The United States (US) was the first country to develop a Senior Executive Service (SES) in 1978 under the Presidency of Jimmy Carter (Hood and Lodge 2004:324). The type of competencies targeted for the SES was the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) that were used not only to select new members into the SES, but also formed part of the executive and management development curriculum to train SES members. The Leadership Effectiveness Framework consisted of 22 competencies, which was obtained from studies undertaken by the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), as well as best practices from both the public and private sector organisations (Bhatta 2001). The OPM is of the view that the ECQs are essential for building a federal corporate culture that is service oriented and customer focused. The ECQs are also used to set entry standards for selection into the SES, for performance management and entry into executive leadership development positions. The executive core qualifications that were relevant in the United States SES in 1997 are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Executive Core Qualifications: United States in 1997

ECQ	ASSOCIATED LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY
Leading change	Continual learning, creativity/innovation, external awareness, flexibility, strategic thinking and vision
Leading people	Conflict management, cultural awareness, integrity/ honesty and team-building
Results-driven	Accountability, customer service, entrepreneurship, problem-solving and technical ability
Business acumen	Financial, human resources and technology management
Building coalitions and communication	Influencing and negotiating, interpersonal skills, verbal communication, partnership, political savvy and written communication

Source: Adapted Bhatta 2001

Research undertaken by Charih *et al.* (2007:28) indicates that senior managers in the US were expected to develop the following core competencies needed in the much more complex environment of the new millennium. These competencies are listed below:

- Adaptability to face new challenges and to have skills that both fit the private and public sectors.
- Negotiation skills with agencies, the private sector, interest groups and the media.
- Senior manager's performance ability to retain talented recruits, manage change and obtain good results.
- Leadership ability to interact with the community, employees and peers, as well as the ability to work effectively in teams.
- Knowledge management, the ability to manage information and security analysis.
- Personnel management and the ability to identify candidates for the public service.
- The ability to work in complex environments.

The post-911 attacks on American soil placed further stress on developing a competent, knowledge-based senior Government executive who could manage and promote a safe environment for all Americans.

New Zealand

New Zealand was one of the few countries that had taken public sector reforms the furthest in the 1980s (Bhatta 2001:198). One of the reform outcomes was the role competency played in managing the performance of various Government departments' chief executives. Given the challenges of globalisation and modernisation, the New Zealand Government decided to upgrade the competencies of senior managers. The upgraded competency framework for New Zealand includes the following competency clusters that is modeled on the Lominger Competency Framework, and is used by the State Services Commission (2009: internet source accessed 14/09/2010).

These include

- Strategic skills.
- Operating skills.
- Courage.
- Energy and drive.
- Personal and interpersonal skills.
- Organisational positioning skills.
- Acting with honour and integrity.

Australia

The Senior Executive Service (SES) was created in Australia in 1984 under the auspices of the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission (PS&MPC). To further strengthen the SES a new Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework (SELCF) was introduced in 1999 to replace the SES selection criteria. The SELCF sought the following five competencies for senior managers/leaders (Bhatta 2001):

- Shaping strategic thinking.
- Achieving results.
- Cultivating a productive working relationship.
- Exemplifying personal drive and integrity.
- Communicating with influence.

With the role of government being redefined – not only in Australia, but also globally – it became apparent that Australia’s senior Government managers needed to develop the following competencies (Charih *et al.* 2007:32):

- Policy advice and development as key policy advisers.
- To master the public management context.
- Global governance and leadership management networks.
- Interpersonal relationship development.
- Familiarity with the external world.

The Netherlands

The Dutch Senior Public Service (SPS) was established in 1995. It revolved around a set of 28 competencies that were grouped into seven clusters (Hoogendam and Vandermeulen in Bhatta 2000:199). The seven leadership competency clusters are as follows:

- Coherent governance.
- Problem-solving.
- Interpersonal behaviour.
- Operational effectiveness.
- Impact.
- Resilience.
- Governance sensitivity.

The United Kingdom (UK)

Hood and Lodge (2004:321) are of the opinion that the competency model for Senior Civil Servants (SCS) in the UK was a knee-jerk reaction to the boom

identified in the private sector competency movement. The Thatcher-led Government, and in particular its *Operation Next Step*, led to the transformation agenda for senior executives to become citizen-focused (Hood and Lodge 2004; Bhatta 2001; Metcalf in Charih *et al.* 2007:28).

The SCS committed itself to core competency. Its fundamental basis was to develop management adherence, as stipulated in the 1999 *Modernising Government White Paper*. Notably, the SCS focused greatly on leadership development and the Wilson Report (1999), which set out the management reform agenda. The aim of the UK SCS leadership competency framework was to develop a leadership profile for each promising candidate, so that individual-specific training and development could take place. It included the following leadership competencies:

- Giving purpose and direction.
- Making a personal impact.
- Getting the best from people.
- Learning and improving.
- Thinking strategically.
- Focusing on delivery outcomes.

The further modernisation of the SCS included senior public sector leaders having to develop the following additional competencies:

- Propose a goal and direction (create a vision).
- Learn and improve.
- Emphasis on service delivery (Charih *et al.* 2007:29).

The United Republic of Tanzania

The Government of Tanzania undertook studies to develop a leadership competency framework for senior public servants in order to promote a senior, responsive cadre of public servants who could deliver on the Millennium Development Goals, and further improve the *status quo* of the Tanzanian people (Nassor: unpublished conference proceedings). The leadership competency framework was homegrown, but borrowed from the best-practice of Australia, the US, the UK, Canada and New Zealand. The Tanzanian model of the leadership competency framework included 24 leadership competencies. These competencies were modeled into four main themes and had eight strands or clusters. These are as follows:

- Communicate ideas clearly.
- Encourage others' abilities.
- Build effective teams.
- Demonstrate personal mastery.

- Assess client’s needs.
- Promote continuous innovation.
- Set direction.
- Create a shared vision.

The Tanzanian Public Service leadership competency model is being used to recruit and promote leadership based on merit. It encourages exemplary leadership and promotes a learning public service that is committed to service delivery.

It is evident that the Tanzanian model was not significantly different from the model used in the western world. After all, the challenges senior public sector leaders faced are derived from the globalised environment. In addition, the competency framework for each of the countries above indicates a universal validity for both public and private sector leadership – but most of the strategic competencies are specific to public sector leaders. The success of a competency model is dependent upon ownership of the process by both political and administrative leaders.

The table below (Table 2) indicates some of the future competencies that are required by senior public sector managers in the western world.

Table 2: Future Competencies of Senior Managers

	USA	UK	AUSTRALIA	FRANCE	CANADA
COMPETENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Ability to negotiate • Evaluation and performance of managers • Leadership/ management of knowledge • Personnel evaluation • Management of networks and partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose a goal/ direction of future • Have personal impact • Think strategically • Get best out of people • Learn and improve • Emphasis on service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be principal policy advisor • Master public/ private management • Results-centered • Manage contracts/ networks • Adapted leadership/ global vision • Interpersonal relationships • External relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt • Negotiate • Evaluate performance • Charisma • Manage knowledge • Manage HR • Manage networks • Innovation • Continued learning • Manage projects • Communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual competencies: cognitive, vision • Management competencies: taking action, teamwork • Human relations competencies: interpersonal communication • Personal qualities: vitality, ethics, flexibility, confidence

Source Charih et al. 2007

Carmeli (2006) focuses on managerial competency in great detail. The author contends that, “the attributes of a management team may satisfy the conditions for achieving and maintaining competitive advantage”. After surveying a vast array of literature, Carmeli (2006:159) identified the following typologies of managerial leadership competencies. The first type includes administrative competencies or skills that were outlined by Katz in Carmeli (2006:157). The administrative skills rest on technical, conceptual and human skills, with the latter being considered as the most important. The second type focuses on managerial skills, as identified by Christensen, Andrews and Bower (in Carmeli 2006). Also referred to as organisational leadership skills, these skills include those of a taskmaster, mediator, motivator and focus on the sensitivity and administrative aspects of the skill. In addition, personal leaders need to be persuasive and articulate if they wish to get the best out of followers. The third type is referred to as the psychometric properties of managerial skills, as surveyed by Shipper in Carmeli (2006:159). These include communication, systematic work planning, expertise, feedback and the ability to recognise good performance.

In addition to the authors listed in the paragraphs above, Beinecke (2009:9) lists the following competencies as central to 21st century leaders:

- Must be knowledge synthesisers.
- Need to be creative.
- Must be able to create a vision, and get others to buy into the vision.
- Need to foster and facilitate collaboration.
- Must possess entrepreneurial ability.
- Must be systems thinkers.
- Must set priorities.
- Must build teams and form coalitions.
- Must be innovative, and masters of management techniques.
- Act as colleague, friend and humanitarian in the organisation.

Beinecke (2009) is quick to point-out that one rarely finds such an individual. However, managers/leaders could surround themselves with a team that shares the complementary competencies. The following section will analyse the South African Public Service competency framework.

Upon launching the Presidential Strategic Leadership Development Programme for the South African Public Service in July 2000, former President, Thabo Mbeki, envisaged a professional approach to leadership. This included a senior management leadership that had functional competence at its core (Draper 2002:7). The following section will examine the development of a leadership competency framework for the South African Public Service.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR SOUTH AFRICA

A survey of the literature indicates that not much has been written on the competency framework for senior managerial leadership in South Africa. The competence approach was initially used by the South African Board for Personnel Practice, who adopted the “Generic Competency Model for Human Resource Practitioners” (Sacht *et al.* in Charlton 1993:34). This model was adopted from the one used by the American Society for Training and Development and focused on a theoretical approach to appraising training. This involved using a competence questionnaire to ascertain competency training needs. In South Africa, competency models were used primarily in the private sector. Research published by Charlton (1993) indicates that leaders need to possess the following generic competencies in order to be effective. Leaders need to:

- capture people’s attention through inspiring a future vision;
- be effective communicators; and
- manage “the self”.

The post-1994 South African public sector faced many challenges. This included the challenge to transform the public sector as a whole to deliver on the State’s developmental goals and to create a “more competent public administration” (Trevor Manuel in McLennan and Orkin 2009:1028). Government believed it was paramount to transform the public sector into one that was responsive to citizens’ needs. Former Minister of Public Service and Administration, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, summed-up the leadership challenge that the South African Public Service faced as follows: “The talent search for contributing leaders who are able to distribute their primal leadership throughout the Public Service demands a steady supply of experienced knowledge workers with competencies” (DPSA: Leadership Development Strategic Management Framework (LDSMF) 2005: Foreword).

The May 2000 Baskin Report focused primarily on the state of Public Service senior managers and the ensuing debates around the challenges that the senior echelons of the Public Service face. This resulted in the establishment of the Senior Management Service (SMS). Some of the key findings of the report and related discussions centered on the following issues:

- A high turnover rate of professionals and managers.
- Poor levels of performance and skills among senior staff, which resulted in poor service delivery.

- Under-developed performance assessment systems, despite introducing performance agreements.
- Lack of training and development programmes.
- The need for a competency-based employment framework was required for senior managers.
- A sustainable pool of future managers was needed.
- A large concentration of managers (approximately 60%) was located at the national level of Government.

The functionality of the SMS was based on eleven performance criteria (competencies), which included:

- Strategic capability and leadership.
- Performance and project management.
- Financial management.
- Change management.
- Knowledge management.
- Service delivery innovation.
- Problem-solving and analysis.
- People management and empowerment.
- Client orientation and customer focus.
- Communication.
- Honesty and integrity (DPSA: SMS 2003).

This article will focus on the first performance criterion, namely strategic capability and leadership, as encapsulated in the SMS Resource Pack: Part Two, entitled *The Leadership Development Management Strategic Framework for the SMS* (LDSMF 2005). This criterion is of importance to this article, as the competency framework for the SMS resides in this strategic framework. The Leadership Development Management Strategic Framework (LDSMF) defines competencies, *inter alia*, as “skills, knowledge and attributes which enable the person to do the job”. The LDSMF core competencies outline the context of what SMS members need to demonstrate in terms of their leadership and managerial roles from a strategic, globally competitive vantage point. The five core competencies of senior management leadership included in the LDSMF are:

- Strategic capability and leadership.
- Financial management.
- People management and empowerment.
- Change management.
- Performance and project management.

THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE LDSMF IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The legal and policy framework listed below provides an impetus to the formation of the LDSMF in South Africa.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996

Section 195 (1)(h) of the Constitution stipulates that, “good human resource management and career-development practices, to maximise (stet) human potential, must be cultivated”. In order to maximise human potential it is important for Government to strengthen its senior management capacity and to professionalise the Public Service. This can be achieved through training and development, as well as by adopting a competency framework to enhance the capacity of senior *managers*.

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997

The vision of this *White Paper* is that human resource management in the “Public Service will result in [a] diverse competent and well-managed workforce; capable of and committed to delivering high quality services to the people of South Africa”. In addition, the *White Paper* sets out a human resource management strategy, which includes “clearly articulated objectives, aligned to the organisation’s strategic and operational goals”.

The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education of 1997

This *White Paper* provides a framework for public service training and education that is appropriate, adequate and accessible, and that meets the current and future requirements of public servants, the Public Service and the public.

National Skills Development Strategy of 2005

The mission of The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is to contribute to sustainable development through skills growth, development and equity of skills development institutions, by aligning their work and resources to the skills needed for the effective delivery and implementation (of services)., Government and its social partners assess the contribution of the NSDS institutions and allocate resources to the nationally agreed strategies for growth, development and equity.

Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service of 2009

The Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy for South Africa serves to maximise South African citizens' potential, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as working productively and competently to achieve better standard of living for all. Furthermore, the strategy also aims to establish an operational plan in conjunction with the necessary institutional arrangements to achieve that better life for all.

Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) stemmed from the Millennium Declaration of 2000. The MDGs are those goals that countries all over the world should strive for. They represent the basic right that every individual should enjoy. These include freedom from extreme poverty and hunger, quality education, productive and decent employment, good health and shelter, women's right to give birth without risking their lives, a world where environmental sustainability is a priority, as well as women and men living in equality. As a consequence of these goals, world leaders have pledged a global development partnership to achieve these universal goals. For example, the role of women in sub-Saharan Africa and the fight against the scourge of HIV/Aids are some of the great challenges that the region face. Consequently, a cadre of competent leaders is central to addressing the challenges that inform the MDGs.

The policy and legislative framework summarised above underpins the formation of the LDSMF for the SMS.

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION (OBE) AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO A COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR THE SMS

Erasmus *et al.* (2005:326) define outcomes as "demonstrations of competence, what learners can do and what they know – in settings that embody a variety of challenges". Outcomes-based education was a shift in educational policy by the post-1994 Government in South Africa. The focus on OBE was on outputs, as opposed to inputs in the former system. Learning outcomes are experiential, based on performance and should be clearly demonstrated. The educational authorities are currently reviewing the concept of OBE.

The learning paradigm for public officials dovetails into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a framework that promotes lifelong learning,

or what the LDSMF (2003) refers to as “continuous learning”. The learning outcomes for public officials have been formulated as part of the unit standards for Public Administration and Management by Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs), a process that is overseen by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (Wessels in Erasmus *et al.* 2005:327). The *White Paper on Public Service Training and Education*, 1997 suggests the following public service competencies, as outlined in Table 3 below.

In order to create a systematic model for the Public Service in particular and the public sector as a whole, the first aim should be to develop public officials professionally, and secondly, in terms of OBE, to develop public officials into lifelong learners. One of the methods that can be used to develop a systematic approach to learning is through a competency model (Erasmus *et al.* 2005:331 and the LDSMF for the SMS 2003). The model consists of the following phases for the SMS.

Phase 1 – The Competency Modeling Phase

Competency Name: The name used to identify the senior management service’s behaviour or groupings of behaviours. An example could be strategic capability and leadership or financial management.

Competency Definition: General description of the behaviour and activities to be demonstrated to achieve the competence level.

Proficiency Level: Description of the degree to which a senior manager has mastered the criteria of a competency. It must be measurable and observable.

Phase 2 – The Learning Phase

This phase involves the development of learning programmes to achieve the stated objectives. The learning phase could include various institutions such as the Public Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA), which could identify learnerships for senior managers. Institutions such as the Public Administration leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) could also be involved in the training and development of senior managers.

Phase 3 – The Learning Assessment Phase

This phase involves providing feedback after a learning assessment has taken place. Marzano *et al.* (in Erasmus *et al.* 2005:340) conclude that assessment is done “by means of tasks and situations in which learners are given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and to thoughtfully apply knowledge, skills and habits of mind in a variety of contexts”.

Table 3: Public Service Competencies

Characteristic	Frontline	Supervisor	Middle Manager	Director	Chief Director	Deputy Director-General
Basic Literacy (8), Numeracy, and Communication Skills (5)	Required	Required	Assumed	Assumed	Assumed	Assumed
Judgment, Integrity, Self-confidence, Flexibility, Initiative, Perseverance, Creativity (1 & 3)	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Leadership (2)	Teamwork	Teamwork and motivating	Providing challenge	Employee development	Organisational Influence	Creating vision and values
Thinking Skills (1, 4 & 7)	Empowered to innovate where necessary	Operational problem-solving	Problem formulation and anticipation	Integration	Strategic perspective	Extracting meaning
Organisational Awareness (10)	Being part of the culture and purpose	Same, plus know how to use the system	Same, plus develop linkages	Organisational know-how	Building support	Political acumen
Interpersonal Relations (2)	Supportive	Same, plus sensitivity	Same, plus handling group situations	Managing sensitive interpersonal situations	Diplomacy	Interpersonal versatility
Communication (5)	Required	Required	Briefing	High-impact communication	Strategic communication	Instilling communication
Action Management (3, 9 & 6)	Best results come from team work	Co-ordination	Planning	Direction/delegation	Orchestration action	Sustaining
Knowledge (8)	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required

*[Numbers indicate SAQA outcomes]

Competency Name	The name used to identify the senior management service's behaviour or groupings of behaviours. An example could be strategic capability and leadership or financial management.
Competency Definition	General description of the behaviour and activities to be demonstrated to achieve the competence level.
Proficiency Level	Description of the degree to which a senior manager has mastered the criteria of a competency. It must be measurable and observable.

Source: Erasmus *et al.*, 2005

THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE – LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK – AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGIC CAPABILITY AND LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY

The following competencies are regarded as critical for the performance of the SMS:

- Strategic capability and leadership.
- Programme and project management.
- Financial management.
- Change management.
- Knowledge management.
- Service delivery innovation.
- Problem solving and analysis.
- People management and empowerment.
- Client orientation and customer focus.
- Communication.
- Honesty and integrity.

These initial SMS 11 competencies have been streamlined into five core competencies and five process competencies (SMS Handbook 2003 & LDSMF 2005). According to the LDSMF for the SMS (2005:43), core competencies are a representation of the content of what needs to be done (demonstrated) by the SMS members in their roles and functions. The process competency is the manner in which the function is to be performed, in essence “the how?”. Table 4 distinguishes between “core” and “process” competencies.

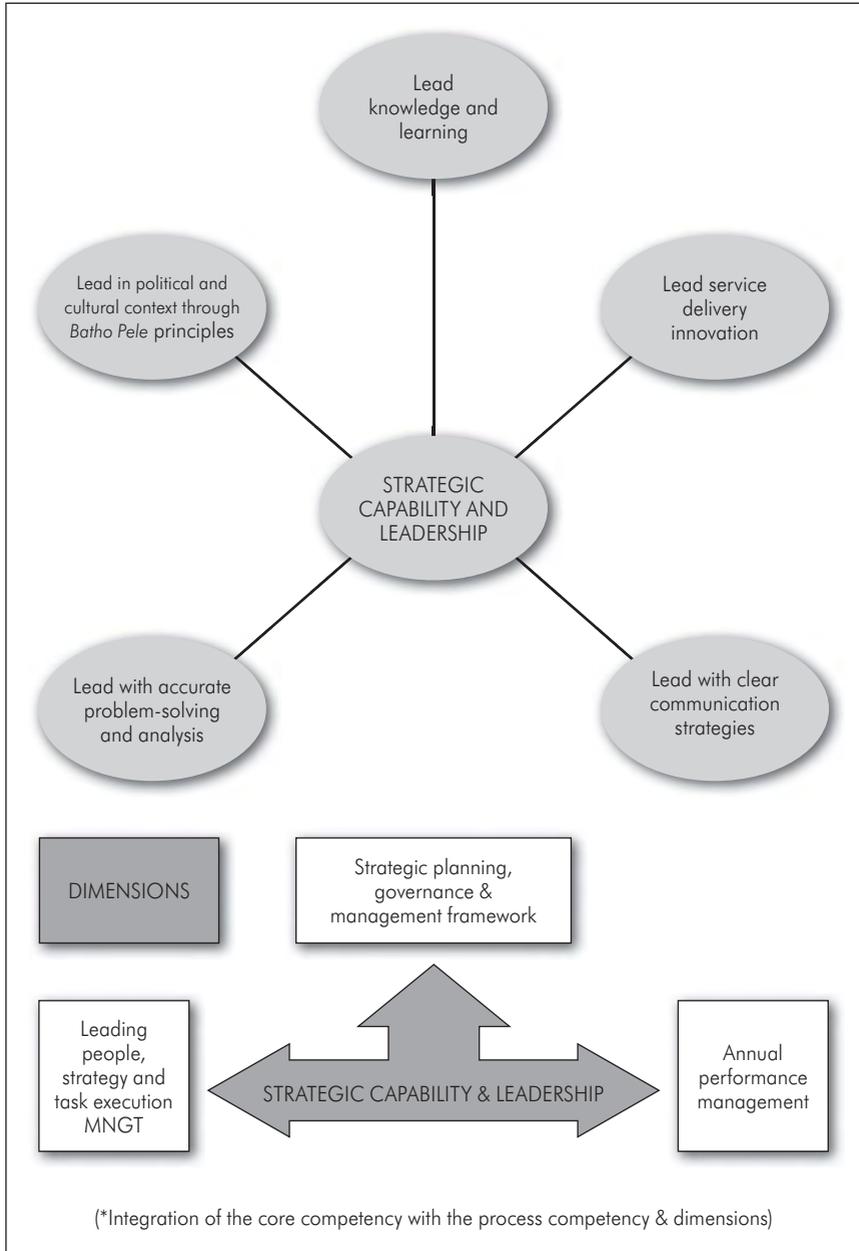
Table 4: SMS competencies

Core Competencies	Process Competencies
1 Strategic capability and leadership	1 Service delivery innovation
2 People management and empowerment	2 Knowledge and information management
3 Project and programme management	3 Problem solving and analysis
4 Financial management	4 Communication
5 Change management	5 Client orientation and customer focus

Source: LDSMF 2005

This article examines the core competency of Strategic Capability and Leadership. The SMS Handbook (2003) defines this competency as being

Figure 1: Core Competency 1: Strategic Capability & Leadership



Source: Adapted from LDSMF Handbook 2005

able to “provide a vision, set the direction for the organisation and inspire others in order to deliver on the organisational mandate”. Figure 1 illustrates this competency. It also highlights the integration of the core and process competencies and its various dimensions.

