



VOLUME 30 ISSUE 1

# Administratio Publica



**ASSADPAM**

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

## **ADMINISTRATIO PUBLICA**

**Chief Editor:** Prof Danielle Nel-Sanders (University of Johannesburg)

**Deputy Editor:** Thokozani Nzimakwe (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

**Technical Editor:** Liza van Jaarsveldt (University of South Africa)

### **Editorial Committee**

Ms Adèle Burger (University of Stellenbosch)

Prof Enaleen Draai (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University)

Prof Liezel Lues (University of the Free State)

Prof Natasja Holtzhausen (University of Pretoria)

Prof Gerda van Dijk (North West University)

Prof Michelle Esau (University of Western Cape)

### **Editorial Council**

Prof C Auriacombe (University of Johannesburg, South Africa)

Prof M J (Jide) Balagun (Former Senior Advisor, UNDESA)

Prof B Basheka (University Kabale, Uganda)

Prof G Bouckaert (EGPA, Leuven)

Prof R Cameron (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Prof V Clapper (University of South Africa, South Africa)

Prof M S de Vries (University of Nijmegen, Netherlands)

Prof V Jarbandhan (University of Johannesburg, South Africa)

Prof G K Karyeija (Uganda Management Institute, Uganda)

Prof J Kuye (Chief Editor: African Journal of Public Affairs (AJPA), South Africa)

Prof J Lutabingwa (Appalachian State University, North Carolina)

Prof C Lynch (Southern University, Louisiana)

Prof M Macaulay (Victoria University, New Zealand)

Prof A McLennan (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Prof R K Mishra (Osmania University, India)

Prof D Olowu (ISS, The Hague, Netherlands)

Prof L A Picard (University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

Prof P S Reddy (University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

Prof C Reichard (EAPAA, University Potsdam, Germany)

Prof D Thakhathi (University of Fort Hare, South Africa)

Prof A van Nieuwkerk (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Prof M van der Steen (University of Tilburg, Netherlands)

**ISSN** 1015-4833

### **About the Journal**

*Administratio Publica* is a double blind, 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. *Administratio Publica* is published under the auspices of the Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management (ASSADPAM). Nationally, only contributions of paid-up members of ASSADPAM will be published. International authors are welcome to submit articles for review but page fees must be paid before publication.

### **Page fees**

Authors are required to pay a fee of R400.00 per page as well as R200.00 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 in to the account of ASSADPAM, but proof of payment must also be submitted to the Editor to avoid any possible delay in the publication of a contribution.

### **Where to send articles**

All correspondence concerning articles should be directed to:

Prof Danielle Nel-Sanders

School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy

College of Business and Economics

P O Box 524

Auckland Park 2006

Tel: +27 82 463 1776

Email: daniellen@uj.ac.za

### **ASSADPAM membership enquiries**

Prof M Subban

School of Management, IT & Governance

College of Law & Management Studies

Westville Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Postal address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

E-mail: subbanm@ukzn.ac.za

Tel: +27 31 260 7763

# Contents

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>iii</b>
<i>D Nel-Sanders</i>	
<b>Uncovering the Nexus between the Informal Waste Economy and Municipal Solid Waste Management in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>M Mofokeng, A du Plessis and L du Plessis</i>	
<b>Positioning Parliamentary Budget Offices within National Budgeting Processes for Fiscal Oversight in African Parliaments</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>M I Jahed and A K Kithatu-Kiwekete</i>	
<b>POSTGRADUATE FORUM</b>	
<b>A Model for Gender-based Violence Awareness</b>	<b>34</b>
The Case of Student Representative Councils in Selected South African Universities	
<i>N von Meullen and G van der Waldt</i>	
<b>Challenges to Effective and Efficient Infrastructure of Public Private Partnerships in South Africa</b>	<b>56</b>
<i>Z H Dlamini and L Botes</i>	
<b>The Relationship Between Leadership and Rules of Conduct in Instilling Ethical Behaviour</b>	<b>76</b>
Case of City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality	
<i>I A Adetunji and C Alers</i>	
<b>Public Expenditure Management Challenges in Zimbabwe</b>	<b>93</b>
Critical Considerations	
<i>A Gwiza and D B Jarbandhan</i>	
<b>Employee Health and Wellness Programmes</b>	<b>116</b>
Critical Considerations for Supervisors	
<i>S Badul and M Subban</i>	



# Editorial

D Nel-Sanders

Chief Editor

In the article **'Uncovering the Nexus between the Informal Waste Economy and Municipal Solid Waste Management in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality'**, M Mofokeng, A du Plessis and L du Plessis explore the untapped potential of the local informal waste economic sector in relation to solid waste management practices in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. More specifically, the article analyses the extent to which the informal waste economy is synchronised with municipal solid waste management policies and strategies. The article also highlights the role that waste pickers or recyclers play in the waste economy to promote local economic development by recycling useful waste. The article revealed that there is a disjuncture between the informal waste economy and solid waste management practices within the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. The Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality has focused predominately on solid waste management, with the exclusion of the informal waste economy. This article offers recommendations on how the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality can formalise the informal waste economy. The authors state that it is important that local government recognises and acknowledges the cross-sectoral linkages of the informal waste economy in relation to solid waste management. The authors argue that stakeholders such as local government, waste pickers, NGOs, recycling companies and buy-back centres must commit to integrating the informal waste economy in the solid waste management value chain, if they are to derive the untapped economic, social and environmental benefits. This article provides new perspective and highlights research gaps on the need to integrate the informal waste economy and municipal solid waste management policies, plans, projects and programmes in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

National budgets are instruments used by the Executive to direct resources for service delivery. It therefore follows that government budgets should be used for purposes of transparency and accountability in Parliament. The annual passing and adoption of the national budget are legislative in nature, which, when coupled with the exercise of oversight over the national budget, requires Parliament to be ably resourced in order to effectively perform these legislative and oversight functions. M I Jahed and A K Kithatu-Kiwekete, in their article **'Positioning Parliamentary Budget Offices within National Budgeting Processes for Fiscal Oversight in African Parliaments'**, argue that although parliamentary financial oversight committees are tasked with oversight at both the legislative and audit

phases of the national budget, the capacity to examine and review the fiscal and economic details of the budget is seldom available, particularly in African parliaments. The authors examine how independent financial institutions, as a recent capacity building phenomenon in African parliaments, can be used to better serve parliamentary financial oversight committees. The authors argue that it is important for parliamentary financial oversight committees to have access to Parliamentary Budget Offices with the needed fiscal and budgetary capacity to analyse, review, and issue the relevant reports throughout the national budget cycle to enhance the fiscal and budgetary capacity of African parliaments. The authors conclude that, through Parliamentary Budget Offices, fiscal and budgetary capacity is more accessible to the legislatures and these institutions could be better positioned within national budgeting processes to support legislative scrutiny.

Gender-based violence is pervasive and deeply ingrained in contemporary society. N von Meullen and G van der Walldt, in their article **'A Model for Gender-based Violence Awareness: The Case of Student Representative Councils in Selected South African Universities'**, argue that, despite several combative efforts by governments, international agencies and non-governmental organisations, gender-based violence has become almost commonplace on South Africa's higher education campuses. The most recent initiative of this nature is a policy framework that compels higher education institutions to create awareness and prevent incidents of gender-based violence on campuses. According to the authors, Student Representative Councils play a significant role in this regard by initiating and implementing student awareness initiatives on campuses. Subsequently, this article reports on the findings of an empirical survey conducted among Student Representative Councils at selected South African universities regarding the prevalence of gender-based violence on campuses. For the purposes of the study, case study methodology was followed, while semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 27 participants from nine universities. The findings highlight that Student Representative Councils face various challenges in creating awareness regarding gender-based violence. The authors state that, "the prevalence of gender-based is unacceptably high, and a comprehensive approach should be followed to address it". The authors add that the relationship between university management and the Student Representative Council needs to be strengthened to fight gender-based violence on campuses through efficient awareness programmes.

In the late 1990s, the South African government adopted a Public Private Partnership approach to accelerate infrastructure development and service provision. In the article **'Challenges to Effective and Efficient Infrastructure of Public Private Partnerships in South Africa'**, Z H Dlamini and L Botes investigate Public Private Partnership projects' failure to deliver on targeted outcomes – especially in terms of infrastructure development, upgrades, operations, maintenance and

management. The authors argue that, more than two decades after implementing this internationally accepted approach, the results have been disappointing across all three spheres of government. To gain insight into the key factors that hamper the implementation of Public Private Partnerships, the authors collected data through qualitative interviews with professionals involved in this process. The research found that many of the challenges relate to inefficiencies in the design and implementation of PPP agreements. In this regard, the authors state that, “various Public Private Partnership projects in the country take far longer than necessary to implement, some fail to reach the desired delivery or completion stage, while others are exposed to financial mismanagement, as well as outright corruption”. The research results highlight that these inefficiencies have led to sub-standard transport infrastructure, incomplete and poorly maintained basic service infrastructure, the misappropriation of infrastructure funds, as well as the mounting infrastructure backlogs.

**In ‘The Relationship Between Leadership and Rules of Conduct in Instilling Ethical Behaviour: Case of City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality’,** I A Adetunji and C Alers highlight the factors that drive the ethical conduct of municipal staff members in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The authors underscore the importance of determining the factors that influence individual officials’ ability to behave in an ethical manner. They argue that this will widen municipalities like the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality’s knowledge base on what drives its staff members to act and behave ethically, especially when dealing with the public. In this qualitative study, interviews were used as a data collection instrument, while unobtrusive research techniques were adopted. For the interviews, staff members from the Human Resource and Operational Divisions of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality’s Department of Public Works were targeted. Responses were obtained online from front desk officers, supervisors, operational managers and human resource managers. The research revealed that leadership had a greater impact on staff members’ behaviour than the municipality’s rules or codes of conduct. “The behaviour and guidance of their leaders tend to influence staff members’ conduct far more than the rules and it needs leadership with integrity to legitimise the rules”, according to the authors. To encourage ethical behaviour, it is suggested that the municipality develop and apply the right approaches to ensure that subordinates, colleagues and managers behave in an ethical manner. In conclusion, the authors call for further research regarding the efficacy of a compliance-based reward and penalty system to attain ethical standards.

Internationally, public expenditure management is seen as a way to foster a culture of financial prudence among fiscal authorities, and to improve the quality of public service delivery. In line with this, the adoption of this management structure in Zimbabwe during the early 1990s was widely accepted as a possible

solution to the functional and institutional challenges that characterised public financial management systems and processes. These measures include constitutional amendments such as Amendment No. 20 of 2013; the promulgation of the Public Financial Management Act and the Audit Office Act in 2010, Treasury and parliamentary reforms, adopting a cash budgeting system, the new debt servicing strategies and a reduction in the number of government ministries. In **'Public Expenditure Management Challenges in Zimbabwe: Critical Considerations'**, A Gwiza and D B Jarbandhan argue that, despite these fiscal reform interventions in the public sector, its performance remains sub-standard. This state of affairs can be ascribed to several inhibitive factors, such as inadequate budgetary support from Treasury, a culture of public financial misappropriation, insufficient budget prioritisation and poor information technology infrastructure. To this end, the authors recommend measures to improve and sustain sound public goods and service delivery in Zimbabwe.

In **'Employee Health and Wellness Programmes: Critical Considerations for Supervisors'**, S Baduland and M Subban state that supervisors in the public service are responsible for managing how employee health and wellness and the rate of absenteeism impacts employee performance. The authors argue that "Supervisors must be able to execute their duties within a diverse workplace and explore innovative measures to embrace employee health and wellness programmes". To this end, the article focuses on how supervisors can identify performance-related challenges in the workplace and implement the employee health and wellness programmes as a combative measure. The methodology of the article entailed a desktop literature review based on unobtrusive research techniques. The research revealed that supervisors' drive to establish employee health and performance programmes helps enhance performance, productivity and service delivery in public sector institutions. "South Africa as a developing country needs public service employees who are committed to serving the citizens, and for supervisors to be accountable in ensuring employees deliver on the predetermined standards, rate of productivity and performance outcomes".

#### **CHIEF EDITOR:**

Prof Danielle Nel-Sanders

Email: daniellen@uj.ac.za

# Uncovering the Nexus between the Informal Waste Economy and Municipal Solid Waste Management in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality

**M Mofokeng**

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of the Free State

**A du Plessis**

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of the Free State

**L du Plessis**

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of the Free State

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to explore the untapped potential of the local informal waste economic sector in relation to solid waste management practices in local government. More specifically, it analyses the extent to which the informal waste economy is synchronised with municipal solid waste management policies and strategies. Waste pickers or recyclers play an important role in promoting local economic development. Consequently, waste pickers are not only responsible for recycling useful waste, but they also contribute significantly to the waste economy. The methodological approach of the article entails unobtrusive research methods (conceptual analysis and documentary analysis). It assessed authoritative documents such as official government policy documents, reports, the worldwide web, accredited academic journal articles and other relevant documents applicable to the informal waste economy and solid waste management in local government. The study found that the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality has focused predominately on solid waste management, with the exclusion of the informal waste economy. This research offers recommendations on how the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality can formalise the informal

waste economy. This article provides a fresh perspective and highlights research gaps on the need to integrate the informal waste economy and municipal solid waste management policies, plans, projects and programmes in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

## INTRODUCTION

The Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (MMM) governs Bloemfontein and the surrounding towns in the Free State province of South Africa. The municipality has identified a number of risks in its 2018/19 Integrated Development Plan (IDP). These risks include the high levels of unemployment, inadequate service delivery as well as threatened sustainability of social and community services. With specific reference to unemployment, it is important that the municipality's Local Economic Development (LED) strategies and programmes include the informal waste economy as a mechanism of ecological governance, job creation and the reduction of waste management cost. According to Tucker and Anantharaman (2020:290), waste pickers, as part of the informal waste economy, play a significant role in redirecting recyclable waste away from landfills. Although municipalities are legally responsible for South Africa's waste management, they can no longer claim to be the sole participant in a circular economy (Viljoen, Blaauw and Schenck 2016:21). Subsequently, waste has become an intricate process that involves households, waste pickers, buy-back centres and other stakeholders that form part of both the formal and informal sectors of the economy (Majeed, Batool and Chaudhry 2017:679).