A competency approach supports strategic leadership and senior managers’ capability (Bhatta 2001; Draper 2002; Morden 1997; Hood & Lodge 2004). Senior managers in the Public Service have to “drive the vision, strategy and lead” subordinates to execute Government’s mandate (LDSMF for the SMS 2005:44). Minnaar and Bekker (2005:119) add that the first step in the strategic management process relates to defining the core functions of the organisation (for Government that would be its legislative mandate). The mandate leads to Government institutions formulating a vision (rationale for the organisation’s existence) and a mission (expression of what the organisation wants to achieve and the related time-frames) statement. An analysis of the management environment takes place in order to draw-up strategies. A strategy consists of the following elements: action plans, goals and objectives that are necessary to achieve the organisation’s objectives. Furthermore, the organization needs the correct infrastructure and resources to obtain its strategic goals (Minnaar and Bekker (2005:123).

The discussion below focuses on the sub-components of the competency, as indicated in Figure 1.

Lead, knowledge and learning

According to Draper (2002:1), one of the key challenges that modern public organisations face is the need to create “organisations”. He goes on to indicate that developing countries need to undertake an analysis of senior managers’ training needs. One of the key debates centers on importance of transforming public organisations. It has been suggested that a method to spearhead the transformation is by creating learning organisations. In essence, leaders must be learners, and they must be receptive to new information and feedback. Leaders need to learn to manage in the information age. Hood and Lodge (2004:320) indicate that the senior management service in the United Kingdom uses the knowledge and learning competency to promote good governance. Aucoin (2003:4) speaks of senior managers’ to learn quickly – especially in a changing world.

Lead service delivery innovation

Draper (2002:1) reports that one of the most notable leadership challenges CAPAM members face is the need for public services to achieve better-

integrated citizen-focused service delivery. There is a dire need for a responsive senior management service to deliver quality services through innovation.

Lead with clear communication strategy

According to Bhatta (2001), the American SES competency stressed the importance of communication. In addition, countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the UK place a premium on effective communication skills for senior managers. According to Quinn *et al.* (2003:38), effective managers need to possess good communication skills. The authors point out that, poor communication skills can result in “both interpersonal and organisational problems”. Quinn *et al.* (2003) lists the following as rules for effective communication by managers:

- Be clear on who the receiver (of the message) is.
- Know what your objective is.
- Analyse the climate.
- Review the message in your head before you say it.
- Communicate using words and terms that are familiar to the other person.
- If the receiver seems not to understand, clarify the message.
- If the response is seemingly critical, do not react defensively.

The World Public Sector Report: Globalisation and the State (2001:107) and Aucoin (2003:11) summarise the need for effective communication, by calling for clarity of both verbal and written expression, sound knowledge of the language and the ability to tailor it according to a specific style and in tone.

Lead Political and cultural context through Batho Pele principles

The interface between senior managers and political office-bearers is significant. If service delivery is to be promoted, synergy is required in this interface. The political office-bearer is accountable to the citizenry, while the senior manager as a leader is accountable to the political office-bearer through a formal employment contract.

Schein (in Charlton 1999:66) speaks of the interdependence between leadership and organisational culture. The author concludes that leadership influences and is influenced by the organisation’s “myths, rules, folklore, values, policies, attitudes and behaviour which are both implicit and explicit”. Hence, the cultural context of leadership cannot be over-emphasised.

The *Batho Pele* principles of 1997 (Republic of South Africa 1997) are an important beacon for transformed service delivery. Draper (2002) adds that

Table 5: Strategic capability and leadership

THE PROFICIENCY LEVELS OF THE COMPETENCY (INCLUDING THE COMPETENCY DESCRIPTION)	
Competency Name	STRATEGIC CAPABILITY AND LEADERSHIP
Competency Definition	Must be able to provide a vision, set the direction for the organisation and inspire others in order to deliver on the organisational mandate

PROFICIENCY LEVELS			
BASIC	COMPETENT	ADVANCED	EXPERT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands organisational and departmental strategic initiatives, but weak in inspiring others to achieve the set objectives; Describes how specific tasks link to organisation's strategies, but experiences difficulty in putting the links into practice; Aligns and prioritises own action plans to organisational strategies but has limited influence in determining the strategic direction; and Demonstrates commitment through actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives direction to team in realising the organisation's strategic objectives; Impacts positively on team morale, sense of belonging and participation; Develops action plans to execute strategic initiatives; Assists in defining performance measures to evaluate the success of strategie; Identifies and communicates obstacles to executing specific strategies; Support stakeholders in achieving their goals; Inspires staff with own behaviour – "walks, the talk"; Manages and takes calculated risks; Communicates strategic plan to the organisation; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates all activities to determine value added and alignment with the organisation's strategic goals; Displays and contributes in-depth knowledge to strategic planning at the organisational level; Ensures alignment of strategies across various functional areas to the the organisational strategy; Defines performance measures to evaluate the success of organisation's strategy Promote organisation's mission and vision to all relevant stakeholders; Empowers others to deal with complex and ambiguous situations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures and positions the organisation to Government priorities; Develops and implements strategies for the organisation utilising in-depth knowledge of customers and clients, the conventions, changing trends, processes and constitutional framework of the Government; Holds self accountable for executing the strategy; Builds and maintains a wide network of internal and external relationships to gain confidence, trust and respect from others; Sought out as a leader who can motivate others to achieve a common goal;

THE PROFICIENCY LEVELS OF THE COMPETENCY (INCLUDING THE COMPETENCY DESCRIPTION)			
PROFICIENCY LEVELS			
BASIC	COMPETENT	ADVANCED	EXPERT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilises strategic planning methods and tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve agreement or consensus in an adversarial environment; Guides the organisation through complexity and uncertainty of vision; Leads and unites diverse workgroups across divisions to achieve organisational objectives; and Develops and implements risk management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates loyalty, comradeship and an organisation environment that permits innovative thinking; and Develops strategic planning methods and tools.

Source: SMS Handbook 2003

public organisations are under more pressure than ever to accept the need to be more inclusive in their approach to people.

Lead with accurate problem solving and analysis

In his research survey among senior officials in the Indian Railway Organisation, Analoui (1995:59) found that problem solving is viewed as an important competency for senior managers. In addition, the Dutch Senior Public Service listed problem solving as an important competence for its senior managers (Bhatta 2001:199). The competency related to the analysis of information, judgement, conceptual flexibility and resoluteness of purpose. In addition, public sector organisations have adapted models from business management. Furthermore, public sector managers need to focus on problem-solving competencies, which would render them “better, faster [and] stronger” in addressing issues that communities face (Kettl 1997; Lynn 1996 and Box 1999 in Carmeli 2006:157).

The competency description proficiency is summarised in Table 5 below. It indicates the strategic capability and leadership competency and benchmarks the levels of proficiency in terms of the competency, which ranges from “basic’ to ‘expert”.

CONCLUSION

A move towards a competency-based leadership requires leaders to meet the critical challenges that modern public governance faces. Leaders need to have a combination of knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes that promote service delivery. The Strategic Capability and Leadership training of senior managers sets out to enable leadership development within the South African public sector. It is promoted by adopting a medium-term development programme, which is aimed at meeting senior managers' individual leadership requirements.

Furthermore, it is important to note that training and development programmes of senior managers have to be informed by the competency framework. Furthermore, results emanating from the personal development plans (PDPs) and the workplace skills plans (WSPs) need to be assessed. The employer is required to play a meaningful role in the development of a competent senior leadership who can rise to the developmental challenge that the South African public sector faces.

Based on the Strategic Capability and Leadership competency, as leaders, senior managers are required to have outstanding communication skills, be problem-solvers, manage knowledge and find innovative mechanisms to promote service delivery within the *Batho Pele* framework. For this reason, managers/ leaders are required to think deeply about the present, create a vision for the future and increase their departments' productivity in order to reach the ultimate goal of a "better life for all".

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Scholarly research

Some guidelines to ethically responsible decisions

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews key aspects in the literature on the ethical responsibilities that apply when conducting social science research. Research products/reports are expected to contain data and findings in accordance with the ethical principles for research. Notably, the research ethics committees of higher education institutions stipulate these principles. The concept of research as well as key activities during the research process are considered, while the manner in which researchers conduct research is explored. The assumption that a small percentage of researchers and students often deviate from honest and transparent research is questioned. As such, examples of researchers who fail to comply with ethical principles are illustrated as a warning, so that researchers and students refrain from manipulating data to serve personal academic desires. Finally, the implications of failing to maintain ethical principles are emphasised.

INTRODUCTION

Due to an increase in the number of postgraduate students and the academic pressure that is exerted on researchers to publish journal articles, this article aims to provide ethical guidelines that researchers and students should apply when conducting research. Research should play a more important role than merely forming part of the process of obtaining a postgraduate degree or producing a

journal article. It is undoubtedly a primary element of scholarship. Researchers are therefore encouraged not only to engage in research activities as part of their research programme, but also to consider these research activities as ethical responsibilities that flow from the requirements prescribed by the institution at which they are working or are registered to obtain a postgraduate degree. Honesty and responsibility may be regarded as core aspects of ethical issues. To obtain a clear description of what research encompasses, this article starts by providing a detailed analysis of the concept of research and research ethics. The aim of this is to extract and reveal the possibility that the word “research” could encompass much more than simply studying and gathering information. The intention is to indicate that, as is the case with any field of science, research includes creativity. Furthermore, this article also aims to discuss the research process and to explore the ethical considerations that apply during the process. By touching on some of the pitfalls that can be encountered during the process, it explains how researchers should manage making ethically responsible decisions in order to avoid the temptation to resort to unethical behaviour. To illustrate what is meant by “ethically responsible decisions”, practical examples are discussed of instances where researchers succumbed to temptation during their research and chose to resort to unethical behaviour. The article ends with a discussion of the consequences of unethical behaviour during the research process.

DEFINITIONS OF RESEARCH

To obtain a clear description of what research encompasses, reference is made to a number of scholars in order to provide a detailed analysis of the concept of research as presented by each writer. This shows that among a large number of experienced researchers and writers, there are different definitions of the word “research” and what it encompasses. The definitions of research prove to be quite idiosyncratic, illustrating each researcher’s individual path of thought. By analysing the definitions these researchers and writers provide, a number of elements or approaches are identified.

In their standard work on social research, Babbie and Mouton (2001:xxi) define the term “social research” as a “systematic observation of social life for the purposes of finding and understanding patterns in what is observed”. They also regard research as a way of obtaining scientific knowledge, which they view as collective knowledge, the product of rigorous, methodical and systematic inquiry. This kind of knowledge is driven by the principle of “search for the truth”. The “search for the truth” principle implies a search for the most valid or best approximation to the world. Furthermore, Mouton

(1996:4) regards research not only as a search for the truth, but also as a problem-solving social activity, as the production of knowledge and as project management.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:4) define research as a systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) in order to increase one's understanding of a particular phenomenon. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:31) argue that, traditionally, research has been perceived the creation of true, objective knowledge by following a scientific method. Contemporary researchers also apply scientific methods to obtain knowledge. According to Swain and Duke (2001:126), research is any gathering of information with the objective of presenting it to someone else. Notably, range and types of information vary greatly (opinions, perspectives, behaviour and concepts).

In a Master's dissertation on Public Administration research in South Africa, McLaverty (2007:20) defines research as a means whereby people can solve problems in an attempt to extend the boundaries of knowledge. Research also includes interpreting data to reach valid conclusions. This interpretation of research can be either basic or applied.

Thani (2009:26) defines research as a systematic method of gathering and analysing information with the intention of sharing and expanding ideas. The author adds that research involves improving theory and practical knowledge. The definition that Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:11-12) provide consists of two parts, namely the process of translating the relationship between facts and theory into practice, and the goal of acquiring knowledge. The authors share a similar stance with Thani's definition, in that the main goal of research is to improve knowledge.

McNabb (2002:3) defines research as gathering, processing and interpreting data, then communicating the results in a report that describes the research findings. Brynard and Hanekom (1997:1) argue that research is closely related to the search for knowledge and the understanding of societal phenomena. Continuing their discussion of this definition, they repeat their mention of the societal phenomena. Furthermore, they suggest that the definition could be considered as one of social research, rather than of research in general. Khalo (2006:560) refers to research as a systematic method of working in a planned way and states that researchers should select and use a suitable method (type) that will make the problem they want to investigate accessible to them. O'Sullivan, Rassel and Berner (2008:2) argue that research involves the study of observable information. Thus, no research can take place without observable information. This definition by O'Sullivan *et al.* (2008) is included in further discussions below. However, the authors' statement could be questioned, as research is regarded as being possible without observable information. For example, non-empirical research does not require observable

information, since it more readily involves thinking and scrutinising. This definition accordingly needs to be reconsidered and refined to give it more substance.

According to Wessels (1999:363), the concept “research” refers to a process (search, enquiry, endeavour, scientific study and critical investigation) and a goal (the discovery of new facts and principles). In considering the characteristics Wessels provide, researchers within the Public Administration might consider applying a similar mindset. Mouton and Marais (1990:156) define research as a collaborative activity by means of which a given phenomenon in reality is studied in an objective manner, with a view to establishing a valid understanding of that phenomenon.

In the course of analysing the definitions given above, the following common elements of research were found:

- Finding and understanding patterns in what is observed (Babbie and Mouton 2001).
- Creating true and objective knowledge (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit 2004).
- Gathering information (Swain and Duke 2001 and McNabb 2002).
- Sharing and expanding ideas (Thani 2009).
- Acquiring knowledge (Bless and Higson-Smith 2000).
- Understanding a phenomenon (Mouton and Marais 1990 and Brynard and Hanekom 1997).
- A process and a goal (Wessels 1999).
- A systematic method (Khalo 2006 and Leedy and Ormrod 2001).

From the preceding discussions research appears to encompass much more than the mere studying and gathering of information. It involves creativity and the search for answers to phenomena, while making a sophisticated contribution to expanding the scientific base of a profession. With this in mind, and in the light of the responsibility attached to doing sophisticated research, the role of ethics during research is now discussed.

ETHICAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH

There are a number of guidelines that need to be followed and applied when research is conducted. These are discussed below with reference to matters that a researcher ought to keep in mind during this process, under the headings of “Ethical behaviour during research”, “Competence of a researcher”, “Initial stages of research”, and “Ethical considerations”.

Ethical behaviour during research

Students have the right to study and research whatever they deem to be of scientific interest in any science. The corollary of this right implies that students, as researchers, have the ethical responsibility to ensure that the manner in which the research is conducted and data obtained meet all the relevant ethical requirements.

Researchers ought to be fully informed of the pervasiveness and complexity of ethical issues and requirements, since data should never be obtained at the expense of other researchers. It follows that researchers have a basic responsibility to be accurate and honest in reporting their research. Although anyone involved in research must also be aware of what is proper and improper conduct while doing scientific research, ethical lapses, such as falsifying data, do take place in the course of research studies. A few examples are discussed below. A researcher usually makes ethically responsible decisions, but there are invariably pitfalls, which could lead to him or her into making an ethically irresponsible decision.

Babbie (2001:47) acknowledges that ethics is associated with morality (matters of right or wrong). Researchers have to be aware of general agreements or rules shared by the social science community. Individual institutions or academic bodies generally convey certain opinions and attitudes about the type of conduct that is acceptable or not in the course of research. Ethics is not confined to human subjects, since it also involves the literature that one consults when conducting research. Ballantine, Levy, Martin, Munro and Powell (2000:233) share an approach similar to that of Babbie (2001), namely that ethics entails distinguishing between right and wrong. When referring to ethics, Mouton (1996:10) asserts that it “aims to provide guidelines on what constitutes appropriate behaviour in the sphere of science”. Mouton’s definition is more relevant than the previous two because both students and academics are involved in this sphere of science. This involvement includes engaging with the literature in an acceptable and appropriate way. When defining research ethics within the Public Administration, McNabb (2002:36) argues that it refers to “the application of moral standards to decisions made in planning, conducting and reporting the results of research studies”. McNabb summarises this definition by pointing out that research ethics has to do with morality (the focus on what is right or wrong). In his definition of ethics, Lisman (1996:9) refers to morality, arguing that it is a set of principles that guide people’s actions. With this definition in mind, one can conclude that morality or ethics reflects the nature and conscience of a person. When researchers engage with literature they should allow their conscience to guide them in terms of acknowledging the authors.

In conjunction with these thoughts on the issue of ethics, the competence of a researcher must be discussed.

Competence of a researcher

Higher education institutions usually outline research processes, requirements and responsibilities to students who register for a postgraduate degree. Students are expected to follow these guidelines when conducting their research and reporting research findings. Furthermore, these students are obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake and deal with such a task. Should there be any doubt about this, they can get assistance to determine or confirm their skills. This means that they should be adequately qualified and equipped to ensure that the entire period of study and dealing with the research project is dealt with in an ethically correct manner (De Vos 2007:63).

Babbie (2001:108) acknowledges that a student embarking on a research task must first be interested in the research that is to be undertaken. After the interest has been established, ideas will begin to flow as researchers try to gather information to prove particular theories. Mouton (1996:91) sheds some light on this matter from a different perspective. He believes that one starts the research process by formulating the research problem. These views lead to the next aspect to be discussed, namely the initial stages of research.

Initial stages of research

In the initial research proposal, the student should not only clarify the reasons for the study, but also specify clearly the manner in which ethical guidelines and expectations are to be observed (De Vos 2007:63). This relates to the entire research process, including the topic to be studied, the research setting or demarcation, the selected research participants, the methods of data collection and analysis, as well as the representation of the data or report writing. In addition, during the research, the student should be constantly aware of the requirement to follow ethical responsibility in each section dealt with.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:76), when students begin a research project they are in a process of “finding out”. This could also be seen as a process of discovering facts. Notwithstanding Babbie and Mouton’s view, and irrespective of what students want to find out or discover, a process of scientific enquiry is still involved. This implies that each project has a research methodology that consists of a number of steps to follow in order to complete the research project in an intelligible and scientifically based manner.

Ethical responsibility during each step of the research process is discussed below. Only the key decision making steps of the research process are dealt with.

- *Conceptualisation.* A researcher should specify the meaning of the concepts and variables to be studied (Babbie 2001:105). Should a researcher report on, for example, the research methods within the Public Administration, s/he ought to define concepts such as “research method”, “research methodology” and “research design” within the context of the specific research project. Since these terms can be confusing, the researcher needs to be specific and ensure that readers are able to understand what is written. De Vos (2007:64) emphasises the importance of carefully conceptualising and phrasing the research question to include everything that is done in the research process. Mouton (1996:109) makes a similar point by arguing that conceptualisation refers to clarifying and analysing key concepts and integrating one’s own unique research with existing theory and research. Presenting another person’s ideas, descriptions and explanations as one’s own in order to clarify and analyse key concepts and variables without the necessary referencing is not only tantamount to plagiarism, but is usually also inadequate to serve as a comprehensive, ideal interpretation of those concepts and variables (O’Sullivan *et al.* 2008:479). This implies plagiarism; when detected, it may not only lead to questioning the offender’s current and past work, but will end his/her academic career.
- *Collecting data.* When a researcher collects data by means of, say, observation, the process entails recording events, behaviour and objects on the particular subject. As Gabrielian, Yang and Spice (2008:157) correctly point out, the qualitative researcher should gain access to the social setting in order to obtain the relevant data. According to these authors, observation consists of two stages: unfocused and descriptive, and focused. In addition, they assert that observation involves various roles: “complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant (Gabrielian, Yang and Spice 2008:157). This implies that when collecting data, it is required that the researcher pays dedicated, focused attention to the subject matter to avoid bias. A common pitfall here is that a researcher can become frustrated by the long period of time that such an exercise requires and decide to speed up this exercise by fabricating data (O’Sullivan *et al.* 2008:479). Such actions are unquestionably beyond acceptable ethical responsibility, since the results will mislead readers.
- *Data analysis.* Babbie (2001:108) explains that data analysis consists of drawing conclusions from the data and identifying whether it answers the study’s research objectives. Mouton (1996:108) states that, “you must ensure that you will be able to do those things that you intend to do”.

The conclusions in the research study will be based on the data analysed. Ethical responsibility is reflected when collected data is stated, analysed and interpreted accurately without manipulation. In cases where researchers realise that the information gathered does not answer their research objectives, and deceitfully manipulate the findings to confirm the research objectives, they are guilty of unethical behaviour.

Following this discussion of aspects on how to deal with research while constantly applying ethical responsibility, some ethical considerations are examined below.

Ethical considerations

Researchers often tend to regard ethical issues as less important and to ignore their requirements and principles. This could be due to a lack of knowledge and insight into the meaning and implications of ethical responsibility.

The concept “ethical considerations” refers to responsibility, honesty and truthfulness. McNabb (2002:36) argues that the truthfulness principle means that, “it is unethical for researchers to purposefully lie, deceive or employ fraud”. Unethical conduct or fraud can include plagiarism, internet plagiarism or printed documents containing false information. Granitz and Loewy (2007:293) define plagiarism as cheating or academic dishonesty at either high schools or higher education institutions. Hawley (1984:53) associates this term with piracy, unacceptable behaviour, sloppy paraphrasing and appropriating of another’s ideas. Valentine (2006:89) acknowledges that plagiarism is an activity that involves both thought and the text. These two elements involve the interaction between people (the transfer of text from one person to another). Scanlon and Neumann (2002:374) refer to both plagiarism and cutting and pasting from another person’s work as fraud. O’Sullivan *et al.* (2008:460) refer to research misconduct as fabrication and falsification. They define plagiarism as “falsely presenting another’s ideas or words as one’s own”.

Thus plagiarism consists of a number of elements, namely deceiving other people, academic fraud, academic dishonesty, pirating information and cutting and pasting someone else’s work. A student registering at an institution for a postgraduate degree, and commencing a research project without taking careful note of information about unethical behaviour, is in itself an indication of a lack of responsibility. Moreover, it gives rise to the question of why students undertake research. Thus researchers need to be clear as to why they embark on research. This is important, since other researchers, students and the profession have to be protected from exploitation by researchers lacking

the necessary responsibility (McNabb 2002:34-38; De Vos 2007:23-24; Babbie 2001:300).

Irresponsible researchers are not only found among students, but are encountered in all fields of research. A few examples serve to illustrate how researchers have succumbed to temptation during their research and chosen to resort to unethical behaviour.

- At Harvard University, Dr Marc Hauser, a leading scientist in the field of animal and human cognition, was found guilty of eight instances of scientific misconduct. His work consisted of experiments from which he made assessments and published the findings in journal articles. Some of the experiments apparently led to bad data storage or data fabrication. Three of the misconduct cases involved problems in published articles, and the rest were found and corrected before publication. Those mistakes included “data acquisition, data analysis, data retention, and the reporting of research methodologies and results”. Dr Hauser acknowledged that he had made significant mistakes and that he deeply regretted the problems caused to his students, his colleagues and Harvard University. As a result, Dr Hauser faced disciplinary measures by Harvard such as “involuntary leave, extra oversight and restrictions on the ability to apply for grants and supervise”. The misconduct findings against him may cast a shadow over the broad field of scientific research that he has done and all the articles that he has published (*The New York Times* 2010:1A).
- An investigation conducted by the University of California found that Dr RB Stricker falsified data for a manuscript and a PHS-supported publication reporting research on AIDS. In the manuscript, Dr Stricker suppressed data that did not support his hypothesis, and reported positive results consistently although only one of four experiments had produced positive results. The falsified data was used as the basis for a grant application to the National Institute of Health. The University and Dr Stricker concluded a settlement agreement in terms of which Dr Stricker agreed not to apply for grants or to serve on advisory committees, boards or peer review groups for three years (Scientific Falsification 2010).
- Peter Cleaton-Jones, Chair of the Committee for Research on Human Subjects (Medical) at the University of the Witwatersrand, said that, “science relies on trust”. He made this statement against the background of scientific misconduct by Professor Werner Bezwoda, a researcher at the University, and said that it was a case in which the University may have been too trusting. Professor Bezwoda’s misconduct was exposed after a team of clinical investigators reviewed his data. The team found that the records of a study of high-dose chemotherapy/autologous bone marrow transplant in high-risk breast cancer patients that Professor Bezwoda had

performed did not match the report he gave at the annual American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting. There was a discrepancy as to the medication administered to the control patients. The misconduct escaped the attention of the University because it trusted that Professor Bezwoda would notify its internal review board of his research, as required by the University. There was no record of an application by Professor Bezwoda to carry out the study. Professor Bezwoda later admitted that he had committed a serious breach of scientific honesty and integrity. This led to the Internal Review Board conducting an audit of all Professor Bezwoda's research, as there was no longer any certainty about its authenticity (Cancer Network 2010).

Moreover, falsifying and fabricating data can lead to financial expenses. According to Michalek (2009), "the estimated cost associated with a single investigation of scientific misconduct can be as high as \$525 000 and the costs of investigating allegations of scientific misconduct annually reported in the United States to the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) could exceed US\$110 million". Why do scientists continue with such conduct? Colantuono (2010) responds to this question by highlighting that researchers are driven by selfish interests such as pride and money. Institutions of higher learning base their grants on results, not on the amount of time spent on research. Sometimes scientists are under pressure to publish their research in order to be subsidised by their institutions

Suggestions to curb unethical behaviour during the research process

New or first-time researchers should be requested to abide by ethical requirements to ensure and maintain the integrity of their research projects. If this is not done, it could indicate that the researcher lacks the necessary experience and insight at that stage and could be considered as incompetent and thus unable to complete the task successfully. A researcher should be informed that to avoid embarrassment, s/he should take careful note of the institution's guidelines and requirements as one of the conditions of registration. Students should be informed that, should they be challenged on the grounds of unethical behaviour, it is almost inevitable that doubt will be cast on any other research they do. It could even lead to the research project being terminated by the institution involved.

Clearly researchers need to ensure that they are not involved in questionable research practices, such as data fabrication, falsification of results and plagiarism or "research misconduct", in O'Sullivan *et al.*'s (2008:478) words. There are several other examples of unethical research behaviour, but these will suffice.

A researcher should be made aware that it is quite simple to avoid charges of plagiarism by never using the exact words of another author without acknowledging the author and/or the source of information. Not recognising that one has used another author's work in one's work indicates a sinister intention that is deemed inexcusable in terms of ethical responsibility.

Data fabrication and falsification of results usually take place when a researcher rescues a poorly planned and/or executed research, which runs the risk of failing. The data obtained fails to confirm particular facts, which could lead to the entire research project being a failure. In such cases, it is conceivable that the researcher is no doubt reluctant to make a fresh start and collect new data. In an attempt to avoid a negative result, s/he may remove certain non-supporting data or add false data to render a positive result. During a research process, a researcher may remove certain data – provided s/he specifies the reason for this in the text. To proceed with data fabrication and falsification of results without making this known is not only unethical research behaviour, but places a worthless research project in the field for other researchers to rely on.

CONCLUSION

This article explored the literature on ethical responsibilities that apply to social science research. A well-planned and executed research process provides a tool for creating and expanding the scientific base of disciplines and professions. Conducting scientifically valid social research is a demanding task and usually leads to a sophisticated research product being submitted to obtain a postgraduate qualification. Unfortunately, the process can also be subject to unethical research behaviour that could plunge academia and professions into a crisis. When unethical research behaviour occurs and the results of a particular study are found to be fabricated, it causes a serious setback in the particular discipline or study field.

In order to illuminate what research encompasses, key concepts of research – particularly the research process and major ethical considerations – were discussed. The article outlined how researchers should ensure ethically responsible decisions, by avoiding some pitfalls that could be encountered when conducting research. A few examples of ethical misconduct in completed research studies were presented to illustrate this point. Finally, key consequences of unethical behaviour in the research process were outlined. The article attempted to draw researchers' attention to the importance of being aware of higher institutions' ethical requirements where students register for fields of study, such as others conduct research. If detected, non-compliance

with ethical requirements of social research could have dire consequences for a researcher's career.

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Linking Public Administration and Management theory to practice

An integrated approach to training public servants

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of a global world, which coincide with continuous societal changes and increased demands on all spheres of life, also impact on the knowledge and skills required from graduates of the public administration and management discipline. The traditional approach to teaching and training of students in this discipline focuses on general theories, concepts, values and principles, with little or no emphasis on practical experience. It is an outdated approach that no longer satisfies the demands of a sophisticated modern labour market.

Students must be prepared to such an extent that they can add value to the employing organisations. Additional, lengthy, expensive and time-consuming in-house training programmes in the fields already covered during their undergraduate studies should be limited to the minimum.

This will require that existing teaching and training methodologies be adopted to make way for a more integrated approach between academics and practitioners in public administration and management. Where needed, the necessary structures like internship programmes should be established and existing structures utilised to ensure that career-specific training is presented.

This article proposes a way forward for a more integrated and co-operated interface between academics and practitioners in the teaching and training of students in Public Administration and Management. Existing practices are reviewed and based on theoretical research teaching and training approaches are identified and discussed that integrate theory with practice and prepare students better for the demands of the work environment.

INTRODUCTION

Public administration practitioners are required to perform their functions in a rapidly changing environment. These changes are brought about by aspects such as globalisation, technological and scientific progress and, in the case of South Africa, the institutionalisation of democracy. The past 16 years saw the face of the South African public service change from that of a white, male-dominated labour force to a non-sexist and non-racial labour force which is much more representative of the people of South Africa than before.

Despite the changes that have taken place, the South African public service is under constant criticism for poor service delivery and non-responsiveness to the needs of the community. The increasing complexity of the environment in which public administrators perform their functions raises the question whether they are adequately equipped to meet the challenges facing them. Public servants regularly have to deal with difficult situations and complicated problems that need to be solved. This state of affairs has undoubtedly set higher standards for prospective public servants studying Public Administration and Management.

One of the fundamental questions to be answered is whether theoretical knowledge alone is enough to equip students for the demands made by the complexity of the modern work environment. Educational institutions which are preparing and equipping students for their future careers should ask themselves whether or not the training and development that they provide is still relevant and appropriate (Bester and Boshoff 2009:729).

A major challenge for any newcomer in the labour market is the integration of theory and practice. This requires that specific measures be taken to ensure that theories that are taught are integrated with practice. In this article some models are identified that can be utilised to integrate theory with practice. The most common of the aforementioned models are internships, learnerships and traineeships, practicums and the use of practitioners to teach at higher education institutions.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF EDUCATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING

Education refers to the overall development of knowledge and intellect usually through the formal education system of schools and universities (Cowie 1994:1318). According to Mello (2008:204) education includes those activities directed at providing and acquiring knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding of the normal course of life. Institutions of higher education – such as universities – are responsible for the process of educating students. One

of the most well-known and widely-used methods in the domain of education, is Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Blooms Taxonomy underpins the classical 'Knowledge, Attitude, Skills' structure of learning method and evaluation, and it's popularity is due to its simplicity and effectiveness (Chapman 2006:4).

Teaching has the widest use in formal and informal situations at all levels and can involve an academic subject or a practical skill (Cowie 1994:1318). Through teaching knowledge is imparted on how to do something. It is designed to expose one's thinking processes by broadening the range of experiences and exposing the student to new concepts and modes of perception (Bergerson 1989:831)

To train means to produce a desired result in behaviour, standard of skill, or physical ability (Cowie 1994:1318). According to Nel *et al.* (2001), cited in Mello (2008:204), it is a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge, skills or behaviour through experience in order to achieve effective performance in a range of activities.

From the above definitions and explanations it is clear that the concepts are closely related and that all three have to do with a change in the ability, competence and capacity of a person or individual to perform a specific function or a task.

DYNAMICS OF THE PRESENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ENVIRONMENT

South Africa is increasingly becoming a complex society, characterised by aspects such as a fragile democracy that needs institutional strengthening, globalisation, modernisation, social transformation and restructuring, to mention a few. To complicate matters even further, contemporary public administration and management is associated with various paradigmatic shifts, such as from despotism to democracy, from traditional public administration to new public administration, from an interdisciplinary to multidisciplinary and from public administration to e-public administration (Vyas-Doorgapersad and Simmonds 2009:3).

The impact of this complexity is also felt in the teaching and training of public administration practitioners functioning in this rapidly changing environment. According to Rosenbaum (2007b:8), the biggest challenge for public administration training and education, in the preparation of civil servants, is the complexity of the world we live in and the serious problems that confront all of us today. Modern society, with its industrialisation, urban development and growth of financial institutions, requires a sophisticated system of management

to direct and oversee the complex public organisations that produce goods and services, and the monetary system to support it (Bogason and Brans 2008:85).

In South Africa the public service is constantly criticised for inefficiency and poor service delivery (Akoojee 2009:32). This emphasises the need for a more effective public management system and the ability of public administrators to meet new and more complex challenges. Academic institutions can therefore play an important role in transferring the necessary knowledge and skills and in changing the attitudes and values of existing and prospective employees.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

One of the aims of institutionalising democracy and democratic governance in South Africa still is to institute a public service that is development-friendly, pro-poor and customer-oriented. A central point of the public sector reform in South Africa as highlighted in the *Public Service Act 103 of 1994* is the creation of a people-centred and people-driven public service which is characterised by equity, quality, timeousness and a strong code of ethics (Van der Westhuyzen 2005:162). The role of the field of public administration in the modern democratic state is a challenging one in supporting government in its goal of benefiting all (Bogason and Brans 2008:85). Baltodano (1997:616) argues that there is an inability in public administration to deal theoretically with the relationship between socio-historical change and the administrative state. South Africa has more unique challenges in this regard than most other countries have as it must make up for the inequalities of the past while it simultaneously institutionalises democracy.

According to a study done by Bester and Boshoff (2009:729), managers in the public sector identified numerous specific job-related shortcomings of entrants to the labour market. Two of these are the inability to integrate theory and practice with one another and a lack of sufficient job-related practical knowledge. After completing their studies, students often enter public institutions such as national and provincial departments with limited knowledge of the working side of government and they are expected to perform tasks unlike those they have been prepared for (Gildenhuis 1988:273). This poses a serious question about the relevancy of teaching programmes at academic institutions and lecturers' ability to transfer the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to students.

According to Denhardt (2001:526), the examination of four major questions in this regard can provide a perspective that might aid us in the teaching and training of students. They are:

- do we seek to educate our students with respect to theory or to practice?

- do we prepare students for their first jobs or for those to which they might aspire later?
- what are the appropriate delivery mechanisms for MPA courses and curricula?
- what personal commitments do we make as public administration educators?

Although there is not one correct answer for each question, approaching it from a human development perspective may provide a framework through which we might develop more coherent answers (Denhardt 2001:529). For those involved in the teaching of Public Administration and Management, the questions, pose the challenge to integrate theory and practice in institutions for higher education (Vyas-Doorgapersad and Simmonds 2009:18). To facilitate the changes require a parallel development of new approaches to the education and training of public managers. This involves broad-spectrum changes in curricula, methodology and ethos aimed at the diverse needs of individuals in this sector (Schutte and Silverman 1996:332).

The democratic reforms witnessed in South Africa since 1994, as well as globalisation and other changes, impact very heavily on the knowledge, skills and understanding of public practitioners to perform the critical responsibilities of government. According to Rosenbaum (2001:65), those who work in administrative development institutions, and train the future administrators and managers of the public sector, must adapt their efforts to reflect the needs of this changing world. To do so, it is necessary for educators and trainers to understand clearly which of the many transitions occurring today will most significantly affect the public sector and what the implications of these changes are for the training of effective public managers.

APPROACHES IN THE TEACHING AND TRAINING OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS

Two approaches can be distinguished in the teaching and training of current and prospective public practitioners. They are the traditional lecturing approach and the integrated approach (Schutte and Silverman 1996: 331). Both of these approaches are discussed briefly below.

Traditional approach

In terms of the traditional approach to the teaching of public administration and management, students in their formative years at institutions for higher education

learn a great deal in their academic programmes. They study theories of the budgetary process, policy making and personnel management, to mention a few. Traditionally, public administration and management programmes require little practical skills and pays less attention to the substance of government. The key question however is whether graduates leave their programmes as educated individuals who are ready to become dedicated and competent public servants in a rapidly changing world (Rosenbaum 2007a:22). It is for this purpose that the traditional teaching and training methodologies should change and adapt to make provision for a value-adding factor.

The traditional pedagogical methodology referred to above and adopted by institutes for higher education in their teaching and training programmes include lectures, written assignments, group project assignments and assigned reading and class presentations.

In a paper presented to the Third Pan-African Conference of the Ministers of Civil Service in Windhoek, Namibia on 5-6 February 2001, Zyani (2001:109) identified three problems that may arise from this approach and which need to be emphasised:

- the training programmes that do not match the real needs of the public service;
- the adopted teaching approaches or processes that do not encourage innovation; and
- the possibility that training programmes presented by higher education institutions may become irrelevant.

The abovementioned approach may also lead to a gap between the type and quality of knowledge transmitted and the actual capacities that the public service demands from graduates of these institutions (Zyani 2001:109). One of the reasons cited by Zyani (2001:110) for this is that institutions for higher education in Africa prefer teaching methods based on presentations, especially lectures.

The rapidly changing environment and dynamics of a global world also have an impact on the professional requirements of academics in this field. If university lecturers want to prepare themselves better for teaching themes relevant to the changing situations in practice, they should ideally associate themselves more with that practice – through research, consultation and in co-teaching with practitioners (Bogason and Brans 2008:88).

Higher education institutions that prepare their students for potential careers in the public service should take note of the needs and demands of the labour market if they want to ensure the relevance of their training (Bester and Boshoff 2009:730). A serious accusation came from a senior official who made the following statement: “So it means that when you left the higher education system, you were not prepared for what you ultimately do. The product that

walks out does not meet the needs of industry, so higher education is not responding to the needs of industry, be it in numbers, be it in knowledge or skills” (Interview with Senior official, Government Department 18 April 2002, as cited in Kruss 2004:679). This viewpoint is supported by Barr and Tagg (1995:10) who state that what students are learning in the classroom does not address their needs; therefore they must be brought back later into another classroom and be instructed for some more learning. The result is never what is hoped for, because critical thinking is taught in the same way that other courses have traditionally been taught, with an excess of lecturing and insufficient time for practice.

It is therefore important that deliberate attempts are made to integrate the theory that is taught at higher education institutions into the practice of public administration and management in public institutions such as governmental and provincial departments.

Teaching and training for a civil service that is both responsive to the needs of the citizens and user friendly also require that the effect of the training be evaluated. It is important to determine whether the curriculum is achieving its educational objectives and to adopt it accordingly if necessary (Vyas-Doogapersad and Ababio 2009:78). This evaluation should be a multi-layer process aimed at the following four areas (McCourt and Sola 1999 cited in Healey 2001:310).

- reactions immediately after teaching
- learning that took place
- individual behaviour change
- impact on the institution

It is particularly the impact that teaching and training should have on the institution that is important in the current South African government in order to determine the relevancy of the training.

Approaches that integrate public administration and management theory with practice

According to Bester and Boshoff (2009:735), thirty-four per cent of the managers who participated in a research project are of the opinion that newcomers to the labour market find it difficult to integrate theory and practice. Second on their list of shortcomings is a lack of work-related knowledge. But there are solutions to the problem. Experience, or learning by doing, may help to perfect the art, in the same way as practice does for athletes or musicians (Garris, Madden and Rodgers 2006:995). It is therefore imperative for higher education institutions to explore other avenues to provide more practical training.

Kruss (2004:683) states in this regard that it is expected from higher education institutions to ensure that graduates are directly prepared to become skilled employees. Skills like management, leadership and conflict resolution that in the past were tacitly developed through processes in the workplace must now be taught by higher education institutions. In this sense, workplace skills become a central requirement of degrees and diplomas and a core component of the degree programme (Kruss 2004:683).

Certain approaches by which the theory of degree programmes is integrated with practice to provide for more practical training are discussed in the following sections. Higher education institutions can utilise these approaches to make sure that the programmes they teach will prepare potential public servants adequately for their tasks.

Internships, learnerships and traineeships

Traditionally an internship can be described as an employment opportunity where someone who has recently obtained a degree gains the required experience. An intern is someone working in a temporary position with an emphasis on education rather than employment (Weible 2010:59).

Learnerships sought to link structured learning provided by an accredited education and training provider (e.g. a college, traditional university, university of technology or private provider) to multiple sites of work experience (Kraak 2008:208). As such, learnerships provide a vehicle for blending the theoretical perspective acquired in courses with real-world experience. The training and practical experience is to culminate in a nationally recognised qualification. According to Kraak (2008:198), learnerships in the South African context are similar to a form of apprenticeship.

A traineeship can be described as the training for a particular profession or work where the trainee will normally learn a skill valued in a specific area of expertise. From the above explanations it is clear that the concepts are closely related and are used interchangeably – most often internships also refer to learnerships and traineeships. For purposes of this discussion, the emphasis will be on the term internship which is in line with the Public Service Internship Programme of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 2010).

In the South African public service, there are mainly three different forms of internships (Republic of South Africa 2010:110):

- traditional graduate internships, which are offered to a person who has completed a qualification and requires workplace experience in order to enhance future employment opportunities;
- student internships which are offered to persons who are enrolled at a higher education institution and require practical experience as part of their study programme; and

- internships linked to professional development and are a requirement for professional registration with professional bodies or councils.