There has been an increasing interest in the informal waste economy; this means that scholars are recognising the importance of gaining insight into the potential economic, social, environmental, and other benefits of the informal waste economy (Majeed *et al.* 2017:680). Yet, the informal waste economy in South African municipalities remains neglected and in need of alternative waste management options that create waste value (Viljoen *et al.* 2016:22). More specifically, South African municipalities have only managed to recycle 10% of all disposable waste to landfills (Godfrey and Oelofse 2017:2). This suggests that there is a disjuncture between waste management and the informal waste economy in most South African municipalities. This article seeks to analyse the MMM's approach to waste management and the extent to which the MMM's policies, LED plan and programmes incorporate or consider the informal waste economy. This article argues that the successful incorporation of waste management practices into the informal waste economic sector may help the MMM unearth the untapped potential of the informal waste economic sector in terms of job creation,

a reduction in waste management cost and ecological governance. Central to this argument is the question: What are the key impediments to the synchronisation of the informal waste economy and the MMM's solid waste management?

The article provides an overview of the key characteristics of the informal waste economy. This is followed by a stakeholder analysis as the theoretical framework that informs this study. Thereafter it analyses South Africa's approach towards waste management in relation to the informal waste economy. The research methodology adopted for this study is subsequently discussed. The article also contains an analysis of the MMM's approach to waste management in relation to the informal waste economy. It finally provides recommendations followed by concluding remarks.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY AND WASTE**

Recent evidence suggests that there is an increasing interest in the informal waste economy (Bisschop and Coletto 2017:2; Gall, Wiener, De Oliveira, Lang and Hansen 2020:2; Masuku and Nzewi 2021:60). The informal waste economy is part and parcel of the informal economy, which gained recognition when economic anthropologist Keith Hart published the first ethnographic study on the informal economy in Accra (Hart 1985). In an interview, Keith Hart was asked how he arrived at the distinction between the formal and informal economy. Some of the important points highlighted by Hart include the following:

- Hart opposes the idea of solely having an economy with highly formal and bureaucratic practices in a state without the recognition of the informal economy as an active actor in the framework of the state.

The recognition is followed by Hart posing the question: "How does it affect our understanding in the development process to know more about what people are doing outside the formal framework of the economy?" (Schouten 2013:8). This question suggests that it is necessary to consider the actors and their significance in relation to the formal bureaucratic economy.

- Lastly, Hart recognises that the whole world is affected by the informal economy when he states: "The informal economy is not a separate place, but that all of them combine the formal and informal in some way" (Schouten 2013:9). In line with the aforementioned quote, one may infer that both formal and informal enterprises are either linked directly or indirectly in the value chain that constitutes the macro- economy of any country.

In addition, the informal economy does exist and needs to be recognised to gain full insight into how people in the informal economy operate (Webb, McQuaid, Rand and Rand 2020:1007; Masuku and Nzewi 2021:60). A relationship between

the formal and the informal economy exists in which the politicians and civil servants form the largest informal economy. Viljoen *et al.* (2016) point out that the informal economy is characterised by unregistered or unofficial small-scale or survival enterprises, temporary workers and self-employed persons that are seldom monitored and taxed by state institutions. Table 1 gives an overview of the characteristics of these survival and unofficial organised enterprises.

**Table 1: Characteristics of survival and unofficial organised enterprises in the informal economy**

	Informal sector	
	(Un)organised survival enterprises	Organised unofficial enterprises
The extent of informality	Do not declare income; have no protection and rights at work; are the least versatile	Limited declaration of income to avoid and evade tax; a limited number of workers are registered to circumvent labour regulations; limited rights at work and are more versatile
Nature of activity	Individual or single street vendors and/or unpaid family workers; small or micro-enterprises; subsistence agricultural farmers; waste pickers	Small medium enterprises; service providers; contractors; distributors
Level of labour intensity	Labour-intensive	Mostly labour-intensive
Owner profile	Poor and illiterate; low education and skill levels	Poor or affluent; well educated; high skill levels
Markets	Barriers to market entry are low; highly competitive; product homogeneity	Barriers to market entry are low; highly competitive; some form of product differentiation
Finance needs	Need working capital	Need working capital, some investment capital and supplier credit
Other needs	Personal insurance and social protection	Personal and, in some cases, business insurance

Source: (Viljoen, Blaauw and Schenck 2016:177)

Table 1 provides an overview of the key characteristics of the informal waste economy. These characteristics provide a comprehensive diagnosis of the informal waste economy. Therefore, any prognosis or strategy that a municipality may introduce to formalise the informal waste economic sector needs to take cognisance of the demographic characteristics of all the stakeholders involved in

the informal economic sector. Umuhoza, Kakshapati, Guendouz and Mugisha (2019:756) corroborate this by arguing that a stakeholder analysis process is necessary to identify the individuals and groups and the potential impact that any policy, programme or action may have on them. This suggests that a stakeholder analysis approach may provide local and national government with the necessary information before embarking on a strategy or programme to formalise the informal economy in relation to the informal waste economic sector.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS**

The challenges faced by waste pickers (and thus the informal component of the waste economy) in their interactions with (especially) local government suggest that there is a need for an in-depth examination of this relationship. In any public management endeavour, such as waste management, stakeholder relations often hold the key to the successful roll-out of services. Furthermore, the South African context is of particular significance since an integrated and functional relationship with the informal component (waste pickers) of the waste economy not only ensures that waste management services are rendered, but also that socio-economic development transpires by providing otherwise marginalised people access to the economy.

If the above argument is to be incorporated for the purpose of this article, the management of stakeholders in this instance is non-negotiable. According to G Itekin (2018:144), stakeholder management commences with stakeholder analysis that identifies the most important stakeholders and attempts to understand these stakeholders. Schmeer (1999) describes stakeholder analysis as a “process of systematically gathering qualitative information to determine whose interests should be taken into account when developing and/or implementing a policy or programme”. One could argue that the question of “whose interests” is relatively simple to answer since it is the local residents as end-users that should primarily benefit from effective waste management by local authorities. If, as argued earlier, the socio-economic contribution of waste management and the accompanying role of waste pickers as key stakeholders is to be considered, the question of “whose interests” becomes more complex.

To this end, Balane, Palafox, Palileo-Villanueva, Mckee and Balabanova (2020:1) argue that although stakeholder analysis requires assessment of the levels of power, position and interest of actors, few empirical studies provide details of how the complexities in the relationships between stakeholders are operationalised. As far as the role of waste pickers is concerned, the role complexity could be seen to be exacerbated by two factors:

- A lack of support by national government: Although there seems to be recognition by the National Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

(2020) of the important role waste pickers can play, there is limited support to further strengthen the position of waste pickers as stakeholders. Efforts to formalise the role of waste pickers and designing a constructive framework for their participation is currently lacking.

- The failure by local government to recognise the role of waste pickers: Whereas there is recognition of waste pickers at national level, local authorities seem to totally ignore their existence and potential constructive contribution. This is reflected in the harsh challenges to which waste pickers are exposed in the areas of jurisdiction of municipalities and the reluctance of municipalities to address these issues. Buch, Marseille, Williams, Aggarwal and Sharma (2021:1) corroborate this by arguing that waste pickers are not recognised by either government or the formal economy.

Thus, the challenge in recognising and establishing the stakeholder role of waste pickers needs to be addressed from two perspectives:

- Intergovernmental perspective: It is imperative for there to be a collective understanding as to why waste pickers should be a key stakeholder in the waste management process. To this end, Balane *et al.*'s (2020) adaptation of Schmeer's (1999) approach to stakeholder involvement is of significance. Central to the argument is that the concepts of leadership, power, interest and position play a key role in determining *who* is involved and *why* they are involved. Against this background, it is imperative for the national department to take the lead in impressing upon local authorities the role of waste pickers in the waste management process and thus their contribution to the waste economy. Instead of viewing them as a stumbling block to the process (as currently seems to be the case), the broader opportunity for the municipality (in terms of service rendering) as well as the broader socio-economic opportunity (providing a marginalised informal sector exposure to the economy) should be emphasised.
- Local governance perspective: Once the involvement of waste pickers as stakeholders has been established from a macro-perspective, as described in the paragraph above, the second level of Schmeer's approach to stakeholder involvement should be implemented, namely capacitating waste pickers with the requisite knowledge and doing so in a manner that ensures that the most effective attitudes and alliances are created among all stakeholders. This will ensure that waste pickers can, from a functional perspective, contribute to effective waste management.

One may therefore deduce from a theoretical perspective that the role of waste pickers as stakeholders in the waste economy should, first, be established and strengthened at an intergovernmental level in order to highlight the underlying reasoning for them to be regarded and included in this role. Second, waste

pickers' stakeholder role should be strengthened at the functional level of service delivery through a constructive relationship with local government. Against this background, the following section discusses South Africa's approach to waste management, waste pickers and the informal waste economy.

## **SOUTH AFRICA'S APPROACH TO WASTE MANAGEMENT, WASTE PICKERS AND THE INFORMAL WASTE ECONOMY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Over the past three decades, South Africa has been engaged in an endless circle of recycling, resulting in the waste hierarchy being embedded in national policy. In other words, South Africa's waste strategy has been predominately the responsibility of national government. According to Nowicki (2019) this approach has led to a disjointed waste management strategy among the three spheres of government, especially in relation to local government. For example, although the National Waste Management Strategy (NWMS) (Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) (2020) acknowledges the role of waste pickers in waste management, municipalities have adopted different approaches, to the detriment of some waste pickers. In Msunduzi Local Municipality, located in Pietermaritzburg, security measures introduced involved shooting waste pickers with pellet guns (Pillay 2015). A recent event that took place on 18 February 2020 saw violence erupt in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality, when security guards prevented waste pickers from entering a landfill site near Muizenberg (Kretzmann 2020). These tragic events, according to Nowicki (2019), are largely due to the fact that the NWMS does not provide guidelines on how municipalities can incorporate informal stakeholders, especially waste pickers, into their waste management and local economic development practices.

In view of the above, waste pickers across South Africa face numerous challenges when doing their work. First, they face a lack of formalisation and support from government, particularly local government. More specifically, for the unemployed a lack of support automatically results in a lack of knowledge regarding the benefits of working as a waste picker. Second, the health and safety of waste pickers is compromised. Waste pickers are exposed to injuries since they have no personal protective equipment, and they are further exposed to safety hazards in terms of equipment and dangerous items. Lastly, waste pickers encounter challenges associated with security in terms of their income because they face exploitation by recyclers, collectors and transporters (Wiego 2013:2).

Apart from the challenges mentioned, it is also important to highlight the potential opportunities that the informal waste economy may offer once it is recognised. First, the informal waste economy is a source of livelihood for millions of

people. Currently, the unemployment rate is 34.9% (Statistics South Africa 2021). Waste pickers contribute significantly to the informal waste economy and waste management sector, to an estimated amount of R15billion. If proper steps are taken by South African municipalities, the potential of this economy can be utilised to create empowerment and sustainable employment opportunities. Second, the informal waste economy guarantees effectiveness, efficiency, economic flexibility, and a sustainable livelihood because it offers certain levels of adaptability and entrepreneurship for the poor (Bisschop and Coletto 2017:7). Lastly, waste pickers contribute significantly to the recycling sector in South Africa. In the same vein, the Department of Environmental Affairs, in its national research on waste pickers, has revealed that 73% of waste pickers strongly agree with the statement that waste picking contributes towards the recycling economy (Department of Environmental Affairs 2012:29). Similarly, 86% of recycling companies, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and researchers strongly agree with the statement that waste picking has a positive contribution to recycling (Department of Environmental Affairs 2012:29). The abovementioned challenges and opportunities of the informal waste economy thus need to be recognised by municipalities across South Africa.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a qualitative policy document analysis approach. The method is useful for analysing the nature of a policy document by examining the historical and contemporary context of the policy content. The method is also referred to as a retrospective analysis, in which researchers carefully analyse and evaluate past and present policies (Cloete 2018:162). Particularly, the documentary analysis presented in this study is predominately focused within the confines of waste management legislations, municipal policies, plans and programmes. Consequently, the method requires an in-depth understanding of the nature and purpose of waste management policies in relation to the informal waste economy in South Africa. On a national or macro-level of analysis, the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 59 of 2008 and the NWMS (DEFF 2020) guide waste-related matters. On a municipal or micro-level of analysis, focus was placed on the unit of analysis (MMM), and how its formulated policies or programmes are synchronised with the macro or national level of analysis. The reason for choosing this method is that policy documents need to be studied in-depth, since they inform practitioners or municipal council members tasked with formulating municipal policies or bylaws.

This study followed Bowen's (2009:28) analytical procedure in document analysis. First, the researchers carefully conducted a literature review on municipal waste management and the informal waste economy. This was coupled with various national and local legislative frameworks, policies, strategies, programmes,

projects and reports. Second, the aforementioned documents were carefully selected and appraised in line with the research question. The data contained in the respective documents was synthesised and yielded excerpts and quotations that were analysed and organised in key thematic areas.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the data extracted from the legislative frameworks in relation to the MMM's Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP), IDP and the various programmes, projects and reports. Thus, this section only presents and discusses the three major themes that emerged from the documents in the public domain. These themes are indicative of the municipality's activities in relation to waste management and the informal waste economy. However, it is important to note that any analysis in relation to the waste sector must consider the descending hierarchy of authoritative policy instruments that seeks to guide the implementation of waste management in local government.

### Legislative framework

Table 2 illustrates the national legislative framework and strategies that have sought to achieve the objectives of the implementation of the Waste Act of 2008, which came into effect in 2009.

**Table 2: National legislation included in the study**

No.	Author	Title	Location	Year
1	Republic of South Africa	National Environmental Management: Waste Act	South Africa	2008
2	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries	National Waste Management Strategy	South Africa	2011
3	Department of Environmental Affairs	National Waste Management Strategy	South Africa	2020

Source: (Authors' own construction)

As an explanation to Table 2, the following excerpt from the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 59 of 2008, states:

“11. (1) The Department and the provincial departments responsible for waste management must prepare integrated waste management plans.

- (4) (a) Each municipality must:
- (i) Submit its integrated waste management plan to the MEC for approval and
  - (ii) Include the approved integrated waste management plan in its integrated development plan contemplated in Chapter 5 of the Municipal Systems Act<sup>1</sup>.

According to the Waste Act, municipalities must develop and have an IWMP in place and the plan should be incorporated in their IDP in accordance with the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.

According to the NWMS, 2020 which falls within the mandate of the DEFF, there is an urgent need to revise and update the 2011 NWMS. The 2020 NWMS will consider: *“Challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of the 2011 NWMS and the political, social, environmental and economic context within which the waste sector operates and impacts on”* (NWMS 2020).

The quote extracted from the NWMS (2020) is problematic for several reasons. First, the contemporary NWMS will prove difficult to attain, since most municipalities, including the MMM, have failed to successfully implement the 2011 Waste Management Plan. Second, it is wishful thinking at best to assume that an updated NWMS, devoid of evidence and proper monitoring and evaluation will lead to an improved waste management strategy. Therefore, it will be difficult to derive concrete challenges and lessons from the 2011 Waste Management Plan since it was never comprehensively implemented by local government in terms of the prescribed guidelines. Finally, one may infer that the contemporary NWMS (2020) would be unable to diagnose the state of the waste sector in order to address implementation challenges experienced by local government. Even if the waste sector were to be holistically or comprehensively diagnosed, the Department of Environmental Affairs would soon realise that the issues identified in 2011 remain relevant and in some cases, may have regressed due to the apparent lack of implementation at the local governmental level.

## **Municipal plans**

As shown in Table 3, the MMM has the 2011 IWMP which is at its draft stage. The review of the 2011 IWMP (Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality 2016) states:

*“The MMM has no waste policy in place. A waste policy will need to be developed to suit the particular intentions of MMM in terms of waste management. By-laws relating to waste management have been passed by Council in July 2013. The by-law is not aligned with the reduction and source separation targets as set out in the Waste Act of 2008 and specifically the NWMS”.*

**Table 3: Municipal plans, projects and programmes**

No.	Author	Title	Location	Year
1	Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality	Integrated Development Plan	South Africa	2020
2	Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality	Strategic Session Focuses on Innovative Waste Management Technologies	South Africa	2019
3	Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality	2011 Integrated Waste Management Plan: Final Report.	South Africa	2016
4	Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality	Review of 2011 Integrated Waste Management Plan	South Africa	2014

In line with the quotation above, to date, the municipality has no updated waste management plans in place that show compliance with the Waste Act of 2008 and NWMS of 2011. Evidence of this is the final report titled “Review of 2011 Integrated Waste Management Plan”, updated in January 2016. The updated version is a similar document to the draft document released in July 2014, but with slight changes. The final report still maintains that the municipality has no waste policies in place in accordance with the Waste Act of 2008.

In view of the above, one may infer that a lack of compliance from the MMM in terms of the Waste Act of 2008 appears to be an increasing tendency. To support this statement, the 2020/2021 IDP (MMM 2020) shows no deliberate effort to include any waste management plans that have been revised and updated. Moreover, the Waste Act of 2008 clearly stipulates that every municipality must include an approved IWMP in its IDP. However, Nyika, Onyari, Mishra and Dinka (2019:328) and Marchand (2012:16) question the extent to which municipal departments comply with the Waste Act of 2008. The lack of compliance therefore undermines the sustainability of the Act to be adhered to by officials who have the right capacity, knowledge and enthusiasm.

As reflected in Table 3, the MMM does recognise the importance of having municipal plans aimed at promoting LED to improve the municipality’s local economy. This is evident in its 2020/21 IDP, where it acknowledges LED as a tool that enhances competitiveness, increases sustainable growth and ensures that growth is inclusive (MMM 2020:261).

However, the 2020/21 IDP does not provide solutions to the challenges identified. No relationship is provided for between the informal waste economy and LED programmes and strategies. Gupta (2012:12) and Buch *et al.* (2021:3) argue that the informal waste economy consists of waste pickers who are members that contribute significantly to the waste management system of every local

government. This is achieved by the waste pickers' collecting, sorting, processing, storing and trading of waste material in the recycling value chain. One may infer that the disjuncture between the informal waste economy and LED programmes and strategies serves as a major stumbling block in unearthing potential economic benefits.

## **Programmes, projects and reports**

The MMM has undertaken several programmes and projects that mainly encourage citizens and key stakeholders to share creative ideas on how waste management challenges can be resolved. First, the Waste and Fleet Management Department of the municipality embarked on a two-day strategic session in July 2019. The main aim of the strategic session was to call for innovative strategies that could assist in the management of waste in the city. A number of innovative strategies were introduced by key stakeholders during the strategic session. The first strategy presented by the MMM Agencies involved the introduction of a vending machine as an alternative method to waste disposal. This strategy brings about benefits such as rewarding communities for recycling waste at specialised facilities.

The second strategy, presented by THINK-HUB, was the introduction of urban mining and e-waste management. The aim of this strategy is mainly to reduce the number of electronic products that are dumped at landfill sites. Overall, the two-day strategic session ended with the department committing itself to embarking on a three-month programme that aims to clear all illegal dumping sites (MMM 2019). Moreover, the department also emphasised the importance of waste officials adhering to the stipulated schedule in order to avoid the increase of illegal dumping sites.

The evidence presented thus far indicates that there is a strong relationship and a high level of commitment between the municipality and its waste management programmes and projects. However, the evidence also indicates that the informal waste economy has been neglected by the municipality. To rectify this, in 2012 the MMM initiated and embarked on a mayoral cleaning campaign. The aim of this campaign was to identify 100 waste pickers from different wards of the MMM who would be assisted through extensive training programmes that mainly focused on ways the waste pickers can collect recyclable materials and on hygiene-related issues (Fouche 2012). However, no reports on the progress of the programme initiated by the MMM are available.

Additionally, the strategic session hosted by the Waste and Fleet Management Department of the municipality called for innovative strategies that could assist in the management of waste in the city, but none of the stakeholders acknowledged the role and significance of the informal waste economy. Lastly, the review of the

2011 IWMP Report of the MMM briefly discusses waste pickers but states neither their demographics nor their significance, and the municipality does not specify how it provides support for the waste pickers (MMM 2014:52).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

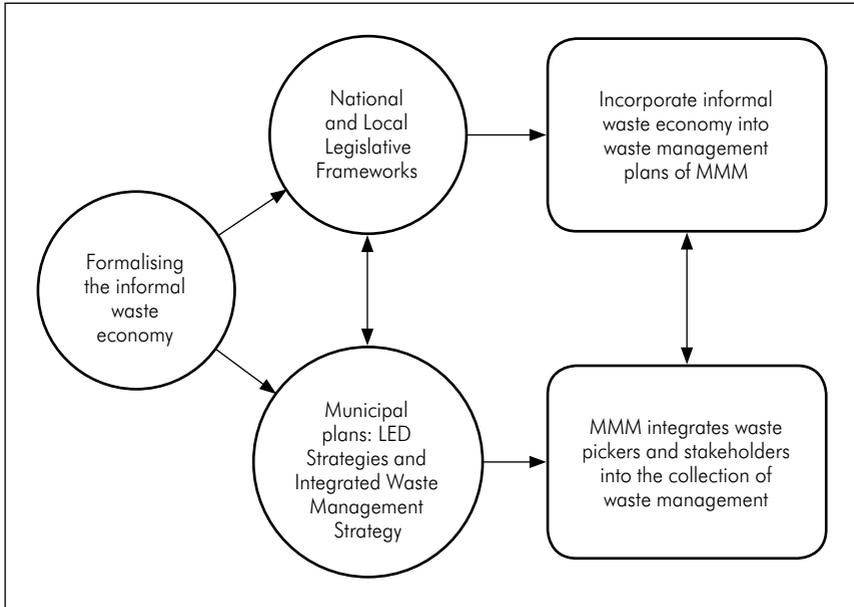
This section provides several recommendations that may lead to the formalisation and synchronisation of the MMM's waste management practices and the informal waste economy.

### **Mobilising and formalising the informal sector**

The MMM must first conduct a stakeholder analysis, in order to identify the major stakeholders in both the formal and informal waste economy. For example, the MMM should quantify the number of waste pickers within its jurisdiction and formally register them on the municipal waste management data base. The data collected should be used in conjunction with the various waste management projects and programmes. This will ensure that waste pickers are included in the decisions taken by the municipality. The municipality must select representatives among the waste pickers who represent the needs and rights of the stakeholders. Therefore, the MMM will be able to analyse the potential impact that any policy, programme or action may have on waste pickers in conjunction with waste management practices. In addition, municipal plans must be synchronised. This means that the IWMP cannot function in isolation from the IDP and the LED strategies.

It is important that the informal waste economy be recognised and acknowledged because it has the ability to increase the economic growth of the MMM. This step must, however, be taken by local government through the integration of waste pickers into the collection of solid waste. Gupta (2012:14) and Schenck, Viljoen and Blaauw (2021:315) recommend that a form of agreement must be established between the waste pickers and municipalities to grant the waste pickers regular access to waste with a right over recyclables. Figure 1 below depicts a synchronised approach to formalising the informal waste economy in relation to the MMM. More specifically, a collaborative and cooperative approach between national and local legislative frameworks, plans and strategies should be followed. Mobilising and formalising the informal economy will require collective efforts from policymakers in local government to analyse the impact of the informal waste economy on waste management in the MMM. In addition, the MMM should incorporate the informal waste economy and its stakeholders such as recycling companies and NGOs and should acknowledge

**Figure 1: Formalising the informal waste economy**



Source: (Authors' own construction)

the waste pickers as a valuable link in the waste management plans and value chain of the municipality.

### **Creating an enabling environment for the informal waste sector**

Once local government, recycling companies and NGOs recognise and acknowledge the important role the informal waste economy plays in the waste management chain, then an environment empowering and supporting the work of waste pickers will automatically ensue. This recommendation is echoed by Baker *et al.* (2016:172) who point out that understanding the needs and challenges of the informal waste economy is important in order to create an enabling environment.

### **Establish a good working relationship with municipal staff at landfill sites**

Waste pickers are often driven out of landfill sites by municipal staff and municipal officials build high fences to prevent waste pickers from entering the site. The most surprising aspect of this is that landfill site municipal staff and

waste pickers are interdependent. This simply means, on the one hand, waste pickers are servicing both the public and the municipality through recycling. The municipality, on the other hand, gives waste pickers the permission to make use of landfill sites while saving costs at the same time. This recommendation is corroborated by Groundwork (2017), which states that if a good working relationship is established between the two parties, waste pickers will be able to recover recyclable waste from landfill sites and streets, which will ultimately decrease the amount of waste in landfill sites, resulting in an increase of longevity and sustainability of the landfill site.

## **Informal entrepreneurs**

Waste pickers can be considered entrepreneurs because the majority of them work independently, meaning they are self-employed and aim to generate profit by taking their recyclables to the buy-back centres. Schenck, Viljoen and Blaauw (2021:312) point out that waste pickers at South Africa's landfills earn approximately R768 in a good week and only R200 in a bad week, but if effective partnerships are established, it is safe to say that the waste pickers will earn a reasonable wage that will enable them to be self-employed.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The main aim of this article was to explore critically the nexus between the local informal waste economic sector and municipal solid waste management practices in the MMM. Central to this exploration, this article posed the question: What are the key impediments to the synchronisation of the informal waste economy and the MMM's solid waste management? Consequently, this article has demonstrated that there is a disjuncture between the informal waste economy and solid waste management practices within the MMM. As pointed out, the MMM is engaged in solid waste management programmes that exclude the informal waste economy.

In conclusion, it may be stated that a silo mentality regarding solid waste management is no longer feasible. For this reason, it is important that local government recognises and acknowledges the cross-sectoral linkages of the informal waste economy in relation to solid waste management. Stakeholders such as local government, waste pickers, NGOs, recycling companies and buy-back centres must commit to integrating the informal waste economy in the solid waste management value chain, if they are to derive the untapped economic, social and environmental benefits. There is a need for empirical investigations concerning the MMM, NGOs, waste pickers, buy-back centres and scrapyards as key stakeholders in solid municipal waste management.