Internships are a common tool to integrate the theory of university degrees with practice. In an internship model, students are encouraged to work in government departments, non-profit organisations, and even private firms (Apfel 2006:1006). Given the ubiquitous nature of internships, one may ask what general assumptions undergird this approach. Gabris and Mitchel (1989:484) list four educational functions that may be of significance as explained below.

Internships serve an educational function. If the student is allowed to observe experience and interact with people in public organisations, he or she can compare abstract learning with the realities of organisational life. The general goal is to provide students with a broader perspective on how theoretical knowledge applies to problem solving in public service.

Internships expose students to problems and data that are simply not available in a classroom setting (Gabris and Mitchell 1989:485). Through this exposure students learn how difficult problems are to solve and how problem resolution often requires substantial amounts of intra-organisational cooperation and teamwork. Internships enhance the interpersonal relations skill of public administration graduate students by teaching them how to get along well with people in sometimes tense and stressful circumstances.

A further advantage of the internship approach is that it provides a basis for relationship-building between the host department and the university (Schutte and Silverman 1996:336).

The final assumption is that students who perform well during an internship may receive job offers from the agencies they have interned with.

In the public service an internship is a planned, structured, and managed programme that provides work experience for a specific period varying from three to twelve months (Republic of South Africa 2006:5). It is a practical programme to assist with the continuous development of people for future appointment in the labour market. The programme is directed mainly at young people who are completing their studies or who have completed their studies and are unemployed. The traineeship programme differs from the student traineeship in the sense that student interns are registered as students at higher education institutions and cannot be defined as 'unemployed' work seekers. Student internships are based on agreements between departments, higher education institutions, and the student interns in question. These agreements differ depending on the work experience specified by the higher education institution for a student to fulfil the requirements of his or her programme.

The internship programme of the South African public service focuses mainly on the strategic skills and occupations within the supply and demand

environment. According to the Cabinet's mandate for the programme, the aim is to address issues such as skills shortages, youth unemployment and unemployed graduates (Republic of South Africa, 2010:6). *The Guidelines on Implementing the Internship Programme Policy in the Public Service* (Republic of South Africa 2010:11) confirms this aim by stating that the purpose of the internship programme is to equip unemployed graduates with the necessary skills, knowledge and work experiences to improve their opportunity of employment.

An example of a traineeship programme is that of the Free State Provincial Treasury Department. The purpose of the programme is to accommodate full-time students studying at universities of technology and further education and training colleges, who need to undergo practical work experience for the completion of their studies (Free State Provincial Government 2010:3).

Where the government internship programme aims to afford graduates the opportunity of gaining practical experience after the completion of their studies, the traineeship programme focuses on exposing full-time students to a predetermined period of practical work experience, which is a requirement for a specific qualification before the student can complete the qualification. One of the benefits of the traineeship programme of the Free State Provincial Treasury Department is that it exposes full-time students to a work environment that has direct relevance to the qualification for which each student is enrolled. Critique against the traineeship programme is that it makes provision only for a certificate and a diploma programme in Office Management and Technology and a B. Tech. degree in Financial Information Systems.

Traineeships may be recommended as the most suitable of the abovementioned approaches in the South African situation. Not only are full-time students exposed to practical work experience, but it also provides a basis for relationship-building between the institution for higher education and the host department.

Practicums

Another tool used to link the theory to the practice is a practicum or so-called capstone experience (Garris, Madden and Rodgers 2006:998). Various methodologies exist for how practicums can be used to integrate theory with practice (Apfel 2006:1006). The integration involves action learning where students work on real community problems and implementing solutions – learning by doing.

In practicums students normally work in teams with the task of addressing challenges and identifying opportunities for a client organisation or to conduct research on a significant social issue (Garris, Madden and Rodgers 2006:999). The practicum prepares graduates for the many diverse challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities they will face in the public service. The design integrates

knowledge and skills learned throughout the curriculum in a single analytic project or exercise. Since it asks students to complete projects for actual clients in a compressed time frame accurately mirroring real-world pressures and deadlines, it should ease the transition from student to professional by exposing students to the realities of the workplace.

The benefit of this tool is that it not only develops the skills of the students, but also provides a service to the community. Non-profit and other organisations with limited resources may benefit from this system. Practicums however, do not always involve an outside entity but can be a non-client-based individual project involving research and the producing of reports (Apfel 2006:1004).

Practitioners as guest lecturers

The value that practitioners add to the training and teaching process is that it exposes students to the practical principles of public administration and management (Garris, Madden and Rodgers 2006:992). A typical programme that makes use of practitioners may do so to teach management or narrower speciality areas such as public financial management, or integrated development policies. The pedagogic basis for using practitioners in the teaching and training process must be that they have some unique kind of practical knowledge – based on their actual work experiences – that can be transmitted effectively in the classroom situation (Garris, Madden and Rodgers 2006:992) Practitioners should be able to contextualise and enlighten case studies in ways that complement or maybe even substitute normal deductive analytical approaches.

According to Apfel (2006:1004), there are a wide range of mechanisms that can be used to include practitioners in the teaching and training of public administration and management. Examples are the following:

- Guest lecturers to provide real world context and thereby complementing the content of the course
- Adjuncts to teach some of the more practical courses or to fill in if core interest or expertise in a particular area is lacking
- Professors of the practice – this model utilises long-term employment contracts and therefore provides much more stability, to both the academic institution and the practitioner.

Challenges

Teaching and training approaches in Public Administration and Management that integrate theory with practice are not without challenges. Various authors such as Apfel (2008:1007), Cupps (2008:308) and Schutte and Silverman (1996:337) espouse that there are barriers that may influence the success of these approaches.

The lack of clarity surrounding expectations on the part of each role player can often make both the host department and the intern uneasy about entering into a long term agreement (Cupps, 2008:308). Interns also found themselves spending weeks observing with little participation in work processes (Schutte and Silverman 1996:337). Cupps (2008:308) asserts that interns are often misused for unloading mundane tasks that no one else wants to do. If the before mentioned situation prevails the purpose of the programme is doomed and little success will be achieved. It is therefore important that the expectations of all role players be made clear beforehand.

With regard to practitioners as guest lecturers, institutions for higher education often make use of practitioners only to fill vacancies in the staff establishment. There is a real need for practitioners to become fully integrated into the academic community, in order to provide real value to students, and for the institution to capitalise on the expertise of the practitioner to assist in program development (Apfel 2008:1007).

CONCLUSION

Public administrators should brace themselves for a future characterised by changes and increased demands on all spheres of life. One of the major challenges emanating from this situation is the teaching and training of a new generation of public administrators. It is they who will have to deal with the increasingly serious problems that confront all of us in modern society.

It is inevitable that the challenges brought about by globalisation and the increased demands on all spheres of life will also impact on the teaching and training of prospective public administrators. New avenues therefore need to be explored in order to ensure that teaching provided by academic institutions remains relevant and that it will equip public administrators for the high demands of the future.

In order to meet the requirements set by changes and the increased demand on education and training it is recommended that institutions for higher education make use of an approach where theories can be integrated with the practice of the real world, thus preparing students for their future work environment. Different models exist that can be utilised for this approach, such as internships, practicums and the use of practitioners in the classroom. The value of these models are that they enable students in public administration and management to be equipped with real-world experiences, making them much more prepared for the complex work environment they will be facing.

The before mentioned models which integrate theories with practice, pose challenges to institutions for higher education to overcome if success is to be

achieved. It will require that such institutions strengthen their relationships with government departments and work closely with them.

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Students' perspectives on case study teaching in Public Administration at Unisa

A pilot study

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ABSTRACT

Public Administration was previously taught by means of traditional teaching methods, known as the “chalk-and-talk” method. More recently, a trend has emerged whereby students in the classroom environment engage in the intellectual and emotional exercise of solving complex problems. Students have to make critical decisions within the constraints imposed by reality (for example limited time frames, information, finances, as well as staff shortages), while the uncertainty of the decisions need to be considered. This method of teaching for the purposes of this article is called the case teaching method.

A case study provides the student with a description of the actual situation the protagonist experiences. The student has to use the theory s/he has learned and answer questions on what s/he would have done in the same situation if s/he were the protagonist. This teaching method not only reinforces the student's theoretical knowledge, but also helps him/her to apply it to a practical situation.

The University of South Africa (Unisa) conducted a two-year study on the subject of Public Decision Making I. The students were asked, by means of a questionnaire, about their experiences with a case study assignment versus a theory-based assignment. The empirical findings are discussed throughout this article.

INTRODUCTION

The increase in student numbers and the resultant heavier workload of academic staff at Unisa has resulted in academics employing assessment methods that are not always ideal. Assessment tasks are designed with more cognisance of marker workload than sound assessment principles (Council on Higher Education 2010:21). Insufficient evidence exists to suggest that academic staff is aware of how the students feel about the teaching methods employed and whether the teaching methods contribute towards a total learning experience. This is a void that exists and needs to be dealt with.

Academics use teaching methods and assume that they are effective and that students learn from them. Teaching methods are compiled on the assumption that they are effective or that they will provide the least inconvenience and the least work for the academic. The researcher used an innovative teaching method and sent students a questionnaire, so that students' voices could be heard and that their needs could be incorporated into the teaching and learning process.

There is a dearth of literature on the case study as a teaching method in Public Administration and brief guidelines are available on the application of case study teaching. Since the researcher could not find theoretical information on the students' perspective on the use of the case study teaching method in a distance education environment, this article focuses on the empirical findings of the research conducted. The researcher distributed a voluntary questionnaire to the students who completed the case study assignment.

This article aims to explore the students' perspective on the case study teaching method in Public Administration on the basis of a literature survey and qualitative research. The researcher teaches Public Decision Making I, which forms part of the National Diploma: Public Administration and Management. As part of the compulsory assignments, the students had to answer a case study assignment. Furthermore, the students had to complete an evaluation of their experiences of the case study as an assignment. The researcher interpreted the perspectives that the students provided and discussed the findings. Examining and illuminating students' perspectives on case study teaching can offer insights into the use of this method at undergraduate level within an open distance education environment.

THE CASE STUDY AS A TEACHING METHOD

Hull (2005:2) states that Christopher C Langdell, who was the Dean of the Harvard Law School, introduced the case study method of teaching in 1871. According to the author, all leading law schools started using the case study

method by 1910. A decade later, the Harvard Business School also realised the value of the case study method of teaching and started using this teaching method. By the 1930s and the 1940s, Public Administration also adopted the use of the case teaching method.

Gragg (in McNair 1954:6), a classical thinker from Harvard University on the use of the case teaching method in learning business concepts, states that a case study is a record of the facts and opinions surrounding an actual business issue that business executives have to make a decision on. In 1940, Gragg wrote a timeless essay on business education entitled "Because Wisdom Can't Be Told", in which he argued in favour of the Harvard case study method for learning business concepts. He felt that the method was a pedagogy that aligned purposeful thinking and student collaboration, while the student had to address real-world problems.

Gragg (in McNair 1954:6) is of the opinion that, in order for any real learning to take place, the student's dynamic cooperation is required. The author believes that the act of listening to wise words and sound advice does very little for anyone, because no amount of information, theory or fact can replace insight, judgement or the ability to act in a wise manner. The case study method of teaching is used so that the student can gain knowledge, insight and judgement that can be applied within work environment. Students are taught the theory in the classroom, but often have difficulty implementing it in the work environment. In reality, the ideal situation often does not exist and the skill of insight and judgement only improves with time and experience since wisdom cannot be taught. Case studies are presented to the students in the classroom environment for open debate, discussion and analysis. Subsequently a decision has to be made about how to deal with the situation described in the case study.

Seperich, Woolverton, Beierlein and Hahn (1996:3) are of the opinion that when case study analysis is implemented effectively, it can be exceptionally valuable when preparing students for their future work environment. This implies that the student can learn valuable lessons from case studies when faced with similar situations in the work environment. As a method of teaching, Wessels (2003:45) regards case studies as descriptions of real-life situations that managers and decision-makers encounter. These cases are discussed in the safe confines of the classroom, where decisions are made without any consequences to the student. The student feels safe discussing the case in the class and making a decision, because there is no cost to the student for making a wrong decision. The student also learns what the consequences would be when making different decisions in different situations.

Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda and Nel (2009:195) state that a case study can be likened to a written demonstration, whereby an explanation of a real or fictitious situation is provided and students can analyse the problems involved in the

case. O' Sullivan, Rassel and Berner (2008:40–42) postulate that a case study examines persons, decisions, programmes or aspects in some depth because they have unique qualities of interest and provide the students with a “real-world” experience. When discussed in the classroom environment, the lecturer could either focus on the case as a whole or on certain components of the case, as dictated by the theory discussed. Case studies provide rich detail and the student can gain greater insight into how to approach or solve a problem. The case study method of teaching can assist students in the field of Public Administration to understand what transpires in the work environment and how to deal with problems.

Rogers (in Christensen 1987:135) is of the opinion that the only learning that significantly influences behaviour is self-discovered and self-appropriated. The case study teaching method encourages the student to learn by discovery. This means that students need to be involved in the learning process. They should not merely regurgitate large volumes of information, but should be involved in the learning process by discovering knowledge for themselves.

As an active teaching method, the case study method requires student participation and involvement and calls for a change of mindset in their approach to learning. A case study is a description of an actual situation that involves a decision or a problem, or an issue faced by a person or persons in the organisation. The student has to deal with the situation that the case study describes. S/he is encouraged to make a decision as if being in the shoes of the manager or decision-maker (IBS Center for Management Research 1). The case study as a teaching method provides an explanation of a situation the decision-maker faces and the student has to make a judgement based on the information provided. The student is then placed in the shoes of the decision-maker and is able to make decisions without any consequences. Thus, the case study teaching method absolves the student of any repercussions from the decision that is made.

Case studies are narratives that test the student's ability to apply the theory s/he has learned to a “real-world” situation. It can be used in any subject where good accounts of specific events can help demonstrate and illuminate theory. The case teaching method does not serve all teaching purposes, but can be a powerful tool for engaging students. Furthermore, this teaching method can also assist the lecturer in ascertaining whether the students have mastered the material to the point that they can apply the theory to the case study presented in the classroom (Husock 2000:1–3). When using the case teaching method, the student has to be actively involved and participate in knowledge acquisition.

Since the lecturer cannot take the class into the organisation, the case study as a teaching method provides a different means of bridging theoretical concepts

and practical situations. When using the case study method of teaching, the lecturer should always integrate the relevant theory from the course and the evidence from the case study provided (Monash University 2010:1). The lecturer should always link the theory to a practical situation in the work environment to show students how theory and practice are connected.

From the discussion above, the case study teaching method can be defined as a description of an actual business concern of a decision-maker. By being actively involved in the situation, the student will be able to make a decision as if s/he is in the actual work environment, but without any of the consequences. The case study teaching method prepares the students for their future work environments, since the learning is self-discovered and self-appropriated. They relate the theory they have learnt in the class to a practical situation or the case study. The case study as a teaching method can be used to elucidate various theoretical concepts that students struggle to understand.

Advantages, challenges and suggestions for using the case study teaching method

As with any other teaching method, the case study teaching method has advantages and disadvantages. From the discussion above, the case study teaching method is discussed as being taught in a classroom environment, where the lecturer is present to react immediately to any questions or even uncertainties the student has. A limitation of this study is that Unisa students are not in a classroom environment, but have to work and learn on their own. This contrasts with the joint discovery of learning in the safe environment of the classroom.

The case study method of teaching has certain advantages over traditional teaching methods. The consequences for the student from his/her involvement in the case study method of teaching are as follows (IBS Center for Management Research 8-9):

- It allows students to learn by doing, as it gives them the opportunity to step into the shoes of decision-makers and deal with issues managers face but without any personal risk.
- It improves students' ability to ask the right questions in a problem situation.
- Students are exposed to an array of industries, functions and responsibility levels. This provides flexibility and gives them confidence to deal with various tasks and responsibilities.
- Case studies provide rich and interesting information about real business situations and they breathe life into conceptual discussions. As real-life examples of theoretical concepts are provided, the student's grasp of management theory is strengthened.

- Students are exposed to the actual workings of business in the real world.
- Case studies reflect the reality of managerial decision-making since the students make decisions based on insufficient information. They also reflect the ambiguity and complexity involved in most management issues.
- This teaching method gives the student the opportunity to work on a case study in a group with differing views and opinions, which improves communication and interpersonal skills.
- The use of the case study exposes the student to decision-making where theories and concepts are integrated.

Pew Research Centre's Project for Excellence in Journalism (2003:1) indicates the following seven reasons for using the case study teaching method:

- The method is effective because people learn best when they teach themselves, since there is a process of self-discovery as opposed to passive absorption. Student ownership and active engagement with the case are central to the method's effectiveness.
- The case study method of instruction builds the capacity for critical thinking.
- It exercises students' administrative perspective, since they develop a framework for making decisions in practice.
- The case classroom models a learning environment that assists the student in learning how to achieve trust and respect, take risks, experience high-quality debate and develop tough-mindedness in other professional settings.
- This method of instruction models the process of inductive learning-from-experienced managers used throughout their careers and therefore prepares the student for life-long learning.
- Due to the interactivity of this teaching method, the lecturer can also learn and can encounter new perspectives on old challenges.
- Because it is a fun way of learning, the case study method helps to motivate students.

As the above discussion illustrates, the students benefit from this method of teaching because they are placed in the work environment and have to make decisions based on the information in the case study. The literature discussed indicates the use of the case study method of teaching within a classroom environment. Even though the students at Unisa are not in a classroom environment, the advantage of the case study teaching method can still be seen in the teaching process. There is also an array of skills that can be honed when using the case study method of teaching, which will be discussed later.

The case study method of teaching has various disadvantages (Wessels 2009:253-254). These include:

- The lecturer provides insufficient guidance.

- A wrong decision does not have a more significant effect than a right decision.
- It is difficult to locate good case study material.
- Classes degenerate into a pointless exchange of personal opinions.
- A case study is a simulated exercise, so the students are under little pressure.
- Skills and competencies cannot be taught easily since they should be experienced and practised by the student.
- A shortage of lecturers who are trained in the case teaching method.
- Students expect the lecturer to teach and not to facilitate the learning process.

The success of the case teaching method depends on whether the lecturer is trained in this method. Since a small number of lecturers have been trained in this field, it might seem like a daunting task.

The following are suggestions for using the case study teaching method (Gravett 2005:73-74). Although most of these come from other disciplines, they are also relevant to the discipline of Public Administration.

- Students should be able to identify with the circumstances in the case study.
- It should relate to the students' interests and/or experience;
- It should relate to the skills and ideas that are studied in the subject;
- It can be used to help the students to draw from their past experiences;
- It can be used to help students to practise the application of various skills and ideas;
- Case studies can be used to establish whether the student can apply the learning material.
- A case study can either be written or it can be explained orally.

Bruner (in Rosenstiel and Mitchell 2003:1) provides various reasons for using the case study method of teaching. This teaching method is effective because people learn best through the lessons they teach themselves. The case method builds students' capacity for critical thinking and models the process of inductive learning-from-experience that managers use throughout their careers. Furthermore, case studies are fun and they help to motivate students. The literature indicates many reasons why the case study method should be used in the teaching process. There are many advantages, and if the lecturer can overcome the disadvantages, the case study method will be more effective in the teaching environment.

Skills developed

Various skills can be honed from the case study method of teaching. For example, decision-making skills will prepare the students to meet the challenges

in their work environments (Seperich *et al.* 1996:3). Wessels (in Mafunisa and Maserumule 2004:11-12) states, that the case study method of teaching can help students to obtain various skills, attitudes, competencies and knowledge. The following skills are developed through the case teaching method: analytical, problem-solving, decision-making, creative, independent-thinking, critical-thinking, communication, evaluation, information-finding and judgement skills, as well as the skill of working under pressure in limited time and with incomplete information.

The skills that students develop by being exposed to the case study teaching method are as follows (IBS Centre for Management Research, 8):

- Qualitative and quantitative analytical skills.
- Problem identification, data-handling and critical-thinking skills.
- Decision-making skills, including generating different alternatives, selecting decision criteria, evaluating alternatives, choosing the best alternative, and formulating congruent action and implementation plans.
- Application skills, using various tools, techniques and theories.
- Written communication skills, involving regular and effective note-taking, case reports and case exams.
- Oral communication skills, including speaking, listening and debating skills.
- Time management skills.
- Dealing with individual preparation, small-group discussions and class discussions.
- Interpersonal or social skills, dealing with peers, solving conflict and practicing the art of compromise, in small or large groups.
- Creative skills and finding solutions that suit the unique situation of each case.

From the above it is clear that various skills can be honed when using the case study teaching method (which can assist the student when facing similar real-life situations).

TEACHING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AT A DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Section 1.3 of Unisa's *Open Distance Learning Policy* (Unisa 2008:1) states, that the University is South Africa's only comprehensive dedicated distance education university. Section 1.1 of the same policy states, that with the 2015 Strategic Plan Unisa dedicates itself to becoming *the* African university in the service of humanity. As we can see from the policy, Unisa is an open distance learning institution in the service of humanity. Unisa has on average

a total number of 250 000 registered students. In the Department of Public Administration, the ratio of the number of lecturers to the number of students is 1:800

Distance learning entails that the lecturer is physically separated from the students, and teaching takes place via print. This means that generic tutorial letters and study guides, multimedia, online material and commenting on written compulsory assignments are the modes of communication. Lecturers answer telephonic and e-mail queries on course content *via* the same medium (Slabbert 2009:48). The Department of Public Administration and Management at Unisa communicates with the students predominantly via print media.