## REFERENCES

- Baker, M., Memela, S. and Rampete, N. 2016. *Empowerment of Waste Pickers in the City of Johannesburg, creating an enabling environment for the informal waste sector to participate in municipal waste service delivery*. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/Duplessisar/Downloads/10952.pdf>. (Accessed on 17 March 2022).
- Balane, M.A., Palafox, B., Palileo-Villanueva, Mckee, M. and Balabanova, D. 2020. Enhancing the use of stakeholder analysis for policy implementation research: Towards a novel framing and operationalised measures. *BMJ Global Health*. 5:1–12.
- Bisschop, L. and Coletto, D. 2017. Waste Pickers in the Informal Economy of the Global South: included or excluded? *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. 37(5–6):1–27.
- Bowen, G.A. 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*. 9(2):27–40.
- Buch, R., Marseille, A., Williams, M., Aggarwal, R. and Sharma, A. 2021. From waste pickers to producers: An inclusive circular economy solution through development of cooperatives in waste management. *Sustainability*. 13(16):1–9.
- Cloete, F. 2018. Policy design. In: Cloete, F., De Coning, C. and Rabie, B. (Eds.). *Improving public policy for good governance*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik, pp. 159–194.
- Fouche, L. 2012. *Waste pickers' opportunity to make money*. Available at: <https://www.bloemfonteinourant.co.za/waste-pickers-opportunity-to-make-money/>. (Accessed on 25 November 2019).
- Gall, M., Wiener, M., De Oliveira, C.C., Lang, R.W. and Hansen, E.G. 2020. Building a circular plastics economy with informal waste pickers: Recyclate quality, business model, and societal impacts. *Journal of Energy in South Africa*. 156:2–11.
- Godfrey, L. and Oelofse, S. 2017. Historical Review of Waste Management and Recycling in South Africa. Available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2079-9276/6/4/57/pdf>. (Accessed on 25 January 2020).
- groundWork. 2017. United we progress divided we fall: a waste picker's guide to organizing. Available at: <https://groundwork.org.za/Documents/waste/groundWork%20SAWPA%20Waste%20pickers%20organising%20booklet.pdf>. (Accessed on 2 February 2020).
- G Itekin, Y.S. 2018. Stakeholder analysis and stakeholder management: A conceptual framework for Turkish forestry. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*. 5(3):142–157.
- Gupta, S.K. 2012. Integrating the informal sector for improved waste management. Available at: [https://www.resource-recovery.net/sites/default/files/gupta\\_integrating\\_informal\\_sector.pdf](https://www.resource-recovery.net/sites/default/files/gupta_integrating_informal_sector.pdf). (Accessed on 25 November 2019).
- Hart, K. 1985. The informal economy. *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*, 10(2):54–58.
- Kretzmann, S. 2020. *Tragic Landfill conflict fouls Cape Town's air*. Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-02-28-tragic-landfill-conflict-fouls-cape-towns-air/>. (Accessed on 6 June 2021).
- Majeed, A., Batool, S.A. and Chaudhry, M.N. 2017. Informal Waste Management in the Developing World: economic contribution through integration with the formal sector. *Waste Biomass Valor*. 8:679–694.

- Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. 2014. Review of 2011 Integrated Waste Management Plan. Available at: <http://www.mangaung.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Mangaung-IWMP-Situational-Analysis-V3-Final.pdf>. (Accessed on 3 June 2021).
- Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. 2016. *2011 Integrated Waste Management Plan: Final Report*. Available at: <http://www.mangaung.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Annexure-C-INTEGRATED-WASTE-MANAGEMENT-PLAN.pdf>. (Accessed on 25 November 2019).
- Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. 2019. *Strategic Session Focuses on Innovative Waste Management Technologies*. Available at: <http://www.mangaung.co.za/2019/07/26/strategic-session-focuses-on-innovative-waste-management-technologies/>. (Accessed on 25 November 2019).
- Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. 2020. *Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality: Integrated Development Plan 2020/21*. Available at: <http://www.mangaung.co.za/2020/07/06/final-approved-idp-2020-2021/>. (Accessed on 3 June 2021).
- Marchand, A.K. 2012. An Analysis of Attitudes towards Recycling: Westdene, Bloemfontein. Unpublished Masters Thesis. Free State: University of the Free State.
- Masuku, B. and Nzewi, O. 2021. The South African informal sector's socio-economic exclusion from basic service provisions: A critique of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality's approach to the informal sector. *Journal of Energy in Southern Africa*. 32(2):59–71.
- Nowicki, L. 2019. *Reconsidering South Africa's approach to waste pickers*. Available at: <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/reconsidering-south-africas-approach-waste-pickers/>. (Accessed on 6 June 2021).
- Nyika, J.M., Onyari, E.K., Mishra, S. and Dinka, M.O. 2019. *Waste management in South Africa*. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/Duplessisar/Downloads/Waste-Management-in-South-Africa-bookchapterigi.pdf>. (Accessed 28 February 2022).
- Pillay, K. 2015. *Municipality to shoot waste pickers with pellet guns*. Available at: <https://www.news24.com/witness/news/War-on-waste-pickers-20151105>. (Accessed on 6 June 2021).
- Republic of South Africa. 2000. *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. 2008. *National Environmental Management: Waste Act 59 of 2008*. Government Gazette, 32000 (March 10):278.
- Republic of South Africa. Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries. 2020. *National Waste Management Strategy of 2020*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. Department of Environmental Affairs. 2012. *Report on the determination of the extent and role of waste picking in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Schenck, C.J., Viljoen, J.M.M. and Blaauw, P.F. 2021. Precarious, more precarious, most precarious? The quality of life of waste pickers in the Karoo. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*. 57(3):302–319.
- Schmeer, K. 1999. *Guidelines for conducting a stakeholder analysis*. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/Duplessisar/Downloads/Stakeholder\\_Analysis\\_Guidelines.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Duplessisar/Downloads/Stakeholder_Analysis_Guidelines.pdf) (Accessed on 28 February 2022).
- Schouten, P. 2013. *Theory Talk #56: Keith Hart on the informal economy, the great transformation, and the humanity of corporations*. Available at: [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/165155/Theory%20Talk56\\_Hart.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/165155/Theory%20Talk56_Hart.pdf). (Accessed on 25 November 2019).

- Statistics South Africa. 2021. *South Africa's unemployment rate rises to a 13-year high*. Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/careers/sas-unemployment-rate-rises-to-a-13-year-high-9d7ba3a0-48e4-4eab-9849-526458c7e30d>. (Accessed on 3 June 2021).
- Tucker, J.L. and Anantharaman, M. 2020. *Informal Work and Sustainable Cities: from formalization to reparation*. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332220304218>. (Accessed on 6 June 2021).
- Umuhozo, M., Kakshapati, S., Guendouz, Z. and Mugisha, B. 2019. A Stakeholder analysis of PET wastes management in Kigali, Rwanda. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*. 9(1):755–770.
- Viljoen, K., Blaauw, P. and Schenck, R. 2016. Potential Barriers Preventing Street-Waste Pickers from Improving Their Socio-Economic Conditions. *SAJEMS NS*. 19(2):175–191.
- Webb, A., McQuaid, R., Rand, S. 2020. Employment in the informal economy: implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. 40(10):1005–1019.
- Wiego. 2013. Waste pickers: The right to be recognized as workers. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/Duplessisar/Downloads/WIEGO-Waste-Pickers-Position-Paper.pdf>. (Accessed on 17 March 2022).

## AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS

### Mr Ambrosé du Plessis

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of the Free State  
205 Nelson Mandela Drive  
Park West  
Bloemfontein 9300  
South Africa  
Email: [Duplessisar@ufs.ac.za](mailto:Duplessisar@ufs.ac.za)  
Telephone: +27 (0) 51 401 2682

### Dr Lyndon du Plessis

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of the Free State  
205 Nelson Mandela Drive  
Park West  
Bloemfontein 9300  
South Africa  
Email: [dplesslm@ufs.ac.za](mailto:dplesslm@ufs.ac.za)  
Telephone: +27 (0) 051 401 2284

### Ms Mosa Mofokeng

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of the Free State  
205 Nelson Mandela Drive  
Park West  
Bloemfontein 9300  
South Africa  
Email: [MofokengMV1@ufs.ac.za](mailto:MofokengMV1@ufs.ac.za)  
Telephone: +27 (0) 74 731 4982

# Positioning Parliamentary Budget Offices within National Budgeting Processes for Fiscal Oversight in African Parliaments

**M I Jahed**

School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy  
University of Johannesburg

**A K Kithatu-Kiwekete**

Wits PLUS  
University of the Witwatersrand

## ABSTRACT

National budgets are instruments used by the Executive to direct resources for service delivery. It therefore follows that government budgets should be used for purposes of transparency and accountability in parliament. The annual passing and adoption of the national budget are legislative in nature, which, when coupled with the exercise of oversight over the national budget, requires parliament to be ably resourced in order to effectively perform these legislative and oversight functions. Although parliamentary financial oversight committees are tasked with oversight at both the legislative and audit phases of the national budget, the capacity to examine and review the fiscal and economic details of the budget is seldom available, particularly in African parliaments. Using a desktop review, this article uses a qualitative lens to examine how independent financial institutions, as a recent capacity building phenomenon in African parliaments, can be used to better serve parliamentary financial oversight committees. The conclusion is that while, through Parliamentary Budget Offices, fiscal and budgetary capacity is more accessible to the legislatures, these institutions could be better positioned within national budgeting processes to support legislative scrutiny.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063 is to enhance good governance by setting up capable institutions. Embedding good governance in this case

involves the setting up and resourcing of institutions to ensure that government provides infrastructure and services to citizens equitably and in a sustainable manner. These structures are important particularly in the legislative branch of government because of the support in African parliaments to meet the triple mandate of representation, legislation, and oversight. National budgets are instruments used by the Executive intended to direct resources for service delivery. The annual passing and adoption of the national budget are legislative in nature, which, when coupled with the exercise of oversight over the national budget, requires parliament to be ably resourced. African governments have implemented reforms such as establishing autonomous revenue authorities to enhance revenue collection for government, passing public finance laws to regulate public finance management for both the executive and legislative branches of government (Kareija 2012; Nyamita, Dorasamy and Garbharran 2015; Stapenhurst, Pelizzo, Olson and Von Trapp 2008; Stapenhurst, Draman, Imlach, Hamilton and Kroon 2011). Moreover, parliaments in Africa are evolving from rubberstamp to transformative legislatures and are enhancing their capacity and ability to shape policies (Draman, Titriko, Lampo, Hayter and Holder 2017; Mohammed 2009). The evolution is largely driven by pushes for democracy that call for the Executive be held accountable for the implementation of policies in society.

Evidence-informed decision-making is increasingly being promoted as a model for enhancing the capacity of decision-makers to be more proactive and to use relevant information in policymaking processes (Stewart, Langer and Erasmus 2019; Blaser-Mapitsa, Ali and Khumalo 2020; Shaxson 2005). Shaxson (2005) asserts that the utility of evidence in policy-making is in whether policymakers can access and use information that is reliable, objective, credible and context-specific. Stewart *et al.* (2019) and Parkhurst (2017) both progress this assertion to the use of evidence-informed decision-making as where the best decisions can be made using available evidence that is credible, reliable, contextual, as well as objective. Parliaments in Africa are also embracing evidence to inform decision-making through approaches such as individual capacity building and peer learning to enhance the ability of parliamentarians to use evidence in order to influence and adopt policies (Draman *et al.* 2017; Effective Institutions Platform 2018; Oronje and Zulu 2018; Hudson and Wren 2007).

While it is necessary for parliamentarians to enhance their skills in order to perform their mandate, it is also imperative that the institutional capacity of parliaments receives attention to ensure that the uptake of reliable, credible, timely, and objective evidence provided to legislators enhances the members of parliament's (MPs) ability to perform their functions. This article examines the independent financial institutions, which are being established across parliaments globally to support the legislative and oversight role over the national budget. The discussion

is pertinent particularly to the context of an African legislature that is evolving its legislative mandate to actively exercising oversight (Draman, *et al.* 2017).

The literature emphasises the scarcity of resources and institutions to support parliamentary committees (Wehner 2009; Yamamoto 2007). Furthermore, reference has scarcely been made on how to improve the institutional processes in parliament in order to support the legislative role over the national budget such as budget committees and Public Accounts Committees (PACs). These committees are unique to each parliament, and also depend on whether it is a unicameral or bicameral parliament, for example, positioned at the end of each spectrum of the national budget; yet consideration of how fiscal capacity can support these committees is rare, particularly in Africa (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst 2004; Stapenhurst *et al.* 2008).

The establishment of Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBOs) in African parliaments in line with recent international practice offers an additional opportunity to provide reliable and objective fiscal information to parliamentarians in order to incrementally augment the legislative and oversight mandate over the national budget (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2013; Von Trapp, Lienert and Wehner 2016a). The article recommends an integrated model whereby PBOs can be positioned to complement the two parliamentary committees namely the budget committee and the PAC, that are directly involved in the national budget by providing fiscal information for effective fiscal oversight of national budgets. Monitoring the Executive enhances the agency through which parliaments can represent the needs of citizens in the adoption of the national budget and the implementation thereof. Through a desktop review, the article uses a qualitative lens to examine how PBOs, as a recent capacity building phenomenon in African parliaments, can be used to better serve the abovementioned parliamentary financial oversight committees.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND OVERSIGHT MANDATES OVER NATIONAL BUDGETARY PROCESSES**

In performing their mandate, parliaments are expected to “scrutinize and authorize revenue and expenditures and ensure that the national budget is properly implemented” (OECD 2014:18). Exercising the legislative and oversight mandates is a multifaceted and iterative process in the national budgeting process where parliaments have the authority to amend the national budget when the need arises (Posner and Park 2007). The authority to amend the national budget varies widely for legislatures in developed economies as compared to African countries. The United States (US) Congress, for instance, has the power to rewrite the government’s proposed budget. Furthermore, the formal amendment powers of

legislatures can be unrestricted, restricted, or prohibited (Yamamoto 2007; Power 2004). In the first instance, legislatures may change revenue or expenditure levels without consent of the Executive, as in the example of the US Congress.

In the case of restricted powers, some parliaments may only make budget amendments as long as the overall balance of the budget proposal remains unaltered. Lastly, prohibited powers curtail any amendments to the proposed national budget, which permits parliaments to either approve or reject the proposed national budget in its entirety. A reversionary budget is a mechanism to safeguard the Executive of services in the event that the approval of the budget is delayed. In cases where this has occurred in African parliaments, this issue has yet to be further interrogated (Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative 2018; OECD 2014; Wehner 2002). Most African parliaments reside at the end of the amendment spectrum with legislatures that can either adopt or reject budget proposals as presented by the Executive (Cheyo 2011; Karyeija 2012). There are persuasive “reasons to believe that the executive dominance we have seen in so many new democracies may come to be tempered over time”, which can “work in favour of legislative institutionalization” (Power 2004:54).

The use of evidence by parliamentarians may be seen as a means by which informed decisions and particularly those that relate to the national budget can be made (Parkhurst 2017; Shaxson 2005). The primary means of oversight in parliaments include debates, questions, and committees (Shephard 2004:40). The accessibility and use of credible robust information through regional networks, think tanks, civil society, citizen engagement, as well as parliamentary research units, are sources of evidence that have increasingly been made available to African parliaments to inform policy decisions (African Institute for Development Policy 2016; Ajam 2019; Draman *et al.* 2017; National Audit Office [NAO] 2011; Parkhurst 2017; Sellah-Mensah 2011). Parliaments should be able to contextualise the national budget in terms of intended developmental outcomes for citizens as planned for the short, medium, and long term. Armed with evidence, parliaments adopt or reject budgets and, in some cases, “block government bills until government action is taken” (Oronje and Zulu 2018:531). In Uganda, for example, MPs refused to “pass a supplementary budget for the financial year 2009/2010 until the World Bank loan on maternal health that had not been passed for the previous two years was considered” (Oronje and Zulu 2018:531).

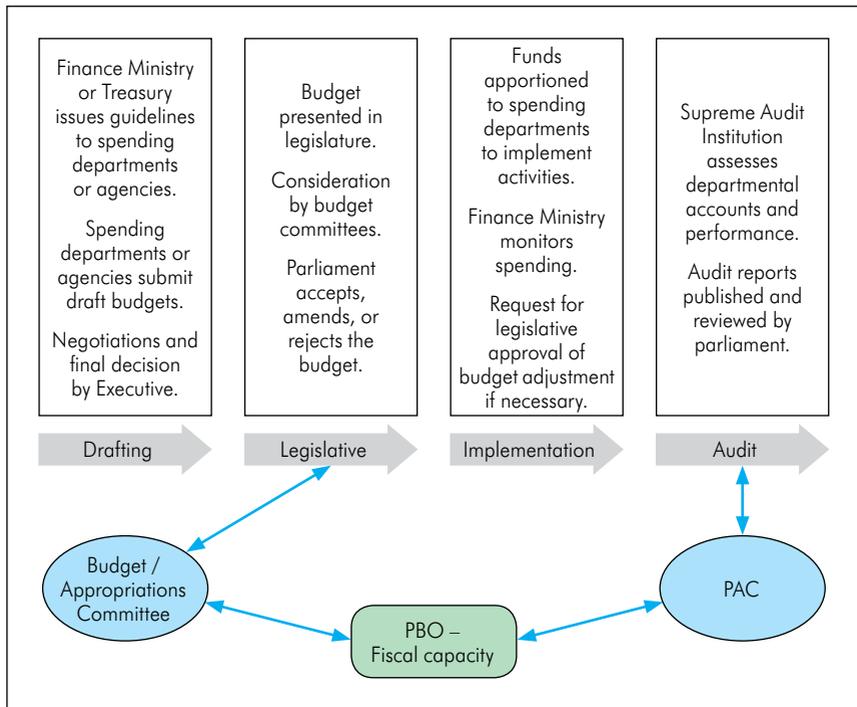
Wehner (2017:9) asserts that “legislative scrutiny of the budget and its implementation is generally regarded as an integral part” of a transparent budgetary process. Legislative fiscal scrutiny can then be viewed as the “obligation of legislators to hold the government to account by assessing its economic assumptions, its budgetary plans” which also includes “evaluating its performance in these areas” to “fulfil their duty as overseers and guardians of the public purse” (Gaspard and Khan 2016:2). Furthermore, parliamentary financial oversight committees cover

the entire national budget cycle, including pre-expenditure scrutiny, which is the examination of revenue and expenditure, and post-expenditure scrutiny, which is the review of government expenditure and performance (NAO 2011:7). These oversight committees are finance, budget, or appropriations committees for pre-expenditure scrutiny and PACs for post-expenditure scrutiny, which are both responsible for oversight at different stages of the budgeting process. It is important that these committees are able to fulfil their mandate which can be realised by the availability of requisite fiscal analytical capacity in parliaments.

## CONCEPTUALISING FISCAL AND BUDGETARY ANALYTICAL CAPACITY

The use of evidence in policymaking is premised on the availability of credible and relevant information (Shaxson 2005). Institutions, processes, human

**Figure 1: Fiscal and budgetary analytical capacity for the national budget process in parliament**



Source: (Adapted from Stapenhurst, Pelizzo and O'Brien 2012:10)

resources, and values form part of the broad ecosystem of parliament to perform its mandate (Ajam 2019; Blaser-Mapitsa *et al.* 2020). This context for parliaments underscores the importance of parliamentarians having access to relevant fiscal information during national budgetary processes. National budgets undergo scrutiny in parliaments at various stages, as noted earlier. It is important that legislatures, and parliamentary committees in particular, have the capacity to interrogate national budgets at the approval and audit phases. Fiscal and budgetary analytical capacity in this case will provide the required capacity. This article draws on the concepts of policy and budgetary analytical capacity to define fiscal and budgetary analytical capacity (Newman, Cherney and Head 2017; Stapenhurst *et al.* 2012). Fiscal and budgetary capacity refers to “mechanisms and institutions needed to improving policy capacity in the budgetary decision-making domain” (Kasperkayas and Xifré 2020:383).

Figure 1 positions the two parliamentary committees, namely the budget or appropriations committee and the PAC, as oversight mechanisms in the national budgetary process. As fiscal and objective non-partisan institutions situated in parliaments, PBOs are tasked with providing fiscal support to parliaments. PBOs are guided by internationally acceptable principles, which include local ownership, independence, non-partisanship, mandate, resources, access to information, transparency, communication, and external evaluation (OECD 2013:2; 2014:10–11). The role of the PBO is crucial to expediting the evaluation and review of fiscal information to the above committees.

## **Using fiscal analytical capacity to support oversight**

In order to meaningfully engage in the budget process rather than simply ratifying executive decisions, legislatures require reliable, unbiased information, as well as strong analytical capacity, which can be provided by independent financial institutions that are objective and non-partisan. PBOs are increasingly being established across the world to provide this function (Kithatu-Kiwekete and Jahed 2019, 2020; McLennan 2018; Pauw 2011; Von Trapp *et al.* 2016a). The main function of PBOs, as indicated by Anderson (2008:39–40), is to make independent budget forecasts; establish baseline estimates, which they do by making projections, not predictions; analyse executive budget proposals; present a technical, not political, review of the budgetary estimates contained in the executive budget; and conduct medium-term analyses.

Furthermore, a medium-term analysis alerts policymakers and the public to possible future consequences of proposed policy actions. PBOs should be strategically located within parliaments to support in particular the parliamentary financial oversight committees mentioned above because fiscal condensed information is vital for parliaments’ decision over the national budget and its implementation.

The mandate of the PBO requires that skilled technical experts in finance, public sector economics, and fiscal policy comprise the majority of the PBO taskforce. This is to ensure that fiscal and budgetary analytical capacity is available within legislatures and that the usually condensed technical fiscal information in the national budget as provided by the Executive can be analysed, reviewed, and reported timeously (OECD 2013; Wehner 2017). Table 1 shows selected African examples with parliaments’ financial oversight committees and those that have set up PBOs.

**Table 1: Selected African parliamentary financial oversight committees and PBOs**

Name of Country	Legislature	Budget Committee	PAC	PBOs
Angola	Unicameral	No details	Yes	Not set up
Botswana	Unicameral	Yes	Yes	Not set up
Ethiopia	Bicameral	Yes	Yes	Not set up
Ghana	Unicameral	Yes	Yes	Not set up
Kenya	Bicameral	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malawi	Unicameral	No details	Yes	**
Mozambique	Unicameral	No details	Yes	**
Namibia	Bicameral	No details	Yes	Not set up
Nigeria	Bicameral	No details	Yes	Yes
Rwanda	Bicameral	Yes	Yes	Not set up
South Africa	Bicameral	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uganda	Unicameral	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tanzania	Unicameral	Yes	Yes	Not set up
Zambia	Unicameral	Yes	Yes	Not set up
Zimbabwe	Bicameral	No information	Yes	Not set up
** Countries that have initiated the process of setting up a PBO				

**Source:** (Adapted from AfroPAC (n.d.); Pelizzo and Kinyondo 2014a and 2014b; Inter-Parliamentary Union n.d.)

The manner in which African parliaments are constituted is influenced by colonial and historical heritage. Francophone countries tend to resemble the French parliamentary system, while Anglophone heritage is evident in the Ugandan, Malawian, Ghanaian, and Kenyan parliaments. The same applies to Mozambique

and Angola, which have a Portuguese colonial history (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit 2016:2–3; Draman *et al.* 2017:22). Countries may opt to have unicameral legislatures such as those found in Ghana, Uganda, Angola, and Mozambique. Bicameral parliaments exist in Rwanda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Africa, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 also shows that all the countries have a PAC to scrutinise the implementation of the national budget, while almost half do not have a finance (budget or appropriations) committee to examine Money Bills and budget proposals, and even fewer have a PBO. It must be noted that PBOs are a recent global phenomenon and African countries have only recently started establishing PBOs, with Uganda being the first in 2007. It must also be noted that there are parliaments, such as Rwanda's Committee on National Budget and Patrimony, with a broader mandate of oversight, which includes the consideration of the draft state budget, implementation of the national economic development and poverty reduction strategy, tax and domestic monetary policy, integration of the regional and global strategies accepted by Rwanda into the national strategic plan, as well as the budget execution level for the fiscal year in progress. Such a committee would perform oversight over and throughout the entire national budget process as well as approve the national budget.

## **PARLIAMENTARY FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES**

Parliamentary financial oversight committees are responsible for reviewing the national budget proposals prepared by the Executive, the financial accounts of government ministries and agencies, as well as issues that relate to a government's management of public money (NAO 2011:7). At the approval phase of the national budget is the budget committee. The main role of the budget or appropriations committees is to review the national budget proposal, including the revenue and expenditure estimates, and to then make recommendations to parliament. PACs provide oversight at the end of the national budgeting process; that is, the post-expenditure review of the implementation of the national budget. PACs are tasked with specific functions that relate to the examination of public accounts and reports issued by the Auditor-General on how government agencies have implemented the budget.

PACs are also mandated to conduct investigations on the implementation of audit findings, invite government members to attend PAC meetings and respond to questions, as well as report to parliament and publicise a PAC's conclusions (Stapenhurst *et al.* 2008:120). Some PACs in Africa are also tasked to examine the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of policy implementation (Pelizzo and Kinyondo 2014a:88). The latter task is sometimes side-lined because of political

interference (Obiyo 2006; Mengistu 2011). Obiyo (2006) attributed this issue to the failure of South Africa's Standing Committee on Public Accounts to fulfil its oversight function over the government's use of funds on the Arms Deal, which was a South African military procurement programme to re-equip the post-apartheid armed forces.

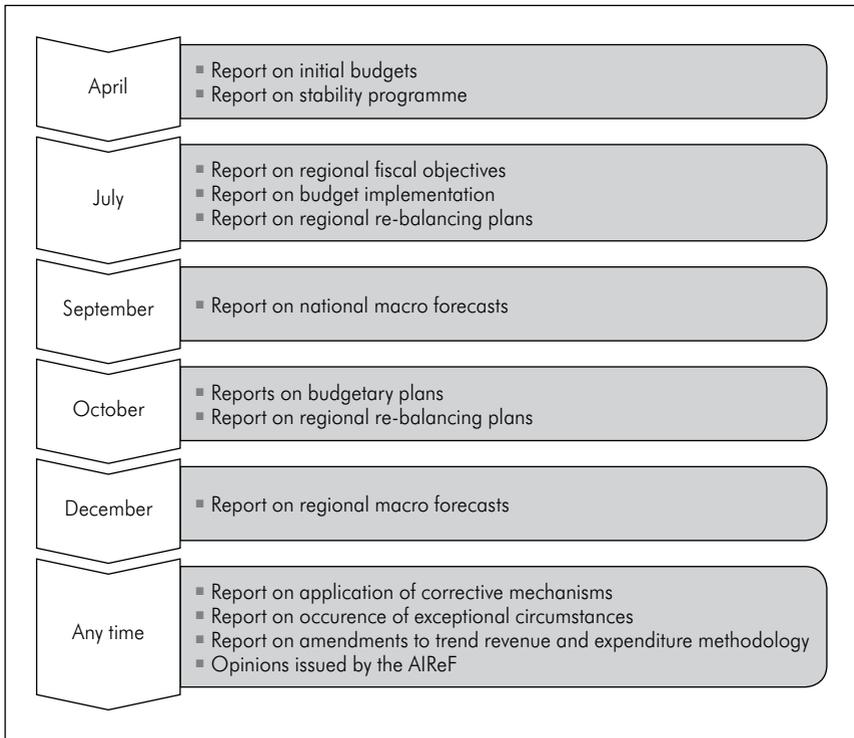
Historically, PACs remain heavily dependent on the respective Supreme Audit Institutions for the budget and fiscal information that they receive. A key concern often raised in the literature that is pertinent for African parliaments is these committees' inability to discuss audit reports promptly, which is mainly attributed to long time lags between years of accounts and the timing of discussing an audit report, which makes PAC recommendations redundant or irrelevant (Cheyo 2011; Drubow 2020; Ekeyi 2011; Sellah-Mensah 2011). Drubow (2020) makes recommendations in this regard, which should involve the planning and prioritisation of issues to be examined. Furthermore, poor knowledge of the public sector financial systems and an understanding of financial regulations by PAC members are additional issues that hinder PACs from effectively performing oversight across African parliaments (Ekeyi 2011:100; Cheyo 2011:142).