In the 1980s an epistemological debate took place between a school of thought that adhered to the traditional approach to the subject Public Administration that was followed in South Africa, and a school of thought that was striving to introduce innovation and new content into the academic field to increase the professional actions of public servants (Wessels & Pauw 1999:334). Since the negotiations for democracy commenced, public administrators wanted to see changes in the field of Public Administration.

Initiatives were taken to transform the discipline and the institutions where Public Administration was taught. These initiatives included a course on case study teaching and writing at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, (Wessels and Pauw 1999:337). In November 1991, the New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI) organised the Mount Grace Conference that was attended by academics and practitioners of Public Administration. The resolution taken by the group became known as the "Mount Grace Resolution" and was as follows: 'The current theory, teaching and practice of Public Administration in South Africa is in a crisis' and 'new approaches to the study, teaching and practice of Public Administration are necessary' (Wessels and Pauw 1999:338). Some took this call seriously and innovative teaching methods and practices within Government were brought about.

Various South African academics were given the opportunity to learn to use the case teaching method in Public Administration. Academics from the Departments of Public Administration and Public Policy at Harvard University were asked to teach this innovative teaching method to South African academics. Over a six-year period, academics were given the opportunity to attend a five-day training session on the case study method of teaching Public Administration. Ultimately choice to integrate this teaching method into the curricula of the different tertiary institutions was left to the discretion of the academics.

The case study teaching method has been incorporated into the curricula at most universities. To date, this method of teaching has not been incorporated into

the distance education environment in the discipline of Public Administration at Unisa. This is despite the fact that case studies have been incorporated into other disciplines at the University. Academics feel that marking answers to questions on a case study requires too much time since a large volume of students is registered at Unisa (as can be seen from the lecturer–student ratio).

The present National Diploma of Public Administration and Management at Unisa consist of 19 subjects. There are six first-year subjects, of which Public Decision Making I forms a part. Public Decision Making I consists of a study guide that contains the theory that the students have to learn. Two to three tutorial letters are sent to the students during the year, which are used to relay information from the lecturer. Physical contact is limited to two face-to-face classes per year, which are not compulsory.

A definition of “graduateness” was given at a presentation by the Tuition Committee of the College of Economic and Management Sciences (Unisa 2010:2-3), of which the Department of Public Administration and Management is part. The aim of the college is to produce graduates who are responsible, accountable, relevant and ethical. Lecturers have to impart knowledge, skills, attributes and values to the students to enable them to become competent and professional graduates who can make positive contributions to society, their professions and their workplace. The education, teaching, learning and assessment process must provide a foundation of values and core competencies (namely knowledge, skills and attributes).

One of the challenges that the lecturer faces is that skills have to be transferred through a written medium. Practitioners expect the students to be ready to work in the public sector by the time that they complete the diploma course. When using the case study teaching method, the lecturer gives the student an opportunity to become acquainted with the work environment – even though the student is working with a case study. The author of this article used an innovative teaching method (namely, the case study teaching method) to assist the students to learn the new concepts and theory by relating the theory to the case study.

RESEARCH METHOD AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the study

Emory (1985:60) states that if the research is concerned with finding out who, what, where, when and how much, then it is descriptive. When considering the aforementioned, this research is descriptive, since the researcher wanted to ascertain what students’ perspectives were of having a case study as

an assignment as part of their studies in Public Administration, at a distance education institution.

The method of data collection

A survey, or *ex post facto* design, was applied in this study, because the researcher interrogated subjects and collected their responses. In using this design, the researcher had no control over the variables. Furthermore, the variables could not be manipulated since the researcher could only report on what happened (concrete events). Notably, the researcher should not influence the variables to introduce bias (Emory 1985:60). Students' perceptions were taken into account, as they responded to the questions on their experiences of having a case study as an assignment at Unisa.

The purpose of the research greatly influenced the use of certain methods of data collection and on the data analysis. The qualitative research method was used in this study, as this research approach allows for a different view of the theme that is studied. Furthermore, respondents or participants have a more open-ended manner of providing their views (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit 2004:5). This can be seen from the questions as they relate to the students' experiences of a case study.

Henning *et al.* (2004:5-6) are of the opinion that the qualitative method of enquiry examines the qualities, characteristics or properties of a phenomenon to gain more insight into an explanation. The data was collected through careful documentation and was analysed qualitatively. In following this approach, the researcher searched for integrated primary themes. The data was analysed by trying to establish a pattern in and a reason for the way in which something happened. In qualitative research, the researcher wants to discover what the actions of the people are, what they think and what they feel. The researcher wanted to ascertain what the students' experiences were and what they thought and felt about using a case study as an assignment. This included whether they felt there was value in learning through this teaching method.

At Unisa, assignments have formed part of formative assessment in the Public Administration and Management diploma course. Both assignments are compulsory and the student must complete them in order to obtain a valid year mark to write the examination. The first assignment consisted of ten multiple-choice questions and the second assignment consisted of an essay that had to be 15 to 20 pages long. All the information to complete both the assignments was included in the study guide. This formative assessment method has been used for the past few years for all six of the first-year subjects.

The Public Administration lecturers found that some students copied the entire assignment from the study guide and did not use additional sources,

as was required. This process did not assist the student in acquiring any skills or knowledge on the topics that were covered in the assignment. It merely indicated that the students could copy the information from the study guide. As stated previously, the researcher teaches Public Decision Making I and, due to the low pass rate and problems students experienced in understanding the theory and concepts, the researcher decided to use the case study teaching method to teach this course. The researcher conducted the study over a two-year period, from 2007 to 2008, and used the case study teaching method while the students provided feedback on their experiences.

During 2007 and 2008, Assignment 01 for Public Decision Making I consisted of ten multiple-choice questions and Assignment 02 consisted of a case study. The students had to complete both assignments, since the marks they obtained would count towards their year marks and enable them to gain admission to write the examination. For Assignment 02, the students were requested to complete the case study questions (which were marked and counted towards their final year marks) in section A. Section B consisted of a voluntary section in which the students had to supply their biographical details and a questionnaire with ten questions. This helped the researcher to evaluate the students' experiences of having a case study as a compulsory assignment.

The students had to complete the following ten evaluation questions in section B:

- In your own experience, is a case study useful in assisting you to understand ethical issues? Elaborate on your answer.
- Did you experience any difficulties when completing this assignment? If so, what type of difficulties?
- Given a choice, would you prefer a case study or a theory-based assignment? Substantiate your answer.
- How do you compare your experience of a case study assignment with your experience of a theory-based assignment?
- Was this assignment more difficult or more rewarding? Please substantiate your answer.
- Did the content of the case study assist you to obtain a deeper understanding of the topics covered (i.e. ethics in the public sector)? Please substantiate your answer.
- Which skills did you use when completing the case study assignment?
- Do you think that a case study bridges the gap between theory and practice? Why? Please substantiate your answer.
- How do you, as a student, feel about using a case study in a distance education environment?
- Please provide recommendations on the use of a case study as an assignment.

Data analysis

The sample selected for the data analysis was 10% of the total number of students who registered for the subject during the years concerned and who completed the questionnaires.

The number of students who were registered for each of the two years was as follows:

- 2007 – 592 students
- 2008 – 823 students

The number of respondents to the questionnaire for each of the two years was as follows:

- 2007 – 444 respondents – 75% response rate
- 2008 – 577 respondents – 70% response rate

Analysis of results of empirical research

In this section, the researcher discusses the perspectives of the students on four of the identified questions, namely questions 1, 7, 9 and 10. The researcher provides the responses from the students in the questionnaire.

Question 1 was as follows: 'In your own experience, is a case study useful in assisting you to understand ethical issues? Elaborate on your answer.' With this question, the researcher wanted to gain more insight into the students' experiences regarding the use of a case study as a teaching method. In other words, did the case study help the students to understand the theory? The responses from the students were as follows:

- Allows one to put into practice what one has learnt.
- It helps one to research more on the topic discussed.
- Sharpens the mind.
- Helps us to understand the issues better.
- More fun to answer.
- Provided better understanding of theory.
- Is helpful as it provides practical examples of what is happening in the public sector.
- Helps us realise why it's important to act correctly in the work environment.
- Assists students to get to know more about how to handle a situation.
- The case study bridges the gap because it is practical.
- The theory is made simple to understand.
- Allowed students to use their discretion.
- Taught students to differentiate between right and wrong.

- Case study assignments are informative.
- Prefer case study to theory-based assignment.
- It assists you to be aware of things you were not aware of.
- A case study helps you to find out things for yourself and helps you to think out of the box.
- A theory-based assignment is like spoon-feeding because it is not challenging, as the answers are right there.
- The students had to consult various sources of information and this exposure contributes towards a better understanding of the theory and practice.

From the responses provided, it is clear that the students feel that the case study helps them to understand the theory. The common responses were that the students found the case study very helpful and easy to use, since it provided practical examples of what happens in practice. The literature states that wisdom cannot be taught and it is only through self-discovery that the students learn the best lessons, as opposed to the regurgitation of large volumes of information. The researcher is of the opinion that the case study teaching method contributes to the overall learning and development of the student.

Question 7 was as follows: 'Which skills did you use when completing the case study assignment?' With this question, the researcher wanted to determine the skills used. The responses were as follows:

- Interpersonal, analytical, writing skills and understanding of issues.
- Innovative thinking.
- Research skills, library skills and internet searches.
- Interviewing friends and family on their opinions of the case study.
- Thinking out of the box.
- Critical thinking skills.
- Creativity.
- Logical thinking.
- Reading skills.
- Practical skills; placing myself in the shoes of the decision-maker.
- I role-played the case study at home with my siblings and listening to their lines, I managed to answer with my own words, and I learnt where ethics really come from.
- Information gathering skills.
- Communication skills (encoding information).
- Related case study to own similar experiences in the past.
- Consultation.
- Problem-solving skills.

An interesting comment one student made was that he role-played the case study at home, which also indicated creativity. The common responses were that the case study assisted the students to gain skills – even though it was used in a distance education environment. The literature states that various skills can be honed by using the case study teaching method and the researcher concurs with this.

Question 9 was as follows: ‘How do you, as a student, feel about using a case study in a distance education environment?’ The researcher posed the question on the students’ experiences of a case study assignment in a distance education environment. Overall, the students felt comfortable using a case study. Their responses were as follows:

- Fun way to learn.
- It’s not good, as distance education needs theoretical study.
- Provides the student with opportunities to acquire new skills of learning.
- Should be used more often in a distance education environment.
- You have to think on your own, as there’s no lecturer close to you.
- Provides an opportunity to broaden knowledge.
- Because of the distance, it is easier to understand a case study, as it does not need explanations as the facts are provided, just for the student to understand the story and have fun.
- Engages the student to debate and go on a fact-finding mission.
- Brought my lecturer right in front of me.
- Promotes interaction with colleagues and people from other sectors.
- Brings you closer to the reality.
- The case study method encourages the student to learn from experience.
- It is very difficult, as I have to use my own thinking in some cases that I am not sure that are correct or not; it would be better if there were classes to attend.
- More interest in case studies, more interest in studies.
- Case studies help students to think for themselves.
- I would prefer to use it in a classroom discussion.
- It is the best and effective way of learning in a distance education environment.
- A case study encourages me to study and helps me not to feel bored.
- Use it more often as it makes the assignment exciting and interesting and it makes the theory more understandable.
- A case study is like story-telling and it is not easily forgotten; when you write the theory, you will recall the case.
- Case teaching emulates learning through individual discovery and lessons are learnt actively, not by theory.
- The student drives himself and the lecturer acts as a facilitator.

The common remarks were that the students enjoyed this learning experience. The researcher is of the opinion that case studies can be regarded as a useful pedagogy – even when teaching in a distance education environment.

Question 10 was as follows: ‘Please provide recommendations on the use of a case study as an assignment’. With this question, it was important for the researcher to establish students’ recommendations for using a case study as an assignment. This gave the researcher ideas to implement the next time a case study would be used. The observations from the students were as follows:

- Case studies should be used more often as an assignment, as it provides students with opportunities to prove themselves in discovering their own knowledge and they can be more at ease with this method.
- Should be used for examinations as well.
- Case study assignments must not be difficult, especially for students who are doing their first year in distance education.
- The case study should be set in a way that will be encouraging and rewarding.
- A case study should be used in each and every subject offered.
- Case studies should discuss a difficult situation, which needs complex decisions to be taken, which will help to make the students good managers who will be able to meet challenges and deal with problems faced in the work environment.
- Lessons learnt from experience are impossible to unlearn, thus this is a good learning method that should be used more often.
- The practical content of the case study must relate to the theoretical content of the study guide.
- Students should discuss the case online.
- It is an economical and time-saving means of exposing the students to a practical situation.
- If we could have case studies in all modules as assignments, the students will have a better understanding of Public Management as a whole.
- Take every chapter of the study guide and develop a case study around it, and it will help in the understanding of the material faster and also to highlight one’s research skills.
- One could also integrate different courses and have one case study cover both courses.

The students felt comfortable with the use of the case study teaching method and made very good recommendations, which the researcher will implement the next time. The researcher is of the opinion that the students enjoyed the exposure to a new teaching method and also liked the new fun way of learning.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The students preferred the case study as a teaching method to a theory-based assignment. They felt that they learned more from a case study, since the case study bridged the gap between theory and practice. The students stated that they did not experience problems with completing the case study. The students found a case study assignment much easier than a theory-based assignment, since they could relate the case study to the theory they had learned, or *vice versa*. The students felt satisfied with the use of a case study as an assignment in a distance education environment, since it helped them understand how the theory was practised in the work environment.

The results from this study indicate that the case study teaching method assists the students to apply the theory they have learnt to the case, which made understanding the work environment much easier. The case study teaching method allows the students to learn by making decisions and choices on their own, which is what happens in the work environment. A few students indicated that the case study could be used in the examination. The researcher feels that, even though the majority of the students felt that they preferred a case study to a theory-based assignment, the students are afraid of the unknown in the examination. The majority of students indicated that the use of the case study teaching method helped them to gain a deeper understanding of the theory discussed.

Furthermore, the majority of the students were of the opinion that they used various skills when completing a case study assignment. The students gave positive ratings to the overall quality of their learning experience. A significant majority indicated that they would be willing to have case studies as part of the assignments in all their subjects. While some students indicated that they were uncomfortable with the use of the case study as an assignment, these differences were not significant. The findings are important, as they suggest to the lecturer who is reluctant to use case study teaching that students think it is possible to learn from this teaching method and that they want the lecturers to use this teaching method.

The results also indicate that the students think it is possible to learn various skills from the case study teaching method in a distance education environment that is similar to those that are realised in a face-to-face environment. The majority of the students were of the opinion that, as a teaching method, the case study could be used in a distance education environment. According to the literature, a case study as a teaching method can be used successfully in the classroom environment where the lecturer is present and can assist the students in discussing the case study. The lecturer assists the students and guides them towards the learning that should take place. In a distance education environment,

the students work through the study material alone and answer the assignments by themselves. Although the proponents of the case study teaching method are of the opinion that case studies are effective in the classroom environment, the researcher has proven that this teaching method can be used just as effectively in the distance education environment.

CONCLUSION

A case is a description of an actual situation where a decision-maker or the manager has to make a decision about a problem or an issue that a person in the organisation faces. In learning with case studies, the student must deal with the situation in the case study by taking on the role of the manager or decision-maker who is facing the situation. However, the student can make a decision without facing any true consequences. By using a case study, the student learns to think independently. During the process of case study teaching, the student can develop independent ideas from actual experiences. The student is given a vehicle (the case study), which presents an opportunity to apply the theory s/he has learnt to a practical situation.

The researcher applied a qualitative research method to gain insight into student's perspectives, which was the focus of the study. This research examined students' perspectives on the use of a case study as an assignment in a distance education environment. The respondents provided their perspectives on the case study teaching method and gave insightful recommendations that the researcher will implement. However, caution is necessary – students were registered for the diploma in Public Administration and Management, which constitutes a single discipline.

The analysis of the responses suggests that the students view this teaching method in a favourable light, even though a very small group of students are uncomfortable with this teaching method. In general, the students were positive about their quality of learning and their experience of a case study in a distance education environment. Given the literature, numerous references were made to the positive effect that a case study can have on a student's learning. These findings are informative – particularly to lecturers who do not want to use the case study teaching method.

The majority of the students held the view that they used various skills successfully when answering a case study assignment. A large majority of the students also felt that the case study teaching method assisted them to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Furthermore, they were of the opinion that this teaching method can be used successfully in a distance education environment, because this teaching method can assist the students to learn.

Case studies as a teaching method for Public Administration have not been attempted at Unisa. However, this study provides conclusive evidence from the students that this teaching method can be used successfully and can facilitate the learning process for distance education students.

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The sustainability of Integrated Development Planning

A case study of KwaZulu-Natal Province

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ABSTRACT

Executing integrated development planning (IDP) to advance development was partially a successful endeavour. The KwaZulu-Natal Government undertook to improve alignment and capacitating of provincial departments and local government to undertake IDP in a sustainable manner. IDP is defined as participatory planning processes for optimal allocation of scarce resources in a manner that promotes sustainable growth, equity and empowerment of the poor. IDPs are meant to assist municipalities in decisions on municipal budgets, land management, promotion of local economic development and institutional transformation in a consultative, systematic and strategic manner. The typology of this paper views IDPs as “triple bottom line”: economic vitality, social equity and environmental sustainability. Synthesising local development planning cannot be overemphasised. Preparation and assistance afforded to municipalities in fulfilling developmental responsibilities is of paramount importance in service delivery. IDPs are the “*nucleus*” of municipalities. The critical question is whether provinces support municipalities successfully in initiating and maintaining co-operation in the IDP process. Is feedback to municipalities a critical reflection of identified gaps in IDPs? Alignment of municipal IDPs to strategic initiatives of provinces and country-wide initiatives is crucial to ensure that development is “on track”. Several recommendations arise from this article including, *inter alia*, improving KwaZulu-Natal’s performance.

INTRODUCTION

The South African Government has a Constitutional mandate to deliver services to promote the quality of life of all citizens. The strategic management of integrated development planning (IDP) was identified as the primary developmental instrument across the three spheres of government to address basic needs of the poor. National and provincial spheres of government were assigned concurrent planning competencies, such as regional planning and development, and urban and rural development. Designated exclusively to the provinces, was provincial planning. Municipalities were made responsible for municipal planning and development. Striving to improve the integrated development plans of municipalities in the various provinces is a challenging demand on governance and local management.

Municipalities in South Africa have transformed to realise their visions and missions. The increasing pressure to make optimal use of scarce resources has brought planning and management at a strategic level to the fore, and are critical for sustainability of municipalities in all provinces.

Municipalities face complex problems with often difficult solutions when it concerns citizen participation. The challenge exists for municipal institutions to gauge citizen preferences in the context of complex governmental decisions. According to Robbins and Coulter (2006:565), the specific role that citizens play is often under-estimated, and at times, the citizens' voices are not heard or often marginalised, as highlighted:

“In the ideal bureaucracy, there is no place for citizen participation. Citizens lack technical expertise, are unfamiliar with bureaucratic routines, and are emotionally involved in issues rather than being detached and rational. Citizens are outside the hierarchy and therefore hard to control. As a consequence, participation may increase the time needed to reach decisions as well as the level of conflict” (Robbins & Coulter 2006:565).

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

According to Ehlers and Lazenby (in Theron 2007:1), strategic management is defined as:

“... the process whereby all the organizational functions and resources are integrated and co-ordinated to implement formulated strategies which

are aligned with the environment, in order to achieve the long-term objectives of the organization, and therefore gain competitive advantage (or edge that an organization has that others don't) through adding value for the stakeholders."

It can, therefore, be said that strategic management has significance and relevance for IDPs in local government, which is termed "developmental" in nature.

DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Mogale (in Mhone and Edigheji 2003:219-226), the present developmental local government model is premised on the recognition of the primacy of linkages between development, service delivery and local citizen participation, defined as the organised effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions. The challenge for the current local government dispensation is to deepen and strengthen local democratic culture. This will invariably ensure that participation becomes synonymous with development.

In this context, the characteristics of developmental local government are maximising social development and economic growth (stimulating local economies and job creation); integrating and co-ordinating (mainly through IDP); democratising development (harnessing the input and energy of local citizens) and leading and learning (building social capital at the local level to enable local solutions to address development problems). The key outcome of developmental local government includes, *inter alia*, the provision of household infrastructure and services; the creation of livable, integrated cities, town and rural areas; local economic development and community empowerment and redistribution (Republic of South Africa 1998:18).

There exists a fundamental building block of the RDP philosophy, as echoed by Burkey (1993:48) as:

"Development involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and in relations between individuals as well as between groups within a society".

From the afore-going definition, the need for active pursuit of development for local citizens is emphasised. It follows then that a synergy exists between strategic planning and municipal governance, which is captured in the following discussion.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE

Strategic planning and municipal governance are intrinsically linked. The alignment of the visionary goals and objectives of the City is interwoven with a city development strategy. It is emphasised that strategic urban planning rests firmly on the foundation of a consensus-based model of urban governance, as highlighted in this statement from Castells and Borja (in Pieterse 2008: 70) on urban strategic planning:

“Strategic planning is directing change based on participatory analysis of a situation and its possible evolution and drawing up of an investment strategy for the scarce resources available at critical points. The diagnosis takes into consideration the settings (globalization), the territory (its various dimensions) and government (or system of public agents). Special consideration is given to dynamics i.e. social demands, critical points obstacles, bottlenecks and potential. The diagnosis is used to determine foreseeable situations, possible scenarios and desirable situations, which are taken as the starting point for laying down projects to attain it”.

Therefore, according to Dale (2004:15), the key strategy for any organisation is how that organisation relates to its environment in achieving its aims, vision and mission. Furthermore, Ehlers and Lazenby (2004:1) conclude that factors which made organisations thrive in the past and were perceived as the norm, are constantly becoming dated. Public institutions have to plan and manage carefully for their future success by being able to acquire new competencies and fend off potentially crippling unforeseen circumstances.

In strategic spatial planning by some government institutions, Albrechts and Van den Broeck (2004:746) traced the origin of strategic planning to the 1920s and 1930s where government institutions gave direction to the activities of others. For Healy (2004:746), strategic planning was closely linked to the modern nation state and different government authorities were guided in the implementation of welfare policies. Motte (in Albrechts *et al.* 2004:743) found that urban and region planning practices focused primarily on projects such as the upgrading of inner cities and regeneration of deprived regions and land use regulations.

Dalal-Clayton *et al.* (in Theron 2007:13) highlighted the emergence and development of strategic planning in developing countries from independence onwards. Although various approaches were followed over the years, strategic regional plans sought to address a variety of development challenges. These include the ongoing migration of people from rural areas to cities; reducing regional inequality by redistribution, resource allocation and response to local

needs; securing rural livelihoods by more effective service delivery such as health care, education and agricultural extension, and limiting the degradation of natural resources. Strategic planning gained ground and is currently firmly on the developmental agenda of developing countries, promoting integrated rural development within the context of good governance based on decentralised district and local government structures.

In municipalities, strategic management is synonymous with strategic planning. The notion of strategic management and planning is a global phenomenon. To this end, the Local Government Management Board encouraged municipalities, according to Reddy (1996:98) highlights that:

“...to adopt a strategic approach...[as] traditional structures, practices and procedures are being re-examined to find new ways of improving service to their communities”.

From the afore-going discussion, the local government context is therefore set in a political and changing environment with recognition of the need to plan for uncertainty. The net effect is a long-term plan focusing on organisational and managerial aspects. In the context of local government, it would be more appropriate to refer to strategic planning as a process by which top management (municipal council) determines ways of managing the (municipality's) [authors' emphasis] external environment, threats and opportunities, as well as choosing and implementing the strategy that the municipality follows. Many municipalities have found it necessary to formulate strategies to address, inter alia, structural reform, change management, affirmative action, gender sensitivity, local economic development, environmental issues, inner city revitalisation, community safety and now, public participation through IDP. Local authorities, including municipalities are adopting strategic management techniques geared towards systematically planning the total resources of the organisation in order to achieve certain goals within a specified time (Reddy 1996:98-99).

LEGAL COMPLIANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is emphasised that the format of municipal strategic plans is prescribed by legislation. The most important policy documents are the *Constitution of 1996*, the *Local Government: Systems Act of 2000* (Act 32 of 2000) (MSA), the *Municipal Financial Management Act of 2003* (Act 56 of 2003) (MFMA) and relevant regulations. The Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001, as well as the Performance Management Regulations for Municipal Managers and Managers Directly Accountable to Municipal Managers, 2006,

are regarded as essential for the purposes of this discussion and research. These documents prescribe a structure according to which municipalities should compile their long, medium and short-term strategic plans.

According to Bekker (2007:5-7), the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000* (Act 32 of 2000), hereafter referred to as the MSA, established municipalities to perform their primary duties as developmental agencies. The purpose of the MSA, *amongst others*, is to establish a simple and enabling framework for planning, performance management, resource allocation and organisational change. Contrary to the broad, goal directed provisions of the Constitution, the MSA contains more specific and detailed pointers regarding the strategic and performance management processes in municipalities. Section 25 of the MSA requires municipalities to adopt a single, inclusive strategic plan for the development of their communities. This plan, known as an IDP is approved for the term of office of a newly elected municipal council, i.e. for a 5-year period. It is regarded as the principal strategic management mechanism that guides and informs all planning activities, outcomes and outputs of a municipality.

Bekker (2007:7) further asserts that, the MSA (Section 26) identifies core components of strategic management as reflected in an IDP. Core components that have significant reflection in this discussion are: vision, objectives, priorities, institutional strategies, operational strategies, financial plan and budget projection and key performance indicators and performance targets.

Although relevant regulations and other policies focus on the strategic and tactical levels of municipalities, it is essential that strategies on the lower (divisional and operational) levels also meet the legislative criteria. This is important for two reasons: *firstly*, is to ensure uniformity in the format of presentation of strategic planning (e.g. the inclusion of the basic elements of objectives, key performance indicators and targets) from the highest level in a municipality to the operational level, and *secondly*, for meeting the policy requirements of strategic planning and the alignment of objectives and strategies of the lower order with the higher order (strategic and tactical). This approach minimises unwanted occurrence of strategic drift in a municipality.

Several South African municipalities face limited resources and increasingly diverse demands that make it impossible to address all the developmental needs in a short to medium term. IDPs should empower municipalities to prioritise and strategically focus their activities and resources, asserts (Coetzee 2002:14). These include prioritising crucial issues, focusing on analysing key problems and exercising alternative strategic options.

Therefore, an IDP as a strategic planning and management tool stresses the importance of decisions that will ensure a municipality's ability to successfully

and effectively respond to changes in the environment (Van Der Waldt 2007:100).

Integrated development planning is therefore a management tool that enables municipalities to take a broad strategic view of their development requirements and to address all the key issues in a holistic IDP. This initiative involves the “triple bottom line”: economic vitality, social equity and environmental sustainability, as highlighted previously in the paper (Van Der Waldt 2007:95–95).

The next discussion highlights some key benefits of IDPs, which has relevance and contributes to the thrust of this paper.

PERTINENT OUTCOMES OF IDP

Since the introduction of integrated development planning the following outcomes in this regard have been observed.

- **IDP as an instrument for local empowerment**

There are several proponents of the literature on IDP, and many comment on the extent to which it has demobilised South Africa’s civil society. Many authors concede that IDP have been prescriptive and state-led, and have failed to allow creative input, innovation and learning that can translate to popular participation on the ground. For Heller (1994:1), the post-apartheid South Africa can be seen has a form of customer worship, and an institutional space for democracy and local participation. The IDP is a proponent for representative democracy at the local level of government.

IDP has contributed to a greater focus on service provision in poor communities and its contribution to a fundamental transformation of the unequal socio-spatial landscape is less certain. There is no indication that IDP has made any impact on the spatial disjuncture created under apartheid, while the deep inequalities in land ownership and access to basic services are clearly visible (Subban 2009:118).

- **IDPs as wish lists**

There is also invariably a gap between the planned ideal and the reality, a contradiction commonly present in societies undergoing transformation. This is particularly evident in the IDP wish-list approach in South Africa and the bureaucratic indifference of municipal government on the ground. Development planning needs to move beyond simply being reparation for the past, and should focus on development as a key to a better quality of life for all local citizens. Development planning must be integrated with participation and democracy. Some key characteristics of IDPs are cited to elaborate on civil society’s participation in municipal spatial development.

- **Effective vehicle to facilitate communication**

Within the municipality, the IDP provides a basis for interaction among officials, councillors, citizens, the private sector and other role-players, to promote strong networks, alliances and partnerships in order to realise the vision of developmental local government (Coetzee 2000:13). Furthermore, the IDP facilitates a system of communication among the local, provincial and national spheres of government, thereby promoting intergovernmental co-ordination (Van der Waldt 2007:102).

- **Essential tool to alleviate poverty**

IDP addresses the socio-economic imbalance of the South African society. The outputs of IDP therefore reflect on the improvement of living conditions of the poor. To this end, poverty alleviation can be achieved by the following aspects:

- Prioritizing poverty issues;
- Developing multi-sectoral strategies for poverty alleviation;
- Identifying poverty alleviation projects;
- Developing operational strategies for employment of the poor;
- Promoting job creation through local economic development programmes; and
- Preparing spatial frameworks for integrating the poor into the economy Coetzee (2000:5).

- **Facilitator of focused budgeting**

The IDP process facilitates budgeting in accordance with planning by linking the municipal budget to the IDP as required by legislation. Identifying the priorities together with communities and other role-players are key aspects in ensuring that the budget is optimally utilised. Strict financial control and effective financial management are not possible unless there is a focused budget (DBSA & NBI in Van der Waldt 2007:103).

- **Vehicle to ensure local corporate governance**

The approach of IDP seeks to involve all stakeholders and to be given an opportunity to engage as effectively as possible in the decision-making processes and the action of the municipal councils (Van der Waldt 2007:103).

- **Instrument to overcome the impact of the apartheid legacy**

There are several challenges of the past, which IDPs attempt to address, and which has an impact on current and future generations. Two important issues noted here are the promotion of integration of rural and urban areas with different socio-economic groups, and places where people work and live with facilitating the redistribution of resources in a consultative process.

- **A performance management tool**

The IDP is a key strategy for local government to become the focal point where development projects of all spheres come together. Therefore, to

expand the significance of the IDP as a performance management tool, municipalities are required to link their IDPs to their Service Delivery Budget Improvement Plans (SDBIP).

IDP RELATING TO THE SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT

The three distinctive although inter-dependent and inter-related spheres of government, namely, National, Provincial and Local, were established to undertake South Africa's developmental mandate.

As stated earlier, the Constitution required from the provincial governments to manage the provincial planning process and also mandated provinces to supervise, support and monitor the local government sphere. Co-operative governance and strong accountable provincial strategic management of IDP therefore, were unequivocal requirements for the implementation of the development mandate in executing provincial planning and the upliftment of communities that were left behind (Theron 2007:3).

An interesting discussion of planning is proffered by Kabra (1997:212), who argues that development planning is a multi-level, multi-agency, multi-stage, multi-disciplinary exercise, aimed at achieving a multiplicity of goals. It presumes a certain kind of relationship between various spheres of government, economy and civil society, and bases itself on a division of roles, responsibilities and resources among them for formulation of plans.

Development planning is a part of social praxis and has to begin by facing the reality that there must be a practical concern for desired changes in output. The discussion which follows reflects a relationship between IDPs *vis-à-vis* relationships in government.

The implementation of the IDP in the local government sphere has brought a new approach to the activities of municipalities in South Africa. This new approach calls for a developmental orientation from municipalities (Parnell in De Vries *et al.* 2008:98). The IDP process requires municipalities to work closely with provincial and national spheres of government.

The planning processes undertaken by a municipality must be aligned with and complement the development plans and strategies of other affected municipalities and organs of state for co-operative governance. The local government planning framework also determines that municipalities are required to comply with planning requirements in terms of national and provincial legislation.

The direct and operational relationship between municipalities and provinces arising from the IDP process is determined by specific stipulations in Sections 31 and 32 of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act. The following

questions regarding the IDP process from a holistic perspective are pertinent (De Vries *et al.* 2008:101):

- Are the IDP support units of the provinces able to assist municipalities in the IDP process as required in the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000*?
- Are the resources sufficient and is there enough autonomy and capacity to provide the necessary support for municipalities and inter-institutional collaborations and co-ordination?
- Is the approach in the IDP assessment process appropriate? and
- Does a province in the IDP assessment process support the objectives of bringing about the realignment and redistribution of resources between the different local areas in a municipality and between different areas between municipalities?

Provinces should concentrate on assisting municipalities to focus their IDP process on strategic issues instead of non-strategic aims. To conduct the IDP process successfully, municipalities depend on positive links, collaboration and co-operation between all applicable government structures. The critical question is whether provinces support municipalities in initiating and maintaining co-operation in the IDP process. Is the feedback to a municipality mainly a critical reflection of identified gaps in the IDP? The MSA requires continuous consultation with municipalities throughout the different stages in the IDP process and the question remains as to whether the provinces consult with the municipalities. The notion of consistent engagement and consultation ought to be a permanent feature of the IDP.

Sustainable relationships between local and district municipalities, and specifically between municipalities and provincial structures, are of utmost importance in the IDP process, but is this happening? If there is a lack of collaboration, then provinces and national departments will not deliver their services in alignment with local priorities and needs. Therefore, it must be emphasised that the infrastructure and capacity of the provinces must be developed in order to ensure that the municipalities' expected role in the IDP process is achieved (De Vries *et al.* 2008:102)

A national planning framework needs to be given within which provinces could give municipalities guidance on this expected role. Therefore, National Government has resolved that a National Planning Commission (NPC) consisting of 20 part-time members (*Sunday Times* 24 January 2010) be established in 2010, the aim of which is encapsulated in the revised Green Paper (Presidency 2009:1) on the NPC:

“The establishment of a (NPC) is the embodiment of government’s efforts to improve long term planning and rally the national around a common set

of objectives and priorities over the long term ... The lack of a coherent long term plan has weakened (the government's) ability to provide clear and consistent policies. It has limited (the) capacity to mobilize all of society in pursuit of ... developmental objectives. It has hampered (the efforts) to prioritise resource allocations and to drive the implementation of government's objectives and priorities ... More focus on planning and more attention to coordination are related interventions to remedy what has not worked".

Within this proposed context, provinces should improve their roles and responsibilities in development planning as discussed in the next section.

ASSESSING VERTICAL INTEGRATION THROUGH IDP – THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCES

South Africa's choice for a system of concurrency rather than a system of strict division of responsibilities means that integration of the various spheres' activities on a particular function is essential for the success of the decentralised development effort. The provincial role in the IDP is that the creation of national and provincial departments of local government, and the location of monitoring and support of IDPs in these departments, are proving to be serious challenges in the integrative potential of IDPs. Local governments and IDPs should become more a line function of these particular departments.

The real and actual content of IDPs should arise from interaction with line departments. Provincial and national line departments should not regard the alignment of departmental policies with IDPs as a responsibility of the national and provincial departments for local government. The immense value of the IDP process and its invaluable source of information for planning and budgeting are paramount for a municipality. The absence of a clear overall provincial strategy in KwaZulu-Natal, for example, seriously impairs the exercise of judging IDPs against a province's mission. Overall, provincial strategies, such as the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Strategic Economic Development Strategy (PSEDS) of 2006 emphasising corridors and nodes, should not be drafted in isolation, but should take into account the groundwork done by municipal IDPs.

The Green Paper on National Strategic Planning (2009:27-28) envisaged that through a system of intergovernmental planning that the provincial and local sphere of government would be actively involved in planning for coherence in intergovernmental planning and policy making. The Presidency foresees that institutional linkages should be developed with counterparts responsible for strategic planning and policy co-ordination in provinces and municipalities.

Capacity for planning and co-ordination needs to be strengthened at sub-national levels. Products of planning such as the envisaged national vision, Medium Terms Strategic Framework, provincial growth and development instruments and municipal integrated development plans will have to be aligned. It is important to view the role of local government on a horizontal level with regard to the IDP process. A discussion on horizontal integration thus follows.

HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION AND CO-OPERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES' IDP

The institutional design of local government should provide mechanisms according to which decentralised entities that operate at the same institutional level can integrate their policies. There are a number of provisions that deal with horizontal co-operation. The MSA instructs the conglomerate of municipalities (the district municipality and the local municipalities within the district) to co-operate with one another by assisting and supporting one another. Local municipalities may provide support to other local municipalities within the district upon request and within available capacity.

Municipalities must ensure that their planning is aligned with, and complements the development plans and strategies of other affected municipalities. If a particular IDP does not measure up to the principle, there is a role for the MEC to resolve disputes or differences in connection with the IDPs of different municipalities. This could take the form of requesting a municipality to amend its IDP. Therefore, the MSA places horizontal co-operation within the context of co-operative government. The instruction to municipalities to consider each other's IDPs is more a tangible form of horizontal co-operation. However, little is known about the efforts of municipalities to adhere to this instruction. It is expected that, as the provincial assessment of IDP matures into a system of integrated review, the horizontal integration will gain momentum (De Visser 2005:231-2).

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF IDP AS A MEANS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The preceding discussion in this paper demonstrated that legislation requires development planning to be participatory, as well as a process that incorporates the voices of the communities affected by planning initiatives. It is common knowledge that the top-down approach to municipal leadership and policy-making has failed to promote development and improve the lives of poor

communities. According to Pienaar (in Mngxali 2006:6), consultation and participation is at the heart of planning and should not be seen as a distraction. The Education and Training Unit (ETU) for Democracy and Development (<http://www.wetu.org.za>) in Mngxali (2006:6) establishes the importance of participation in planning, and highlights the following list of benefits with relevance to this paper:

- Better understanding of the strategy and plans;
- Increased commitment and support for achieving them;
- Better decisions in the planning process;
- Relevant decisions based on experience and local knowledge; and
- Sustainable gains because of the increased commitment, skills and understanding of community.

Therefore, development planning initiatives to invoke public participation are critical for shaping the spatial discourse of IDPs for local municipalities (Bunker in Theron and Subban 2010:8).

A discussion on the assessment and evaluation of IDP follows.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO IDP – ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Implementation of development plans is an ongoing process and needs careful analysis, assessment and evaluation. Todaro and Smith (2006:530) reflect on factors that impact on plan-making and implementation. Key factors cited are unexpected economic events, lack of political and technical will, lack of institutional capacity, administrative, support and management skills, lack of co-ordination between stakeholders, lack of skilled staff, insufficient and unreliable data, too many objectives, insufficient public participation, role identification and management of implementation.

These challenges are further identified by Van Der Waldt *et al.* (1997:282) in the application of strategic plans as follows:

- Lack of formulating a long-term vision;
- Inability to react quickly to change;
- Forecasts may not be achieved;
- Process is time-consuming, expensive and complicated; and
- Strategic plans may be difficult to reconcile with government's objectives and budgets.

From the above discussion, these key variables highlight the need for strategic planning and management, capacity building and IDP as building blocks for

institutional and community partnerships in the quest for enhanced service delivery and improved quality of life for all.

A focus on integrated planning in KwaZulu-Natal follows:

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF IDP IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Some of the more pertinent aspects on strategic planning of IDP in KwaZulu-Natal are presented in the following discussion:

- **Provincial-wide planning**

Subsequent to the introduction of integrated development, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government embarked on drafting a Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS), which was adopted in 1996. The plan was implemented until 2000, upon which various draft reviewed plans were developed, but never adopted. KZN is to date without a politically adopted PGDS and related Spatial Development Framework (SDF). However, the Provincial Cabinet approved in October 2006 a Provincial Spatial Economic Development Framework (PSEDS) consisting of nodes and corridors to guide public and private investment in KZN.

- **IDP**

On introduction of IDP, the then national Department of provincial and Local Government developed guidelines for drafting IDP. These guidelines were finalised in 1998 and tested through a municipal pilot programme consisting of three municipalities in KZN. At a later stage, a further set of guidelines was developed for drafting IDP, and these are still in use.

After the 2000 election, municipalities were required to draft IDPs in accordance with the MSA. To improve the quality of IDPs in 2005, IDP hearings were conducted during which the plans were scrutinised by a multi-disciplinary team of experts. To improve the quality of IDPs further, the DPLG initiated joint IDP assessments and engagements with Provinces in 2006 and 2007 to make IDPs more “credible”, based on the IDP Credibility Assessment Framework of March 2006. In 2008 and 2009, decentralised provincial assessments were undertaken to save on costs (KwaZulu-Natal 2009/10 IDP Assessment Report, Municipal Strategic Planning Unit, 22 September 2009: 4).

- **Assessment results**

The results reflect the empirical performance of municipalities in the Province with regards to IDPs. The discussion below reflects the performance in the Province from 2007 to 2009 (Presentation, MEC Panel Key Observations on 09/10 IDPs and Recommendations 22 September 2009). The aim of this type of feedback is to demonstrate, support and monitor the performance of

municipalities, and ultimately contribute to the developmental mandate of local government.

- **Assessment results for 2007/2008, 2008/09 and 2009/10 reflect as follows:**

According to the Presentation on the MEC for Local Governments' Panel on Key Observations on the 09/10 IDPs and Recommendations dated 22 September 2009 the following is noted, namely 61 Draft IDPs were ready for assessment in 2009 with 60 ready in 2008 and 58 in 2007. In 2009 the lowest credibility score was 35%, 37% in 2008 and 16% in 2007). The highest credibility score was 93% in 2010, (89% in 2008 and 83% in 2007).

- In addition, 30 out of 61 IDPs have reached the IDP credibility benchmark of 60% in 2009, and 35 IDPs in 2008). Metro and all 10 District Municipalities are above the benchmark, with the lowest at 70%. 8 district families are above the benchmark.

- **The assessment results for 2009 were in accordance with the following key aspects:**

- Municipal Transformation and Institutional Development: 3.13
- Local Economic Development: 2.79
- Basic service delivery and Infrastructure development: 2.76
- Financial viability and management: 3.16
- Good governance and Community participation: 3.23
- Spatial Planning and Spatial Development Frameworks (SDF): 3.03

- **Support to weak IDPs**

There is an overwhelming need to provide support to the weaker municipalities regarding their IDPs. Support for weaker IDPs focused on the following key aspects:

- Budget allocations;
- Identification of 5 weakest IDPs;
- Appointment of Service Providers; and
- Hands-on support in Municipalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that in order to enhance the credibility of IDPs and to facilitate the future assessment of IDP that:

- Standardised formats of IDP documentation by all municipalities;
- Sector department participation in the IDP;
- Alignment and coordination amongst all spheres of government;
- Alignment of performance management, IDP and budget processes;
- Flow from objectives and strategies to implementation and monitoring;

- Not only short terms objectives and strategies are reflected in the IDP;
- IDP should have up-to-date information and incorporate community surveys; and
- IDP should be readable and easily understandable.
(KZN 2009 IDPs and Recommendations)

From the abovementioned discussion, efforts to assess the relative failure or weakness of integrated development plans by municipalities is complex and multi-dimensional in nature, asserts Andrews, Boyne & Walker (in Boyne, Meier, Toole & Walker 2006:30).