## **ROLE OF THE PBO TO PROVIDE FISCAL AND BUDGETARY ANALYTICAL CAPACITY TO BUDGET COMMITTEES AND PACs**

Recent global trends provide evidence that the setting up of the PBO as a "specialized budget research office attached to the legislature [is meant] to strengthen its capacity by providing technical expertise on budgeting matters, [which is] something legislators often lack" (Kasperskaya and Xifré 2020:385). The core functions of the PBO are to cater for the fiscal and budgetary capacity needed to support the legislature, namely economic forecasts, baseline estimates, analysis of the Executive's budget proposals, and medium-term analysis. The PBO offers fiscal support by providing reviews of the documentation tabled in parliament, monitoring and synthesising matters on reports tabled and adopted in a House with budgetary implications, advising committees on policy debates and developments in key expenditure and revenue areas, and monitoring and reporting on potential unfunded mandates (South African Parliamentary Budget Office [SAPBO] n.d.).

Table 1 illustrated that only four countries have set up PBOs in African parliaments, namely the PBO in Kenya, the National Assembly Budget and Research Office in Nigeria, and the PBOs in South Africa and Uganda, whose mandate is prescribed by national legislation in each case. The African PBOs perform their mandate in that economic briefs, fiscal analyses, and reports are issued regularly

**Figure 2: Independent Authority for Fiscal Responsibility (AIReF) reports throughout the financial year**



Source: (Von Trapp *et al.* 2017:39)

to parliament and are accessible to the public (Kiraso 2008; Pauw 2011; PBO 2011; SAPBO 2017). However, the reports and analyses are not aligned with national budgeting processes, nor is there any indication that the PBOs are directly engaged with both the parliamentary committees, despite the need for support in fiscal and budgetary capacity, which is vested in the PBOs.

In Spain, the PBO known as the Independent Authority for Fiscal Responsibility (AIReF) is mandated by law to prepare reports on: “the macroeconomic forecasts; the methodology to calculate trend patterns of income and expenditure; the draft stability programme; analysis of budget implementation, public debt, and the debt-ceiling rule; determination of individual objectives for Spain’s autonomous regions; economic-financial and rebalancing plans for the central administration and the autonomous regions; on projects and main aspects of the budgets of public administrations; on the application of the correction mechanisms foreseen in Organic Law 2/2012 of 27 April on Budgetary Stability and Financial Stability

and on the occurrence of the exceptional circumstances referred to in Article 11.3 of this same law” (Von Trapp, Nicol, Fontaine, Lago-Penas and Suyker 2017:38).

In order to achieve this, the AIREF provides periodic regular reports on the national budget, as shown in Figure 2.

Another example is the Korean National Assembly Budget Office in South Korea, one of the best resourced PBOs that supports its legislature in budget analysis in terms of forecasting, costing, and evaluation (Von Trapp *et al.* 2016b). Aligning the fiscal and budgetary capacity of PBOs with national budgeting processes enhances the flow of fiscal information more expediently to the parliamentary financial oversight committees, and this information will address the technical gaps that these committees have when exercising oversight over the approval and audit phases of the national budget.

## **FINDINGS**

African parliaments are evolving towards being transformative legislatures. The ability to make evidence-informed decisions, particularly on the national budget, will have positive implications for enhancing accountability through legislative fiscal oversight. International experience as indicated by South Korea and Spain shows that PBOs are well placed in providing fiscal and budgetary capacity.

In Africa although parliamentary financial oversight committees, that is, budget or appropriations and public account committees, are well placed to conduct legislative fiscal scrutiny, the capacity to analyse the technical fiscal reports still needs to be developed to a level whereby parliament can interrogate the national budget timeously. It must be recognised and acknowledged that while four African parliaments, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Uganda have operationalised PBOs, momentum still needs to be replicated in other legislatures on the continent.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Parliament’s legislative and oversight role can be enhanced to be a transformative legislature that is responsive to citizens’ needs in holding the Executive accountable through the national budget process. Realising this responsibility will require that legislative financial scrutiny is accompanied by corresponding fiscal and budgetary capacity within parliaments. Parliamentary financial committees are tasked with a mammoth oversight mandate, which includes the expedient review and evaluation of fiscal information provided in the budget by the Executive. It is therefore important for parliamentary financial oversight committees to have

access to PBOs with the needed fiscal and budgetary capacity to analyse, review, and issue the relevant reports throughout the national budget cycle to enhance the fiscal and budgetary capacity of African parliaments.

## REFERENCES

- African Institute for Development Policy. 2016. *Annual Report 2016: Shaping Africa's Future Through Evidence-Informed Policies*. Available at: [https://www.afidep.org/download/annual\\_reports/07.11.2017-Annual-Report\\_Web.pdf](https://www.afidep.org/download/annual_reports/07.11.2017-Annual-Report_Web.pdf). (Accessed on 29 April 2021).
- African Organisation of Public Accounts Committees. n.d. *AfroPAC: How We Work*. Available at: <https://www.afropac.net/about-us/background>. (Accessed on 29 April 2021).
- African Union. 2015. *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. Available at: <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>. (Accessed on 23 March 2021).
- Ajam, T. 2019. *Future-Proofing the State Against Corruption and Capture: The Role of the Parliamentary Service in Supporting Effective Legislative Oversight in South Africa*. Paper presented at the ASSADPAM Annual Conference, KleinKaap Boutique Hotel, Centurion, 25–27 September.
- Anderson, B. 2008. The value of a nonpartisan, independent, objective analytic unit to the legislative role in budget preparation. In Stapenhurst, R., Pelizzo, R., Olson, D.M. and Von Trapp, L. (Eds.). 2008. *Legislative Oversight and Budgeting: A World Perspective*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Blaser-Mapitsa, C., Ali, A.J. and Khumalo L.S. 2020. From evidence to values-based decision making in African parliaments. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*. 20(2):68–85.
- Cheyo, J.M. 2011. Strengthening Parliamentary Accounts Committees through regional networks in Africa. In Stapenhurst, R., Draman, R., Imlach, A., Hamilton, A. and Kroon, C. (Eds.). *African Parliamentary Reform*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative. 2018. *The Role of the Legislature in the Budget Process (Nigeria)*. Available at: <https://www.cabri-sbo.org/en/publications/the-role-of-the-legislature-in-the-budget-process-1>. (Accessed on 10 June 2021).
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. 2016. *Guardians of Democratic Accountability: The Role of Anglophone and Francophone African Parliaments in Supervising the Budget*. Pretoria: GIZ.
- Draman, R., Titriku, A., Lampo, I., Hayter, E. and Holden, K. 2017. *Evidence in African Parliaments*. Oxford: International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications.
- Drubow, G. 2020. *A Critical Review of Public Accounts Committees*. Available at: <http://agora.parl.org/sites/default/files/agora-documents/A%critical%review%of%public%accounts%committees.pdf>. (Accessed on 10 June 2021).
- Effective Institutions Platform. 2018. *The Future of Peer-to-Peer Learning and Partnerships in the New Development Agenda*. Available at: [https://www.effectiveinstitutions.org/media/The\\_Future\\_of\\_Peer\\_to\\_Peer\\_Partnerships\\_in\\_the\\_New\\_Development\\_Agenda.PDF](https://www.effectiveinstitutions.org/media/The_Future_of_Peer_to_Peer_Partnerships_in_the_New_Development_Agenda.PDF). (Accessed on 10 June 2021).

- Eyeke, B. 2011. The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committees in Nigerian states: Structure, working practices and networking. In Stapenhurst, R., Draman, R., Imlach, A., Hamilton, A. and Kroon, C. (Eds.). *African Parliamentary Reform*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Gaspard, H. and Khan, S. 2016. *The Legislative Fiscal Scrutiny Function: Lessons from Canada*. Paper presented at the 2017 Parliamentary Budget Office Conference, August 2017. Cape Town, South Africa. Available at: [https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/PBO/conf2017/presentation/The\\_Legislative\\_Fiscal\\_Scrutiny\\_Function\\_Lessons\\_from\\_Canada\\_2016.pdf](https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/PBO/conf2017/presentation/The_Legislative_Fiscal_Scrutiny_Function_Lessons_from_Canada_2016.pdf). (Accessed on 29 April 2021).
- Hudson, A. and Wren, C. 2007. *Parliamentary Strengthening in Developing Countries*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union. n.d. *African Parliaments*. Available at: <https://www.ipu.org/about-ipu/members/geopolitical-groups/african-group>. (Accessed on 29 April 2021).
- Karyeija, G.K. 2012. Public sector reforms in Africa: What lessons have we learnt? *Forum for Development Studies*. 39(1):105–124.
- Kasperskaya, Y. and Xifré, R. 2020. *Fiscal Discipline and Budgetary Analytical Capacity: The Case of the Euro Area*. Available at: <https://voxeu.org/article/fiscal-discipline-and-budgetary-analytical-capacity-euro-area>. (Accessed 21 May 2021).
- Kiraso, B. 2008. Establishment of Uganda's Parliamentary Budget Office and the Parliamentary Budget Committee. In Stapenhurst, R., Pelizzo, R., Olson, D.M. and Von Trapp, L. (Eds.). 2008. *Legislative Oversight and Budgeting: A World Perspective*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Kithatu-Kiwekete, A.K. and Jahed, M. 2019. Enhancing the Legislature's fiscal oversight: The case of South Africa's Parliamentary Budget Office. *Administratio Publica*. 27(2):6–25.
- Kithatu-Kiwekete, A.K. and Jahed, M. 2020. Enhancing the Legislature's fiscal oversight with PBOs: Selected African examples. *Administratio Publica*. 28(1):98–112.
- McLennan, A. 2018. The power of the purse: Fiscal oversight and the South African Parliamentary Budget Office. *African Journal of Public Sector Development and Governance*. 1(1):90–105.
- Mengistu, M. 2011. Strengthening financial accountability and parliamentary oversight in the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. In Stapenhurst, R., Draman, R., Imlach, A., Hamilton, A. and Kroon, C. (Eds.). *African Parliamentary Reform*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Mohammed, A. 2009. Budget oversight and the South African budget office. In Verwey, L. (Ed.). *Parliament, the Budget and Poverty in South Africa: A Shift in Power*. Pretoria: IDASA.
- National Audit Office. 2011. *Improving Parliamentary Oversight: A Guide for Parliamentary Staff*. London: The Westminster Consortium for Parliaments and Democracy/National Audit Office.
- Newman, J., Cherney, A. and Head, B.W. 2017. Policy capacity and evidence-based policy in the public service. *Public Management Review*. 19(2):157–174.
- Nyamita, M.O., Dorasamy, N. and Garbharran, H.L. 2015. A review of public sector financial management reforms: An international perspective. *Public and Municipal Finance*. 4(2):25–37.
- Obiyo, R.E. 2006. *Legislative Committees and Deliberative Democracy: The Committee System of the South African Parliament with Specific Reference to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA)*. PhD Thesis. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2013. *OECD Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions*. Paris: OECD Secretariat.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2014. *Budgeting Practices and Procedures in OECD Countries*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Oronje, R.N. and Zulu, E. 2018. Contribution of a network of parliamentary committees of health to the ecosystem of evidence use in African parliaments. *Evidence & Policy*, 14(3):523–535.
- Parkhurst, J.O. 2017. *The Politics of Evidence: From Evidence-Based Policy to the Good Governance of Evidence*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Parliamentary Budget Office. 2011. *Inflations and Exchange Rates in Kenya: Why We Must Act Decisively*. Kenya: Parliamentary Budget Office, Parliamentary Service Commission.
- Pauw, J.C. 2011. Will the Money Amendment Act enhance the power of the purse in South Africa? *Politeia*, 30(3):54–73.
- Pelizzo, R. and Kinyondo, A. 2014a. Public Accounts Committees in Eastern and Southern Africa: A comparative analysis. *Politics and Policy*, 42(1):77–102.
- Pelizzo, R. and Kinyondo, A. 2014b. *Public Accounts Committees in Eastern Africa: A comparative analysis with a focus on Tanzania*. Available at: [https://media.africaportal.org/documents/REPOA\\_BRIEF\\_44.pdf](https://media.africaportal.org/documents/REPOA_BRIEF_44.pdf). (Accessed on 10 June 2021).
- Pelizzo, R. and Staphenurst, R. (Eds.). 2004. *Legislatures and Oversight*. Washington, D.C.: The International Bank of Reconstruction/The World Bank Institute.
- Posner, P. and Park, C.K. 2007. Role of the legislature in the budget process: Recent trends and innovations. *OECD Journal of Budgeting*, 7(3):1–26.
- Power, T.J. 2004. Time and legislative development in new democracies: Is executive dominance always irreversible? In Pelizzo, R. and Staphenurst, R. (Eds.). *Legislatures and Oversight*. Washington, D.C.: The International Bank of Reconstruction/The World Bank Institute.
- Sellah-Mensah, S. 2011. Engaging civil society: Ghana's first Public Accounts hearing. In Staphenurst, R., Draman, R., Imlach, A., Hamilton, A. and Kroon, C. (Eds.). *African Parliamentary Reform*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Shaxson, L. 2005. Is your evidence robust enough? Questions for policy makers and practitioners. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, 1(1):101–112.
- Shepard, M. 2004. Administrative review and oversight: The experience of Westminster. In Pelizzo, R. and Staphenurst, R. (Eds.). *Legislatures and Oversight*. Washington, D.C.: The International Bank of Reconstruction/The World Bank Institute.
- South Africa (Republic). 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa (Republic). 2009. *The Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Act, 2009 (Act 9 of 2009)*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South African Parliamentary Budget Office. n.d. *The Involvement of PACs in the National Budget*. Presentation to the South African Parliament.
- South African Parliamentary Budget Office. 2017. *Annual Report 2016/2017 Financial Year: Parliamentary Budget Office*. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

- Stapenhurst, R., Draman, R., Imlach, A., Hamilton, A. and Kroon, C. (Eds.). 2011. *African Parliamentary Reform*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Stapenhurst, R., Pelizzo, R. and O'Brien, M. 2012. *Ex-Post Financial Oversight: Legislative Audit, Public Accounts Committees ... and Parliamentary Budget Offices?* Background paper prepared for OECD PBOs and Independent Financial Institutions' Annual Meeting. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/49778002.pdf>. (Accessed on 11 June 2021).
- Stapenhurst, R., Pelizzo, R., Olson, D.M. and Von Trapp, L. (Eds.). 2008. *Legislative Oversight and Budgeting: A World Perspective*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Stewart, R., Langer, L. and Erasmus, Y. 2019. An integrated model for increasing the use of evidence by decision-makers for improved development. *Development Southern Africa*. 36(5):616–631.
- Von Trapp, L., Lienart, I. and Wehner, J. 2016a. Principles for independent financial institutions and case studies. *OECD Journal of Budgeting*. 15(2):9–24.
- Von Trapp, L., Lienart, I. and Wehner, J. 2016b. Korea. *OECD Journal of Budgeting*. 15(2):153–164.
- Von Trapp, L., Nicol, S., Fontaine, P., Lago-Penas, S. and Suyker, W. 2017. *Review of the Independent Authority for Fiscal Responsibility (AIReF)*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Wehner, J. 2002. Parliament and the power of the purse: The Nigerian Constitution of 1999 in comparative perspective. *Journal of African Law*. 46(2):216–231.
- Wehner, J. 2003. *Best Practices of Public Accounts Committees*. Cape Town: IDASA.
- Wehner, J. 2009. South Africa's new parliamentary budget process: An initial assessment. In Verwey, L. (Ed.). *Parliament, the Budget and Poverty in South Africa: A Shift in Power*. Pretoria: IDASA.
- Wehner, J. 2017. *Good Practice in Parliamentary Budget Scrutiny: International Comparisons*. Report for Budget Process Review Group established jointly by the Finance and Constitutional Committee and the Scottish Government. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/business-and-consultancy/consulting/assets/documents/Good-Practice-in-Parliamentary-Budget-Scrutiny.pdf>. (Accessed on 29 April 2021).
- Yamamoto, H. 2007. *Tools for Parliamentary Oversight: A Comparative Study of 88 National Parliaments*. Geneva: IPU.

## AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS

### Prof Mohammed Jahed

School of Public Management, Governance  
and Public Policy  
College of Business and Economics  
University of Johannesburg  
P O Box 524  
Auckland Park  
2006  
Tel: 011 559 3225  
Email: [mjahed@uj.ac.za](mailto:mjahed@uj.ac.za)

### Dr Angelita Kithatu-Kiwetekete

Wits PLUS  
University of Witwatersrand  
92 Empire Road  
Parktown  
2050  
Tel: 011 717 9502  
Email: [angelita.kithatu@gmail.com](mailto:angelita.kithatu@gmail.com);  
[angelita.kiwetekete@wits.ac.za](mailto:angelita.kiwetekete@wits.ac.za)

# **A Model for Gender-based Violence Awareness**

## **The Case of Student Representative Councils in Selected South African Universities**

**N von Meullen\***

Centre for Teaching and Learning Support  
North-West University

**G van der Waldt**

Focus Area: Social Transformation  
North-West University

### **ABSTRACT**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is pervasive and deeply ingrained in contemporary society. Despite several efforts by governments, international agencies, and non-governmental organisations to combat GBV, it has also become almost commonplace on South African campuses of higher education institutions (HEIs). The most recent initiative to reduce endemic cases of GBV is the Department of Higher Education and Training's Policy Framework to address GBV in the Post-School Education and Training System (2020). This Policy Framework compels HEIs to create awareness of GBV policies and prevent incidents of GBV on campuses. Student Representative Councils (SRCs) play a significant role in this regard by initiating and implementing student GBV awareness initiatives on campuses. The purpose of this article is to report on findings of an empirical survey conducted among SRCs at selected South African universities regarding the prevalence of GBV on campuses and to uncover challenges experienced in their student GBV awareness efforts. By following case study methodology, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 27 sampled participants from nine universities. The results were thematically analysed and based on the findings a model is proposed to support SRCs in the implementation of the GBV Policy Framework on their respective campuses.

## INTRODUCTION

GBV increasingly has not only become a grave concern for society but also for HEIs all over the world. GBV is commonly regarded as actions related to physical and/or psychological violence, molestation, and exploitation or any non-consensual sexual advances made by one person towards another (Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott 2004; Gross *et al.* 2006; Kuki 2018).

Despite the prevalence of GBV, there is limited research on the prevalence of GBV incidents on campuses as well as inconclusive studies on its effects on the victims' academic success (Enaifoghe 2019; Enaifoghe and Idowu 2021). Studies show that in Western parts of the world one in five women experience sexual violence during their tertiary education (Krebs *et al.* 2009). This often results in peaceful protests against GBV on campuses and a greater demand for gender equality (Wafula *et al.* 2018). Globally, universities have thus begun to conduct regular surveys to better comprehend the underlying causes, scope and nature of GBV on campuses (Sexual Assault and Misconduct Task Force 2016).

South Africa is no exception to the crisis of GBV in HEIs. According to Finchilescu and Dugard (2018:3), reflecting on the broader experience of GBV in South African universities and promoting awareness thereof, current efforts are "sometimes antipathetic". To date there have been a few surveys that determine the extent and experiences of GBV in universities and among students in South Africa (Finchilescu and Dugard 2018). These studies are usually specific to a few universities or particular faculties, making generalisations and broader conclusions difficult. This situation is exacerbated by the absence of reliable, recent statistics regarding the prevalence of cases. It is widely accepted, however, that South Africa experiences extremely high levels of GBV (Vetten 2014; Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 2016; Wilkinson 2017). Fineran *et al.* (2003) contend that most research in South Africa focuses on severe cases of GBV such as rape and assault, and tend to neglect all other related risk factors of sexual violence. Gross *et al.* (2006) confirm this contention, arguing that GBV-related research is too focused on the implications of Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) statistics. Martin (2015) argues that the recent #MeToo Movement that commenced in 2017 on social media brought significant attention to the prevalence of sexual violence in HEIs. Also, Du Preez, Simmonds and Chetty (2017:97) state that the recent 'fallism' movements (eg. #RapeCultureMustFall) by students in South Africa reflect the way students think and act on these matters.

The purpose of this article is to reflect on the findings of a survey conducted among SRCs in selected South African universities to determine how they perceive the prevalence of GBV cases on campuses, to ascertain their official role in GBV, to detect the nature and scope of SRC GBV awareness efforts among

students, to pinpoint challenges that they experience in this regard, as well as to propose a model designed to support them effectively in their efforts. Based on the findings, recommendations are made to address identified challenges and to improve support for SRCs in GBV awareness creation on campuses.

## **PREVALENCE AND CONSEQUENCES OF GBV AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Feminist theory, studies concerning patriarchal social systems and masculinity, as well as scholarly inquiry into conventional gender roles, social norms and power relations confirm the complexities associated with GBV in society (Leburu and Phethlo-Thekiso 2015; Crowther-Dowey and Silvestri 2017; Heilman and Baker 2018; Enaifoghe and Idowu 2021). In a higher education context, O'Connor and Kingkade (2016) argue that GBV remains a significant problem and they lament the increasing number of incidences in HEIs. Fisher *et al.* (2000) and Strebel and Foster (2000) further contend that although some research on GBV has been done, there are relatively few studies conducted on GBV on university campuses. In this regard, Alexander-Scott *et al.* (2016) and Clark *et al.* (2017) insist that studies regarding GBV are case sensitive, implying that particular, misguided social norms, cultural practices and belief systems significantly influence perceptions of GBV in different institutions as well as the design of awareness programmes to respond to it appropriately.

GBV on university campuses has significant consequences for students in general and victims in particular. Studies conducted by Chivers-Wilson (2006), Hembree *et al.* (2009), Lindquist *et al.* (2013), Banyard (2014), Chang *et al.* (2015), and Baker *et al.* (2016) revealed a number of negative consequences. These consequences can be categorised as follows:

- Academic consequences: Sexual assault is linked to students dropping out or leaving the university environment permanently, in addition to low academic performance.
- Substance abuse: There is evidently a causal relationship between GBV and alcohol consumption and drug abuse among university students. Criminals may provide drugs or alcohol to victims or may target individuals who are heavily intoxicated. Alcohol and drug abuse are potential predictors of assault since approximately half of the victims and half of the perpetrators report that they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the incident.
- Psychological consequences: GBV on campuses has been linked to symptoms of depression, anxiety, depression, desolation, and unhappiness. Post-traumatic stress disorder has also been linked to the majority of cases of sexual violence on campuses.

- Re-victimisation: Victims of GBV often experience similar incidences in future. If students encounter GBV during their first year of university life, there is a high likelihood that they will again fall prey during their second and third years of study. It is thus vital that students report incidences so that appropriate preventative measures can be instituted and the necessary support be provided.
- General health concerns: Sexual abuse often leaves physical scars on victims, but health consequences go beyond bodily pain. Typical health conditions include heart disease, hypertension, arthritis, reproductive problems and neurological symptoms. Furthermore, victims of GBV often contract sexually transmitted diseases, inclusive of HIV, that require long-term medical care. Female students may also fall pregnant, requiring months of tests, medical costs and maternal care.

## **GBV AT HEIs: THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2016), there are 76 HEIs in South Africa with two million students and staff members across 420 public and private campuses. Enaifoghe (2019) and the Institute for Security Studies (2019) lament the fact that there is no reliable data base available on the nature and scope of GBV in South African society in general. While there are no current statistics on the matter, a recent study on rape justice by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) provided some insights (Mercilene *et al.* 2017). The sample used by the SAMRC consisted of 3 952 cases of rape that were reported at 170 police stations across South Africa in 2012. This confirmed previous results obtained from a study conducted by Jewkes *et al.* in 2002 which discovered that more than a quarter of female students are at risk of being raped at or near their university campuses. Also, Shefer, Clowes, and Vergnani's (2012) transactional sex study at a South African university in 2012 established that it is relatively common for female students to engage in sexual relationships with older males (so-called 'sugar daddies') to help pay for study fees, or simply to boost their social status. Gordon and Collins (2013) conducted in-depth interviews with female students at another South African university to determine the prevalence of GBV. They came to similar conclusions as the study undertaken by Shefer, Clowes, and Vergnani (2012), with both investigations discovering that gender inequalities among university students give rise to a damaging culture of GBV, to such an extent that it is almost being normalised.

There is also a general lack of coordination between different governmental and non-governmental organisations to obtain a more holistic perspective regarding the nature and prevalence of GBV in communities. A study conducted in 2016 by

SAMRC in conjunction with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) found that government departments collect various administrative data related to GBV in a rather unsystematic, unsynchronised way, implying that data cannot effectively be utilised for policy and strategy design purposes. In addition, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation's Diagnostic Review of the state's response to GBV (DPME 2017) established that the state heavily relies on the South African Police Service (SAPS) to supply GBV-related data. However, this data is not disaggregated and does not provide a realistic perspective regarding the scope and degree of GBV in South Africa. This in turn makes it difficult to measure the success or compare the effectiveness of various government or agency policies and strategies pertaining to GBV. Radloff *et al.* (2014) also cite recent research from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University, and the University of the Western Cape, all of which found that the prevalence of GBV is substantially higher than available statistics show. In this regard, Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) argue that there is a general dearth of research on GBV in South Africa, and that figures are often inaccurate because universities tend to deal with such issues unofficially. Surveys are further hampered by the multicultural, heterogeneous composition of the student population. Students from diverse cultures and social backgrounds perceive and experience GBV and sexual harassment dissimilarly (Merry 2009:12). Gordon and Collins (2013:102) investigated how female students interpret and experience GBV in a more recent study about GBV and gender imbalance at South African universities. According to the findings, female students live in constant fear of sexual harassment and violence. It is evident that GBV is persistent in South African universities and that gender imbalances and inappropriate cultures put female students at a higher risk of being victims. In this regard, Gordon and Collins (2013:102) report that female students perceive GBV almost as "an unavoidable fact of life".

Treffry-Goatley (2018:1) and Kgosana (2019:3) argue that universities generally lack relevant awareness programmes and mechanisms to address GBV and sexual assault among students. There are, however, pockets of excellence in this regard from which best practice can be extracted. The 'Chapter 212 Movement', for example, that forms part of the larger 'Unashamed' Movement is named after chapter 2.12 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, which speaks to human rights, security and freedom of students (Wazar 2016). Corke (2016) argues that the University of the Western Cape, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Cape Town, and Rhodes University all have sexual policies to deal with assaults and harassment. Student activists argue, however, that these policies are 'not worth the paper it is written on' and need to be reviewed as they contain narrow definitions of only rape while creating a safe haven for perpetrators (Corke 2016). Students are often unfamiliar with the contents of sexual policies, and incidents of sexual violence are under-reported

(DHET 2017:5). Joubert *et al.* (2011:1) confirm that South African universities in general still lack a comprehensive policy framework for GBV, while some simply fail to implement their GBV policies successfully. Furthermore, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE 2016:34) conducted hearings in 2014 and 2016 on gender transformation in HEIs in South Africa and found that there are 'uneven responses to sexual violence in universities'.

A positive development is the fact that the DHET has developed a document called 'Policy Framework to address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System' (2020). This Framework has as strategic objectives the "creation of an enabling environment, prevention and awareness, and support and assistance" (DHET 2020:15). It envisages universities "promot[ing] the safety of all students and staff by putting in place comprehensive prevention programmes intended to raise awareness of policies and services addressing GBV, as well as other measures aimed at preventing incidents of GBV" (DHET 2020:26). The Policy Framework stipulates that HEIs must allow for student representation by establishing institutional forums and committees, whose role lies in "advising the institution's council around race and gender policies as well as fostering an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an environment for teaching, research and learning. They must promote this positive institutional culture and report on the status of policies addressing GBV in their institutions" (DHET 2020:32). It is especially in this regard that SRCs can and should play a meaningful role.