SEIZING CONTROL OF IDP – DELIVERING THE “DREAM”

Translating the IDPs into practical deliverables is a challenging matter. The adoption of a simple, practical approach to designing and implementing IDPs is crucial to the quest and if delivery is to improve, then one has to stop doing what has not worked, and start doing things that will contribute to solving the systemic problems in society (Manning 2006: 120-4).

Provincial governments especially the departments of local government, as well as treasuries should assume a more strategic and focused role with a view to provide support and resources to low-capacity municipalities and assist them in the formulation of their IDPs (Koma 2010:117).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to provide a discussion on the paradigm shift and emphasis on local government from transition to transformation and strategic governance. The ultimate intention is to improve the sustainability of municipalities’ development planning initiatives. The shift initiated a plethora of legislative and transformation processes which culminated in, amongst others, IDP. Currently, the structure and strategic functioning of municipalities must deal skillfully with the communities that urge policy changes, as they are viewed as a collective body that can add value as input-providers to IDP. Municipalities are challenged to satisfy the intense demands of local communities through the primacy of integrated planning, realistic development, and active citizen participation. In this paper, perspectives and insights regarding the development planning landscape, institutional context within which it takes place, organisational apparatus for undertaking planning and measures for promoting appropriate plans as managed and measured by the Province were discussed.

IDP is examined as one very discernible tool to address the strategic focus of municipalities. The outputs of strategic interventions by municipalities and the provinces affect communities. Ultimately, satisfaction of public desires depends on commitment and delivery.

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An overview of the link between ward committees, development and community participation with reference to the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

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ABSTRACT

In terms of prescriptions contained in developmental legislation including the *Local Government : Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, participation by local communities in the affairs of their municipality must take place through, *inter alia*, the ward councillor as well as other appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures established by the municipality. Ward committees, as advisory structures to the ward councillor and as a structure established by the municipality, are required in terms of national legislation to ensure that there is public participation in matters of local government. As such it is the objective of ward committees to enhance participatory democracy and local development in the areas in which they have been established.

In this article the role of ward committees is reviewed within the context of developmental local government. The legislative framework

pertaining to ward committees is also analysed and critically evaluated and certain recommendations are proposed.

INTRODUCTION

International experience has shown that one way of achieving successful and lasting models that will ensure citizen participation in governance is the establishment of structured and institutionalised frameworks for participatory local governance. According to Cloete (1997:12), the central government prior to 1996 showed little interest in municipal affairs and contributed marginally to the development of local government and administrative systems appropriate for South Africa's urban areas. This underscores the importance and relevance of the establishment of ward committees as vehicles for public consultation and participation.

In South Africa, ward committees are regarded as special-purpose vehicles for public participation. They are expected to establish effective and continuous communication with and between the community, the ward councillor and the municipality. Communication in any institution is critical to its success (Knipe, Van der Walt, Van Niekerk, Burger and Neil 2002:107). This is the reason why democratic states prefer mass participation of the citizenry in the decision-making process (Black, Calitz and Steenkamp 2003:69). As it is impractical for each community member to take part in every decision the municipality has to make, a representative system has to be developed. Such a system involves the election of ward councillors and Proportional Representative (PR) councillors who represent the various communities in council. According to Section 157 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, elections can either be on a purely proportional basis (Proportional Representation) or a pure ward system. The system used in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) comprises a combination of the two. At the third local government elections of 18 May 2011, the residents of the NMBM elected 60 ward councillors as well as 60 PR councillors by their respective political party. Both groups combine to form a municipal council of 120 councillors.

There is a difference between a Ward councillor and a PR councillor. The ward councillor is the link between the Council and the voters. This is the person one consults on community issues which require intervention from the municipality. It is the councillors duty to give regular feedback to the inhabitants about council decisions, developments and budget plans that affect the community. A ward councillor is required to operate from a municipal office

in the ward. In terms of Section 73(2)(a) of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, the role of the ward councillor is to represent that ward in the council and must be the chairperson of the ward committee. According to the *Eastern Cape Herald* of 17 May 2011 (p 1 col 3–5, p 2 col 3, p 4 col 3–4), a PR councillor is elected by the political party through its leadership lists and is primarily accountable to their political party. The PR councillor interacts with party structures at local and provincial levels. A PR councillor assists in governance matters and serves on committees, task teams and forums such as Youth, Disability and Gender desks formed by the council. PR councillors have a responsibility to make important decisions by voting in Council on issues such as council resolutions, by-laws, policy changes, planning and the annual budget. PR councillors may debate governance issues in the party's caucus, where they have the opportunity to represent differing views on the issues based in the interests of their constituencies and their own judgment. PR councillors may also serve as a substitute chairperson of a ward committee if the ward councillor is unavailable. Both PR and Ward councillors can be elected to serve on the mayoral committee which has a total of 12 members. The NMBM has 120 councillors split equally between PR and Ward councillors.

The democratically elected representatives of a local community are known as councillors (Venter 2001:207). According to Meiring and De Villiers (2001:94), the work that a councillor does is always time bound and linked to a specific place, whether a municipality or a ward. On the other hand, no development can take place in an area without the identification and recognition of the needs, interests and expectations of community members as a whole (Meiring and De Villiers 2001:97). It follows that certain councillors, as chairpersons of ward committees, are responsible for ensuring that community needs are identified and prioritised through some form or system of public participation.

From the categories indicated above, it is clear that the ward committee system in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality falls within the second category of public participation systems, namely induced participation (a sponsored, mandated and officially endorsed system). In the section that follows the link between ward committees, development and the importance of community consultation and participation is discussed.

LINK BETWEEN WARD COMMITTEES, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

It can be argued that the main focus of ward committees is to influence public participation in identifying and prioritising their developmental needs. It is necessary to first define and understand development. Development is both a

subjective and objective sustainable increase in the quality of life of an individual or a community (Cloete and Wissink 2000:77). This view of development is based on that of Torado (1997:76) and implies that:

- Development is not an end product, but a continuous process of improvement in living conditions;
- Development has both subjectively perceived and objectively determinable dimensions (a state of mind and a physical reality);
- Development can be durable, which implies that it must empower people to improve their own conditions themselves over a long period, in a relatively independent way; and
- Development needs a balanced or synchronised improvement in different policy sectors (social, cultural, economic, political, organisational and technological) and in the areas of basic life-sustaining and higher-order needs in order to be durable.

According to Cloete and Wissink (2000:78), the level of development in a community is determined by the initial starting conditions, such as natural conditions or events caused by policy decisions and the influence of public participation.

A similar conceptualisation of development is adopted by Torado (1994:16-19), who holds the view that development must represent change through which an entire social system moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a condition of life regarded materially and spiritually as “better”. In this regard, it is argued that at least three core values should serve as a conceptual basis and practical guideline in understanding the meaning of development, namely:

- To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods and services such as food, water, shelter and protection;
- To raise levels of living, including higher incomes, the provision of jobs, improved education and greater attention to cultural values; and
- To expand the range and economic choices available to individuals by liberating them from dependence and servitude resulting from alienating material conditions of life.

The above definition agrees with that of Meiring and Parsons (1994:32), who define development as the purposeful change of the environment in order to improve the well-being of the inhabitants, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. To achieve this goal of promoting the general welfare of inhabitants, Meiring and Parsons (1994:32-33) are of the view that development must aim at:

- Eliminating poverty caused by a lack of the means to provide for food, clothing, housing and other material needs;

- Eliminating social problems; and
- Empowering each citizen to attaining a good and specific standard of living.

According to the World Development Report (1994:2), sustainable and meaningful development can be achieved if, amongst other things, a strong voice and responsibility is given to the communities and stakeholders involved in the development. This highlights the imperativeness of public consultation and participation in development.

It is, therefore, evident from the preceding discussions that community participation does not happen in a vacuum. Communities are motivated to participate by the prospect of bringing development to their areas – development that is sustainable and empowering. This is development that focuses on basic essential human needs such as water, food, health, safety and the like. It also focuses on the utilisation of indigenous knowledge in ensuring that development is appropriate to local conditions and needs. The work of the ward committees, therefore, is to understand development in the right context and to engage the community in the identification of their needs and prioritising them against scarce resources. An overview on the performance of ward committees in influencing public participation in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality now follows.

PERFORMANCE OF WARD COMMITTEES IN NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY IN INFLUENCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In terms of Section 72 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, only metropolitan municipalities and local municipalities of certain types may have ward committees. In establishing a municipality, it must comply with, *inter alia*, Sections 73(1) and (2) of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, which stipulates that –

- “(1) If a metro or local council decides to have ward committees, it must establish a ward committee for each ward in the municipality;
- (2) A ward committee must consist of:
 - a. The councillor representing that ward in the council, who must also be the chairperson of the ward committee; and
 - b. Not more than 10 other persons”.

In terms of Section 73(3)(a) of the above Act, the other ten ward committee members are composed of elected representatives from –

- Women's organisations in the ward;
- Other targeted groups in the ward (youth, disabled and the like); and
- Representatives from voting districts in the ward.

The following are a number of challenges that face certain ward committees in the NMBM:

- Insufficient training regarding municipal issues and the role and responsibilities of ward committee members;
- Absence of a working relationship with community structures;
- Interference by politicians in the implementation of development projects;
- Community needs that exceed budget provisions;
- Incorrect understanding of the roles of ward committees resulting in confusion and misunderstanding in the community; and
- Insufficient resources, limiting ward committees in discharging their role of public participation (Shaidi 2007:53–54).

In order to meet the above-mentioned challenges, the following recommendations were proposed to the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality:

- That roles and responsibilities of the ward committee members be clarified in order to avoid any future confusion and unnecessary clashes with the community;
- Adequate resources be made available to ward committees;
- Relevant and continuous training programme be developed and implemented so that ward committee members understands clearly their roles and responsibilities;
- Incentives be given to ward committee members where they exceed their expected targets; and
- That the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality should consider introducing a performance management system for ward committees (Shaidi 2007:54–55).

Section 72 – 78 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, provides for:

- The roles, powers and functions of ward committees;
- Strengthening of participation of the communities in local governance;
- Capacity building and support to ward committees, including resources; and
- Ward committees and regulatory frameworks.

Regarding the functions and powers of ward committees, Section 74 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998* stipulates that a ward committee may make recommendations on any matter affecting its

ward to the ward councillor or through the ward councillor, to the metro or local council, the executive committee, the executive mayor or the relevant metropolitan sub-council and has such duties and powers as the metro or local council may delegate to it in terms of Section 32 of the Structures Act, 1998. In order for ward committees to attain a certain level of functionality, adequate provision of financial and infrastructural resources was also essential (Shaïdi 2007:55–57).

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is considering a new approach to strengthening its ward committee system, in order to render it more effective. A report from the Public Participation Unit of NMBM (2008) identifies the following as the main shortcomings over the preceding three years in the role the ward committees played in influencing public participation:

- The ward committee system in the NMBM was launched as late as 2003;
- Certain ward committee members were appointed directly by ward councillors, instead of being elected by their sectors;
- The ward committees were operating below the expected optimal levels in that:
 - They did not always meet regularly to strategise their public participation plans;
 - Certain ward committees did not sit to discuss, debate and interrogate the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) or municipal budget as required;
 - Certain ward committees failed to submit agendas (from the communities) to the portfolio committees of Council for consideration; and
 - Certain ward committee members attended IDP and budget presentations given by municipal officials, but were unable to comprehend, follow or participate in the debate thereof.
- The cluster system used in grouping the ward committees had not yet reached the desired efficiency levels;
- Ward committee meetings and public participation meetings were not being held as frequently as desired. Ideally, ward committees should meet once every two months; two weeks after that they should meet with the broader community for the purposes of reporting as well as harnessing community participation. Certain ward committees met the community once in five months only, or only at special events, like elections;
- Certain of the Business Units of the municipality did not conduct public participation through the ward committees or the Public Participation Office. This caused confusion and uncertainty and possibly compromises community participation;
- The ward committees were not adequately resourced in terms of office equipment, administrative support and funding;

- Ward committee members worked on a voluntary basis. However, a large number of ward committee members were unemployed individuals who have no steady income. This compromised the time and resources such as transport available to them to fulfill their roles in influencing public participation;
- The Public Participation Unit of the NMBM was understaffed. The Cape Town Metro had two public participation officials for every five wards, while the NMBM deployed four officials for sixty wards, which worked out to two officials for every thirty wards. Each NMBM official, therefore, dealt with six times more wards than his/her counterpart in the Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality. The ideal number suggested by the NMBM Public Participation Unit was 29 public participation officials for the existing 60 wards (Public Participation Unit NMBM 2008).

It is clear from the above discussion that the effectiveness of certain of the ward committees in influencing public participation was questionable. This is despite certain strategies employed as prescribed by legislative prescriptions contained in “developmental” legislation including the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998* and the *Local Government : Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*.

It is evident that with regard to the challenges faced by and performance of ward committees generally in South Africa that the following resources should be provided if they are to fulfill, *inter alia*, their prescribed public participation roles:

- Capacity building and training in local government matters;
- The introduction of a performance system to ensure ward committees carry out their public participation roles;
- A system of reimbursing transport costs incurred by ward committee members when traveling on official engagements related to community participation; and
- Adequate infrastructure and finance commensurate with the obligations of ward committees (Shaidi 2007).

It is clear that as ward committees are currently viewed against the background of their advisory status only, attention needs to be directed towards possibly redefining their roles and responsibilities in local government. As advisory structures it is debatable whether they have a meaningful role to play in influencing policy making at the local sphere of government.

In the section that follows, ward based planning as a tool for community participation will be discussed.

WARD BASED PLANNING AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

It is proposed that most municipalities in South Africa need to set up the necessary infrastructure aimed at facilitating ward based planning. In this regard, the primary purpose of ward-based planning is to give effect to the provisions of, *inter alia*; the following local government legislative prescriptions:

- Sections 16, 17, 29(1)(b), 34 and 42 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000*; and
- Section 23 (1) (a) of the *Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003*

In terms of Section 16 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance, and must for this purpose –

- “(a) encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including in –
- i. the preparation, implementation and review of its integrated development plan;
 - ii. the establishment, implementation and review of its performance management systems;
 - iii. the monitoring and review of its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance;
 - iv. the preparation of its budget, and;
 - v. strategic decisions relating to the provision of municipal services.”

These provisions are emphasised again in Sections 16, 17, 29(1)(b), 34, and 42 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000*, as well as in Section 23(1)(a) of the *Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003* which require a municipal council to take cognizance of the views of its local community during the tabling of the annual budget of the municipality.

It is proposed for purposes of this article that the following key stakeholders should be actively involved in any ward-based planning processes implemented by municipalities in South Africa (Shaidi 2007:76):

- Executive Mayor;
- Speaker of the Council;
- Councillors;
- Ward Committees;
- Certain municipal officials;

- Trade Union/Shop stewards and their members;
- The local business sector; and
- Facilitators/Service providers.

It is further recommended that the following representatives should be nominated from each ward in order to represent the broader community in the ward –

- 2 ward committee members;
- 2 members from special sectors in the ward;
- 1 representative from the youth sector in the ward;
- 1 representative from the women's sector in the ward;
- 1 representative from the health sector in the ward;
- 1 representative from the housing sector in the ward;
- 1 representative from the safety and security sector in the ward; and
- 1 representative from the sports sector in the ward.

It is clear from the above discussions that ward-based planning seeks to broaden and democratise public consultation and participation in the affairs of the local municipality. This can be achieved through, *inter alia*, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budgetary processes and also through local governance with particular emphasis on the role to be played by local communities as envisaged in terms of the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, which clearly outlines the developmental role to be played by municipalities in South Africa. The section that follows reviews a pilot project in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality pertaining to a ward committee central node centre, which is situated in the township of Motherwell.

PILOTING WARD COMMITTEE CENTRAL NODE CENTRE CONCEPT

According to Carradice (at a personal interview held on 14 October 2010), ward committees are generally facing a number of challenges that inhibited their capacity to influence public consultation and participation. Amongst the challenges identified are:

- Certain ward committees had no venues where they could meet and execute their business;
- A significant number of ward committees have no access to technology like computers, e-mail and printers necessary for their communication;
- There is a lack of facilities in most ward committees; and
- Ward committees need sustained training and capacity building initiatives.

In terms of best practices guidelines offered by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the following generic roles and responsibilities are recommended for each ward committee in South Africa:

- To create formal unbiased channels and co-operative partnerships between the municipality and the community in the ward;
- To ensure contact between the municipality and community through the use of and payment for services;
- To create harmonious relationships between residents of a ward, the ward councillor, geographic community and the municipality;
- To facilitate public participation in the process of development, review and implementation management of the Integrated Development Plan of the municipality;
- To act as an advisory body on council policies and matters affecting communities in the ward;
- To serve as an officially recognised participatory structure in the municipality;
- To serve as a mobilising agent for community action;
- To receive and record complaints from the community within the ward and provide feedback on council responses;
- To make recommendations on any matter affecting the ward to the ward councillor, or the local council, the executive committee and the mayor;
- To execute other functions as delegated by the municipality;
- To participate in all stakeholder cluster forums; and
- To be represented by their chairpersons in the council's study groups (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2007:13-15).

In view of the above, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality has piloted a ward committee central node centre in the Motherwell township which has implemented, *inter alia*, the following ideals (Shaidi 2007:78):

- A building equipped with communication infrastructure, facilities and a fully equipped boardroom to host all the cluster's ward committee meetings in order to be able to prepare responses to council plans, execute resolutions, draft and prepare documents, and to meet with community members;
- Manning the centre with two or three officials to provide secretarial/administrative support to a cluster of wards (approximately six wards form one ward cluster). Such officials control the usage, bookings and maintenance of the venues in the centre; and
- Each central node consists of five offices, and are used as follows:
 - one open-office facility for ward committee members which operates by appointment;
 - one office for officials;
 - one boardroom with facilities; and

- one hall (seating capacity: 80 community members).

From the above, it is evident that the ward central node concept is based on the need to –

- Cluster a number of wards (six to seven) and provide shared services in order to attain economies of scale;
- Streamline and eliminate unnecessary duplication and costs;
- Manage ward committees' actions in a more corporate manner;
- Offer shared services nearer the wards, such as training, joint meetings; and
- Provide for sound and structured administrative and secretarial support (Shaidi 2007:81).

It is also clear from the preceding discussions that the ward committee system in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is still faced by a number of challenges, ranging from lack of clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of ward committees amongst ward committee members, to lack of resources and apathy in public participation on the side of the community. The ward committee central node approach should, therefore, be seen as a piloted attempt to address these challenges in a structured and organised manner.

CONCLUSION

There appears to be a lack of skills and capacity amongst certain ward committee members in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, which in turn limits the ability of ward committees in influencing public participation and consultation. A further inhibiting factor appears to be the lack of facilities and equipment needed by ward committee members in order for them to perform their duties more effectively. It is suggested that the introduction of a performance management system for ward committees could be a step in the right direction. Lessons learnt from the pilot ward committee central node centre concept in Motherwell could also assist by informing future empowerment needs of ward committees countrywide. What is clear is that ward committee structures in South Africa still have numerous obstacles to overcome if they are to play a meaningful role in local government matters.

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The utilisation of ward committees as an effective tool for improving service delivery

A case study

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ABSTRACT

The socio-political environment within which the local sphere of Government operates, is regulated by a legislative framework that aims to enhance public participation, thus facilitating effective service delivery. This article argues that public participation could be used as a vehicle through which municipalities can achieve efficient service delivery. This article assesses the legislative framework with regard to the establishment and roles of ward committees, as well as ward-based planning. The common challenges that ward committees face are also explored in detail. The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality is used as a case study in this investigation.

INTRODUCTION

Local Government plays a major role in providing basic services, as a requirement for maintaining a reasonable and acceptable standard of living. Over the past few years, municipalities have faced challenges in providing equitable public service delivery throughout South Africa. Dissatisfaction concerning service delivery led to protests in various municipalities. There are a variety of causes that could have triggered these protests, such as misaligned

local governing structures and the lack of public participation by the community members in decision-making concerning the quality of services.

Municipalities have a responsibility to promote development within their surroundings and. Moreover, they are responsible for further enhancing local democracy to help promote a more effective Local Government. The article analyses the composition and duties of ward committees, as well as their functionality. This research is driven by the participatory role that the community should play, through the facilitation of ward committees. Furthermore, a comparative study is made in terms of the functioning of municipalities, as well as the dissatisfaction of their residents. An analysis of ward committees within the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM) will be used as a case study. Among a plethora of issues raised, suggestions are further proposed in an attempt to overcome the service delivery challenges.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Historically, in South Africa, the notion of ward committees was first introduced in the Cape of Good Hope when the *Burghers* (ordinary citizens) pressed for a greater share in the Colony's Government in the 18th century. These wards were governed by the *Wardmasters*, whose responsibilities were to *firstly* keep a register of persons residing in their areas (wards) and *secondly* to report to the committee of the High Court on particular municipal and criminal matters. However, it later became evident that the role of the *Wardmasters'* roles evolved into particular relationships, where contact between the people and the municipal commissioners was promoted. These commissioners were members of the committee of the High Court, where laws were made and executed (Craythorne 1997:126-127).

WARD COMMITTEES

To strengthen democracy, the South African Government established the ward committee system in December 2000, in accordance with Sections 72-78 of the *Municipal Structures Act*, 1998. The intent was to improve service delivery by bridging the gap between the respective communities and the municipal structures. Among others, ward committees should be able to enhance participatory government, by collectively organising communities concerning ward jurisdiction (Smith 2008:13). Local Government plays an important role in enforcing Municipal, Provincial and National Government policies within municipalities to ensure effective and accountable service

delivery in a specifically defined jurisdiction. For this reason, ward committees are established.

A ward committee is an area-based committee whose boundaries coincide with a ward's boundaries. These committees have no specifically assigned duties, legislative and executive powers. Hence, they are established as committees that play an advisory role to the council, in accordance with Sections 73 and 74 of the *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998* (hereafter called the MSA).

Despite the variety of challenges municipalities face, ward committees could encourage and formulate programmes to promote public participation. This can help ensure that a municipal council is in a better position when making decisions to help facilitate improved service delivery. Public participation is essentially a process that engages communities from the planning to the implementation and the evaluation phases of a particular activity or a project (Draai and Taylor 2009:114).

From the above, it could be deduced that consultation with the community plays an important role in every municipal development plan. As alluded to earlier, a proper mechanism with the potential of ensuring an effective public participation process should be in place. Subsequently, ward committees should enable communities to take charge of the participation process. According to Draai and Taylor (2009:114), this will result in the transfer of process-based skills, knowledge and ownership to the local community. In addition, Napier (2008:163) suggests that, in solving the dilemma of service delivery in municipalities, the ward committee structure should focus on increasing the involvement of the municipal communities when decisions are made within the Local Government sphere.

Committees concerned with ward-related affairs are regarded as the mechanisms that enable public participation within Local Government. Ward committees could serve as the vehicle for promoting local participatory democracy. As a result, the rationale for their establishment is to ensure the necessary contact between the communities and the Government institutions. Furthermore, ward committees should also support the elected councillor to represent a specific sector in the municipal council, in terms of Part 4 of the MSA.

Establishment

A ward committee should include the councillor and persons representing women, youth, religious groups, sports and welfare, environment, education, community-based organisations, ratepayers' associations, traditional leaders, the disabled, the informal traders' association, agricultural associations (where

applicable) and community safety forums. However, the committee may not exceed 10 members (Reddy and Sikhakane 2008:681). It is also important to note that only registered voters belonging to a particular ward may be elected to form part of the concerned ward committee. Other qualifications could be required, as contained in the relevant municipal by-law. Aforementioned could prescribe the criteria to be followed when establishing a ward committee, as well as its functioning and management.

Section 72(1) of the MSA determines that ward committees can only be established within Metropolitan and Local Municipalities of a special type (*i.e.* executive structures within council), but not in District Municipalities. Currently 283 municipalities exist, as depicted in Table 1. Only 231 Local (category B) and six Metropolitan (category A) Municipalities (excluding 46 District Municipalities) can establish ward committees.

Section 73 of the MSA requires the councillor of a particular ward to be the chairperson of a ward committee. A ward committee is not a political forum, and as such it should not be made up of the members of one interest group or only a political party to which the councillor may be affiliated. This is important, as the MSA in Section 73(3) requires a Metropolitan or a Local

Table 1: The establishment of ward committees per province

Province	Population	Number of Metropolitan Municipalities	Number of Local Municipalities	Number of wards	Number of established ward committees
Eastern Cape	6 527 747	1	38	636	636
Free State	2 773 059	–	20	300	300
Gauteng	10 451 713	3	8	423	423
KwaZulu-Natal	10 259 230	1	50	771	771
Limpopo	5 238 286	–	25	513	513
Mpumalanga	3 643 435	–	18	365	365
Northern Cape	1 058 060	–	27	174	174
North West	3 271 948	–	21	365	365
Western Cape	5 278 585	1	24	348	243
Total	48 502 063	6	231	3 895	3 790

Adapted: CoGTA (2009:14)

Council to acknowledge and emphasise the importance of the representation of gender and a diversity of interests within a particular ward, when electing the members of a ward committee. This could be emphasised in the election procedures that the respective councils compile. In fact, Section 72(3) of the MSA defines the objective of the ward committees as the enhancement of participatory democracy in Local Government. It also enables a municipality via a ward committee to contribute to the processes followed to deliver the goods and services, as expected by the municipal community.

Most municipalities who authorised to establish ward committees have established them in order to comply with the legislation to help foster community participation. Some municipalities have decided to refer to these community participation structures as development forums, residents' associations or ward forums and intend to utilise them for the similar purposes than ward committees (Putu 2006:14 and City of Cape Town 2010).

In 2009, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) released a report: *The State of Local Government*. The report stated that within the 283 municipalities in South Africa, 3 895 wards were demarcated. In all the wards, except for 105 wards in the Western Cape Province, ward committees have been established, as indicated in Table 1.

It is unclear why the Western Cape Province did not establish ward committees in all the municipalities that were entitled to establish them. Their failure could range from the perception that ward committees are non-representative, under-resourced and have no significant authority to make decisions (Naidu 2008:86).

By facilitating public participation, ward committees can help municipalities to determine community needs. This will assist municipalities in identifying the services municipal communities require, as well as contribute towards establishing and advancing the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). As such, the need for formulating an IDP arises to effectively develop a mechanism for identifying community needs and priorities, and to design administrative and managerial practices to meet these needs.

Role of the ward committees for sustainable, effective service delivery

The democratically elected South African Government faces a major challenge of ensuring that municipalities provide optimal and efficient services to a citizenry that consists of heterogeneous cultures (Pretorius and Schurink 2007:19). It is imperative that the elected legislatures receive a mandate from the citizens concerned with regard to their collective needs. As a result, public participation is without a doubt an effective method to determine respective

communities' needs and expectations. Chapter 4 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000* promulgates the development of community participation, through community-based structures. As a legitimate right of all citizens – particularly those who were previously disadvantaged – Pretorius and Schurink (2007:19) are of the opinion that access to effective public services should not be reserved for the privileged. All citizens are entitled to equitable service delivery. They should therefore be involved in determining priorities during activities aimed at satisfying the actual or perceived needs.

Challenges facing ward committees

Ward committees are a prominent channel for communication through which communities inform municipal councils about their needs, expectations and problems. Naidu (2008:86) is of the opinion that the present structure and form of ward committees in South Africa are dysfunctional. Furthermore, Naidu believes that it has weakened the role that participation plays within the municipal structure. This failure could be ascribed to various reasons including:

- Ward committees' lack of credibility to influence decision-making.
- Ward committee members' lack of commitment in their endeavours. Some ward committee members perceive ward committees as a mere stepping-stone towards realising their political ambitions.
- Power relations (i.e. political interference) undermine the role of ward committees – a ward councillor is a politically elected representative, and by default s/he is chairperson of a ward committee that has the potential of promoting partisan interests.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

In 2003 Government attempted to augment the functioning of ward committees by introducing the Community Development Workers (CDWs) system. CDWs are public servants who are assigned to municipalities to ensure that all spheres of Government deliver services by utilising the multi-skills they have acquired. The introduction of the CDWs created problems, as ward committee members often perceive the CDWs as a duplication of ward committees. However, this is not the case, as CDWs are remunerated by the State and are subject to the *Public Service Act, 1994* (Proclamation 103 of 1994). As a Provincial Government assign CDW's to specific wards, they are not accountable to a municipal structure but to a provincial structure. Basically, the CDWs assist communities by integrating the functions of all Government Departments to accelerate a community's access to those services. As a result, the ward

committees are concerned with the services that a municipality provide, while CDWs are required to ensure that all of the services rendered by the respective spheres of Government are integrated into the respective municipality (DPSA 2007:14).

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Notwithstanding the legacies of Apartheid, the disparity in terms of service provision by municipalities is still a major concern. It therefore becomes important for municipalities to integrate their services and development activities with those of other spheres of Government, thus achieving the principles of co-operative government, as envisioned by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. This helps enable a process that ensures and promotes the co-ordinated planning and management of policies. This process is called the Integrated Development Plan (DP) (Craythorne 2003:149-150). An IDP is a mechanism that involves the entire municipal community in finding the best possible solution to achieve long-term development goals through municipal strategic planning. An IDP helps to (ETU undated):

- ensure the effective use of scarce resources in municipalities;
- speed up service delivery;
- attract additional funds;
- strengthen democracy;
- overcome the legacy of apartheid; and
- promote co-ordination among Local, Provincial and National Governmental institutions.

It should be noted that ward committees have a three-fold function in the IDP processes. Through their ward committees, communities are central to *firstly*, participation in creating an IDP; *secondly*, managing municipal performance; and *thirdly*, participation in the municipal budgeting process to give effect to the IDP. However, all these functions are interrelated. For instance, through an IDP, municipal budgeting is aimed at achieving identified key development priorities. Performance management is inevitable, as an appropriate system is needed to realise the municipal vision and mission (DPLG and GTZ 2005:57). Naidu (2008:91) alludes to the fact that a clear service delivery plan should form the basis of all IDPs. Through the priorities determined in an IDP, municipalities could be held accountable by their electorate for achieving or failing to achieve the objectives set out by the municipality's IDP.

The concept of public participation in Municipal Government was developed to facilitate ward-based planning, strategic priorities of municipalities and

to ensure that municipal planning targets are achieved. Through ward-based development plans, communities have an opportunity to ensure that the IDP developed for the municipality addresses the priorities and the concerns of all sectoral interests within a ward (Institute for Performance Management 2007).

In a report commissioned by an *ad hoc* committee on service delivery for the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, it was established that about 25% of the municipalities across the country experienced service delivery protests. Furthermore, these protests did not occur across an entire municipality, but only in specific wards – especially where disadvantaged community members live (CoGTA 2010:6). The so-called *service delivery protests* could even be traced back to the community's lack of participation in the processes required for formulating the IDP.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND THE IDP

Public service delivery is defined as the end-product of a chain of plans and actions involving municipal and provincial plans, as well as the national budget, by a range of stakeholders through local consultations (Hemson, Carter and Karuri-Sebina 2009:156). Thus, service delivery can be regarded as the goods and services that Government is expected to provide to ensure the sustainable livelihoods of its citizens.

An IDP aligns the key priorities of a specific ward in accordance with the urgency of the need, as expected by the community. A community should list the need for access to

- electricity,
- primary health care, and
- facilities.

Through its budgeting process, the municipality will be responsible for ensuring that the delivery of these services is prioritised.

CITY OF TSHWANE METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY WARD COMMITTEES

The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM) is the administrative capital of South Africa and is a Category A Municipality. It is located in the north-western corner of Gauteng Province. In 2010, at 65 km x 50 km, the CTMM made up almost 13% of the province's total surface area of 2 198 km². It should however be acknowledged that the demarcated size of the CTMM

will be expanded after the 2011 Local Government elections. It is important to note that the CTMM is the second largest municipality in Gauteng. The CTMM consists of 76 wards (subject to change after the 2011 Local Government elections) (CTMM Annual Report 2008/2009:8). These 76 wards are organised into groups of eight to nine wards, which subsequently forms a zone as determined by the jurisdiction. Three zones create a sub-region. As such, the CTMM has nine zones and three sub-regions. Sub-regions are managed by co-ordinators who have the sole responsibility of monitoring the sub-regional development to facilitate the consultative processes by the municipal council.

In 2010, the CTMM included 686 640 households, with 28, 7% living informal dwellings. In terms of basic services, a need arises for an urgent intervention by implementing a strategic plan that attempts to eradicate backlogs. Among others, the municipality faces major challenges to improve infrastructure, such as proper sanitation, as well as access to clean water and safe and secure electricity (CoGTA 2009:71).

Internationally, civil society's involvement in government activities is gaining prominence. To facilitate ordinary-citizen involvement, there is a need for regulations to manage and administrate structures aimed at enhancing the quality of contributions. In achieving its aims and objectives, the CTMM's ward committee system effectively utilises the Executive Mayor's office and the office of the Speaker for structural support (City of Tshwane, ward committees undated:2).

The CTMM has drafted a by-law on ward committees. Although it has not been promulgated, it is aimed at clarifying the roles ward committees already play. This draft by-law highlights, *inter alia*, the powers, functions, duties and obligations of ward committees within the municipality. As a result, the draft by-law confirms the municipality's intent to establish a policy that provides direction to help enhance active public participation on a ward basis. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that the draft by-law provides a dispute resolution mechanism for its ward committees (City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, draft by-law). Although ward committees operate under delegated authority from the Metropolitan Council, they are not council committees. They operate as community structures under the chair of a ward councillor. Ultimately, ward committees are established to assist the ward councillor to perform his/her representative duties effectively.

The primary role of ward committees could be seen as the facilitation of communication between the residents and appropriate governing structures, by encouraging public participation. In the CTMM, it has been observed that ward committees have the ability to:

- educate residents;
- promote public participation and local democracy;

- serve as agents of change and transformation; and
- serve as the watchdogs of the municipal council and municipal administration.

Ward committees have many functions and deal with a range of issues. This includes issues that are beyond a municipality's structured responsibilities assigned in terms of Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution, 1996, such as housing, education and unemployment. Ward committees should receive their mandate from the communities they represent and convey this directly to the municipal council through the office of the Speaker. As a result, it is important to classify and consider the issues that are often discussed at ward committee meetings. These could be divided as follows.

Primary issues

The issues that ward committees discuss on a regular basis will be referred to as the primary issues. These are the issues that are within the delegated powers of the ward committees. These issues include:

- community safety,
- electricity and water,
- primary health care,
- infrastructure maintenance and development, and
- environmental management.

These issues have a direct and major impact on community development and ultimately contribute towards improving the living conditions of individual residents. More often, both the communities and ward committee members refer to these issues as the services they expect the municipalities to deliver. For instance, the lack of provision of such services in a municipality would amount to *poor service delivery*.

Secondary issues

Secondary issues refer to matters beyond the control of ward committees and municipalities. However, the local residents regard ward committees as agents of municipal government. These issues include:

- poverty alleviation,
- unemployment,
- eradicating the housing backlog, and
- education.

Municipalities attempt to address these identified issues. However, restrictions, such as a lack of resources exist. Through co-operative governance, the

execution of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) aims to improve the livelihoods of people by ensuring sustainability, through the provision of skills. The EPWP aims to capacitate local residents by providing opportunities for employment within the four sectors – infrastructure, environmental, social and economic. Through ward committees, the EPWP has been able to identify infrastructure needs within municipalities. Thus, an EPWP could provide employment and contribute to skills development, which improves citizens' living standards.

Challenges facing CTMM ward committees

In terms of their composition, most ward committees comply with the *Municipal Structures Act, 1998*. Section 73 of this Act contends that when ward committees are formed, gender representation and diversity of interest should be considered. The aim is to ensure that the various sectors within a ward are represented. Depending on a particular ward, the sectors that exist in a ward determine the creation of the portfolios within those wards. The common challenges ward committees face can hamper the promotion of service delivery within municipalities. Ward committees serve as structural communication mechanisms with the municipality. This means that ward committees give community members a platform to raise Government-related issues within their jurisdictional boundaries (Reddy and Sikhakane 2008:680).

Ward committees in the CTMM perform various municipality-related functions. They act as a conduit between the people (at the grass roots level) and the governing institutions. More specifically, these area-based committees assist their communities by directing their queries to the relevant stakeholders, through the office of the Speaker. This was highlighted at a particular ward committee meeting, where the issue of illegal electricity connection was discussed. The primary focus of the discussion was that people who illegally connect electricity to the main power supply has caused an electrical dysfunction, which culminated in serious damage to electrical appliances in about 23 households. As a result, the ward committee argued that it was their obligation to institute a compensation claim for the affected residents at the municipality through the office of the Speaker. They also approached the Public Protector for advice on the matter.

With regard to the effectiveness of ward committees, it is important to clarify their operations. The effectiveness of the ward committees depends on the usefulness of their instituted portfolios. For example, if a specific portfolio in the ward underperforms, it will have a negative impact on the success of the ward committee as a whole. The rationale of instituting portfolios within the committees rests in the notion that effectiveness and efficiency are

achieved only through expert knowledge and the division of labour. At every ward committee meeting, every member who is responsible for a portfolio is expected to present a report and provide feedback, should the need arise. However, members do not show equal participation. Thus, the ward committee members do not show the same passion, enthusiasm and zeal towards ward committee activities. This may depend on the issues discussed, as the eagerness or interest in a particular issue differs from one member to the next. Challenges include illiteracy, ignorance of the municipal governance and administration system, and local residents who show a lack of interest in municipal affairs. An inferiority complex tends to prevail due to illiteracy. Generally, people are afraid of participating in municipal affairs, arguing that they cannot make any worthwhile contribution (Fourie 2001:222). The lack of resident participation could lead to an ineffective participatory structure. As a result, communities might be unaware of deviations from IDPs, which could lead to unacceptable governing and administrative actions by a municipality.

Ward committees within the City of Tshwane receive structural support from the office of the Speaker. Through this support, ward committees are able to organise themselves as the liaison mechanisms responsible for a particular zone and to make the necessary logistical arrangements to ensure that they function effectively. Specific officials in the office of the Speaker are assigned with secretarial functions. These officials have to record, manage and reproduce any administrative documents, such as the minutes of the meetings in each ward within a particular zone.

The challenges ward committees face can potentially hamper the public participation process. Thus, it is important to highlight these challenges to improve public participation for the benefit of the communities. The challenges are:

Citizen involvement

Ward committees were established to promote local democracy by enhancing citizen in Local Government matters. As such, the CTMM ward committees have to increase involvement and participation to improve decision-making in the Municipality. Poor attendance tends to curtail the potential contribution ward committees could make to the municipality's effectiveness. When a public meeting is called in the informal settlements of Mamelodi to address issues of crime prevention or substance abuse, the attendance is often very poor. However, when an agenda involves housing or unemployment, venues are often filled to capacity. This further reiterates the fact that different wards have different needs. As such, a one-size-fits-all approach where a municipal official or a councillor single-handedly compiles meeting agendas, may not address the true needs of a ward, resulting in poor attendance. To encourage participatory

governance, the Municipality should provide training to the residents on municipal issues, such as the functions and powers of municipalities.

Political interference

Traces of political interference are present in almost all of the CTMM wards. Some prominent political individuals who are unaffiliated to the Council also tend to become involved in ward committee matters. Some ward committee members agree to participate in ward committees hoping to be remunerated. Some members exploit the ward committee platform to settle party political scores. Power relations are subject to possible manipulation, which affect ward committees negatively. A municipal councillor may even utilise a ward committee only as a token of compliance with the legislation. In most African National Congress (ANC) led wards, the branch political head normally becomes the ward councillor, who is then *ex officio*, the chairperson of a ward committee. This often creates confusion in as far as the responsibilities are concerned. Thus, the ward committee becomes a mere extension of a political party. Ward committees are then composed of members or supporters of the ruling party in the ward. As a result, ward committees are used as a platform to increase political leaders' status.

Lack of structured / co-ordinated plan of action

In organisational studies, evidence proves that organisations require *inter alia* a well co-ordinated and structured plan of action (POA) for them to function effectively (Robbins and Coulter 2003:232). A POA is used to direct the organisation towards successfully completing or achieving their goals. It is thus imperative for each CTMM ward committee to be able to set its goals and translate them into a POA for members to implement. To ensure an effective POA, the ward committee should include all stakeholders in its planning. Members should be given the freedom to participate in compiling such a plan, which later serves as a guideline to help determine goals. In the case of CTMM, some ward committees lack a structured POA. This has a negative effect on ward committees' contributions.

CONCLUSIONS

Taking note of the socio-political environment within which Government functions in South Africa, it is important to *firstly* emphasise that residents should be educated with regard to when, how and why they should participate in municipal affairs. Failure to do so often results in the residents' lack of participation, which negatively impacts the municipality's decision-making

processes. Consequently, the ineffectiveness of such a participatory structure would have a direct negative impact on the democratic character of Local Government and the Republic of South Africa in general.

Secondly, the ward committee system should be reviewed. Some ward committee members do not take the initiative and do not develop POAs for a committee. This has a significant impact, as the committee serves as a communication mechanism between the community structures of municipalities and individual citizens. Perhaps ward committee members should be remunerated, or financially assisted for their involvement. Ward committees could also be assigned more powers to make decisions for their respective wards.

It could be argued that the role of the CDWs should be changed, so that it does not conflict with the functioning of ward committees. However, this would require that ward committees be empowered to act as liaisons and CDWs be assigned functions to assist ward committees.

Thirdly, it is important for the municipality to formalise processes for the functioning ward committees. Through a legitimate ward committee, it is inevitable that community members will subsequently participate in Local Government matters. Their participation will help the municipal council in meeting their respective communities' expectations.

In summary, ward committees are relevant stakeholders in bridging the communication gap between the municipal councils and the communities they govern. It provides a platform for engagement on the issues that concern Local Government and its processes. Notably, ward committees are in a better position to represent the true views of their communities. Therefore, the functioning of ward committees should be a major focus area for every municipality entitled to establish them.

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Administratio Publica

ISSN 1015-4833