## **ROLE OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS IN RAISING GBV AWARENESS**

According to Klemenčič (2012) and Moreku (2014), the democratic dispensation in South Africa resulted in acknowledgement of the acute importance of broadening the decision-making base of public institutions. This also culminated in the active involvement and participation of student leaders in university decision-making processes. One such mechanism is the establishment of SRCs. The SRCs serve as a link between registered students and the university management to facilitate the success of students and educational affairs on campuses. As such, SRCs should liaise closely with students to understand the needs and challenges that they are facing. SRCs can and should play a significant role to make the general student population aware of any aspects related to GBV and liaise between students and university management.

The role and responsibility of SRCs have increased over the past years within South African universities. According to Mandew (2003:7), the establishment of the SRC dates back to the 1960s when it was first established at the University

of Cape Town. Since then, SRCs increasingly play an essential role in university decision-making processes and often strongly influence priorities and resource allocation in universities. Ntsala and Mahlatjie (2016:106) contend that the role of SRCs in HEIs revolves around the administration and governance of student affairs. That is, they lead and represent students on various platforms in- and outside university campuses. Furthermore, Ntsala and Mahlatjie (2016:106) view the SRC as having a responsibility to create general student awareness by disseminating information that directly affects students. Mozhgan *et al.* (2011) cite a recent study illustrating the significant role that the SRC plays to improve the general knowledge of students regarding university affairs as well as in appreciating differences of students and opinions of diverse cultures on campus. Similarly, Wright (2013) maintains that SRCs can play a significant role in raising general student awareness of university and related matters, but that they require access to quality information to fulfil this role as well as a system of good corporate governance at universities.

In terms of section 35 of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, SRCs have the following functions:

- "interacting with management, the general public, the media, other HEIs, other SRCs, and national and international student organisations;
- being an umbrella organisation for student clubs, societies, student committees and councils;
- coordinating supervision related to the use of student facilities;
- conducting all authorised student body meetings and managing the student body related to student petitions within the prescribed rules;
- appointing of office bearers and committees;
- organising student activities;
- keep book of all monies paid by the university council and any other money needed for the representation of students or to collect or pay such funds by students;
- keeping order at student functions and ensure good conduct of students;
- coordinating the involvement of all students in community projects;
- responsible for student publications; and
- having the final say in all matters within their jurisdiction".

It is evident that the role of SRCs in HEIs mainly revolves around the administration and governance of student affairs. Mozhgan *et al.* (2011) and Wright (2013) assert that the SRC also has a responsibility to create general student awareness by disseminating information that directly affects students, such as on university policies and academic rules. Mozhgan *et al.* (2011) add that the SRC also facilitates the development of a conducive climate and attitude regarding students' retrospectivity, responsibilities, and ethical behaviour. By adhering

to these principles and characteristics, SRCs can support and assist university management in policy and planning activities that may affect students (Ntsala and Mahlatjie 2016).

As far as the particular role of SRCs in GBV is concerned, it should be noted again that scholarly inquiry is case (university) sensitive. There are, however, commonalities regarding the nature and scope of GBV awareness and student support provided by SRCs. Some of the practical interventions in this regard include the following:

- creating portfolios in SRCs to address particularly GBV-related matters on campus;
- establishing victim support offices on campuses for medical care, mental health, and counselling services;
- student empowerment through information dissemination regarding human rights, safety conditions on campus, and being aware of the services and support structures that are in place;
- GBV research endeavours to inform university policies, safety measures and the effectiveness of victim support structures; and
- establishing a conducive, preventative support culture to openly and frequently deliberate and disseminate GBV-related issues on campus.

The role of SRCs in raising awareness regarding GBV as well as the prevalence of factors influencing SRCs in this role are influenced by the nature and dimensions of GBV programmes at a particular university. SRCs can only operate within the parameters of university policies and programmes. It is thus imperative to analyse the nature and dimensions of these policies and programmes to determine to what extent they enhance or hamper the awareness-creation role of SRCs pertaining to GBV.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

By following a qualitative research design and intrinsic case study methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain rich data about the nature and scope of the problem. The results were thematically analysed to interpret the findings. The primary objective of the interviews was to analyse challenges in promoting effective GBV awareness by the SRC on South African campuses and to design a GBV awareness model for both university management and SRC members to address these challenges.

Purposively sampled universities were selected based on their relatively large residential student populations and their physical location. The nine universities served as cases representing the total population of 26 public universities in South

Africa. Three universities were selected from Gauteng, being the most densely populated province. The sampled universities were:

- Central University of Technology (Free State Province);
- North-West University (North-West Province);
- University of KwaZulu-Natal (KwaZulu-Natal Province);
- University of Limpopo (Limpopo Province);
- University of Pretoria (Gauteng Province);
- University of South Africa (Gauteng Province);
- University of Stellenbosch (Cape Province);
- University of Venda (Limpopo Province); and
- University of the Witwatersrand (Gauteng Province).

The units of analysis imbedded within these cases were SRC members, purposively sampled based on their portfolio of responsibility, i.e. gender-related matters. Three SRC members per university were sampled ( $n=27$ ). The rationale for selecting these SRC members was that they represent the opinions and experiences of the total student population. They also act as partners with university management collectively and inclusively to design student-related programmes, such as GBV. As the governing body of students dealing directly with all student matters, SRCs serve as valuable sources to obtain rich data regarding the prevalence of GBV on campuses.

An interview schedule was designed and pretested (piloted) with four SRC members to ensure comprehension of the nature of the questions posed. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, face-to-face interviews were not possible. The interview schedule was therefore distributed to selected participants via e-mail. This was followed-up by telephonic interviews once the participants had read through the questions. Ethical clearance (Ref. NWU-01497-19-A7) was obtained to conduct the survey and informed consent was obtained from the participants.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

Of the 27 sampled SRC members 24 participated in the survey, an 88,8% participation rate. There were 53,8% male and 46,2% female participants. Responses of participants were categorised based on the following key themes:

- The nature and scope of SRC GBV awareness creation;
- Policies and structures in place to support GBV;
- Reporting arrangements for GBV incidents;
- The influence of GBV on the academic life of victims;
- University support and empowerment towards SRC in GBV matters;

- GBV awareness methods;
- SRC involvement in the design and implementation of GBV programmes;
- Students' knowledge regarding university GBV support services;
- Challenges influencing the SRC to promote GBV awareness; and
- Suggestions on improving GBV awareness on university campuses.

The first three questions dealt with contextual issues to probe SRC members' opinions regarding their role in creating GBV awareness on campus. The overwhelming majority of participants (86,7%) confirmed that the SRC has a significant role to play in designing GBV awareness programmes and to disseminate related information to students. The remaining 13,3% of participants were unsure about their particular role. They believe the university management is responsible for meaningful campaigns on GBV awareness while the SRC should provide student perspectives and receive the necessary guidance and resources to play a designated role in the implementation thereof. Their beliefs are based on the fact that GBV is a highly complex, sensitive matter. It should be understood within broader social injustice and human rights contexts. Students, inclusive of SRC members, are usually not familiar with international conventions, treaties and protocols, national legislation and programmes governing GBV matters. They also do not necessarily have the required competence to imbed GBV-related international best practices, standards, and principles in university policies and programmes. Therefore participants reason that university management should drive awareness campaigns. Participants alluded to the fact that the establishment of engagement platforms and educational initiatives to support GBV awareness on campus are rather sophisticated and resource intensive. As such, their establishment usually falls outside the capability and capacity of the SRC.

In a follow-up question, participants were requested to outline the nature of support provided to GBV victims on campus. Based on their input, it is evident that all universities, to varying degrees, have policies and support structures in place to deal with GBV on campuses. Although such initiatives can be commended, it is worrisome that a significant number of SRC members (42,5%) are not sure whether these policies and support mechanisms are adequate or effective. A further concern is that some SRC members were simply not aware of support initiatives. One member from a particular university may, for example, be familiar with the nature of such policies and support mechanisms while the other two from the same university are not familiar at all. As the SRC is generally regarded as a legitimate source of information for students, the SRC should promote awareness and the use of these support mechanisms. If a student goes to an SRC member for assistance regarding any GBV-related matter, they should be able to direct the student to the suitable place or person. A further matter of concern is

that only female students are seemingly targeted as far as university GBV support is concerned. Five SRC members from different universities raised questions as to why males and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, and asexual community are not equally supported.

The majority of participants (78,5%) agreed that the SRC should be at the forefront of addressing GBV awareness on campus, but felt that some of their efforts are stifled by limited support from universities. Participants generally described support as any assistance (e.g., financial, infrastructure, training, and equipment) in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

It is evident that SRCs are fairly well supported by their respective universities to deal with GBV-related matters. However, it is concerning that 23,1% indicated that they are not supported at all. It should be noted that four participants declared that the SRC is not doing enough to create GBV awareness, in spite of the support they receive. They also contend that GBV awareness initiatives do not always yield the expected outcomes. They confirmed, however, that they are not aware of any efforts to measure or assess the effectiveness and efficiency of such initiatives. They therefore hold that GBV awareness programmes should run continuously throughout the academic year and be integrated with other student programmes to yield the desired results.

A further question posed to participants was why they think victims of GBV do not report incidents. Participants isolated the following reasons:

- fear of their abusers, i.e. re-victimised by perpetrators (65,5%);
- prejudice and judgement by family, friends or their communities (58,2%);
- fear that no one will believe them (42,5%);
- traumatised by the university and SAPS reporting system (38,4%);
- universities fail to hold perpetrators of GBV accountable for their actions (35,4%); and
- not being educated regarding GBV and the seriousness around the issue (28,4%).

Another question probed the perceived influence that GBV has on academic performance of students. This question made provision for a closed-ended, Likert-scale response as well as open-ended responses in which SRC members could substantiate their answer. The following responses were obtained:

- Highly detrimental (65,4%), e.g., health conditions including hypertension, reproductive problems, neurological issues, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infections, pregnancy, etc.
- Damaging (23,1%), e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, suicide thoughts, dysfunction, eating disorders, drop out – leaving the university, etc.
- Moderate and somewhat (11,5%), e.g., psychological trauma, poor academic performance, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, etc.

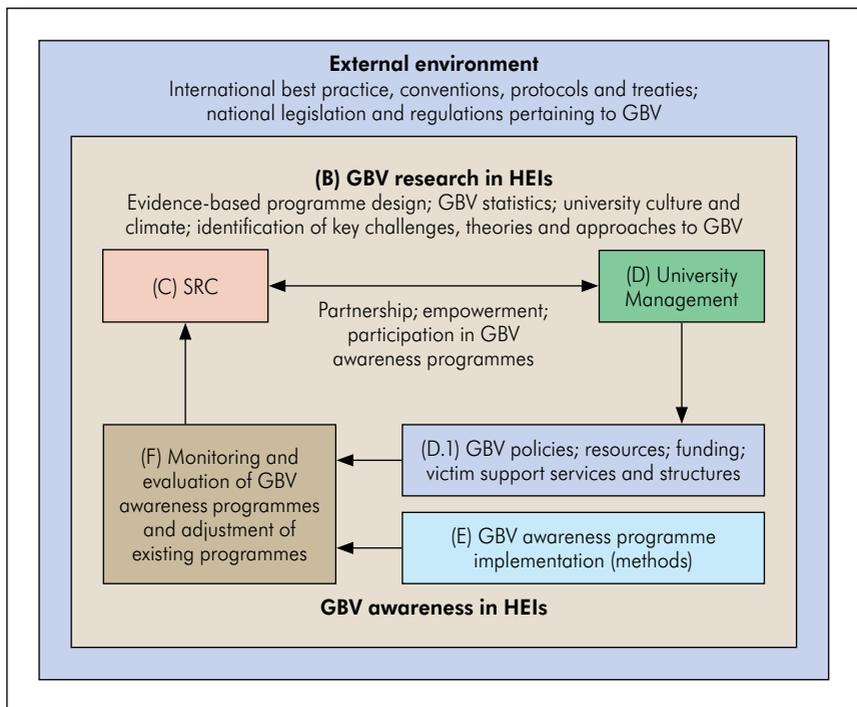
From these responses it is evident that the effect that GBV has on the academic life of students is of great concern and should not be taken lightly by university management.

The thematic analysis of findings revealed that there are various challenges associated with the awareness creation role that SRCs should play. Some of the most significant challenges include the general lack of university management support, limited funding for awareness programmes and campaigns, the general apathy of students and their limited participation in awareness programmes, as well as the general loss of trust in the justice system.

## TOWARDS A GBV AWARENESS MODEL FOR SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Shoemaker, Tankard and Lasorsa (2004) explain that scientists' knowledge and understanding of the world is often represented by means of scientific models.

**Figure 1: A GBV awareness model for South African universities**



Source: (Authors' own construction)

The scientific method concerned is basically one of creating, verifying, and modifying models of the world, or of 'reality'. According to Van der Waldt (2013:49) a model in its most elementary form generally refers to a "graphical presentation of a process, function or system". Such models usually take the form of diagrams, figures, tables, charts or schemes. An elementary form of models simply enables visual illustrations of the variables and relationships between them. Fan *et al.* (2012:784) add that models as physical representations are frequently utilised to aid scientific inquiry or to serve as a means to synthesise research findings and recommendations. In this sense they can follow the format of structural models, sequence or process models, or of content models. Such models can also be used to illustrate the macro- (i.e. environmental), meso- (i.e. processes and systems) and micro- (i.e. functional content) dimensions to delayer complex phenomena (Williams 2003:204).

Based on the research findings, a GBV awareness model is proposed (Figure 1). The main purpose of this GBV awareness model is to improve the ability of HELs in general and SRCs in particular to curb GBV incidences on campuses by means of more effective, appropriate awareness-creation programmes. The model is also intended to address current GBV awareness gaps on campuses. It is based on the architecture of a process map.

The section below highlights the key dimensions of the model.

## **A: External environment**

External factors informing the contextual dynamics of the model's application are represented by the model's outside bounds. External factors may act as a motivator or a constraint for SRCs in their efforts to raise GBV awareness. It is imperative that SRC members ensure that they identify all the possible factors that may positively or negatively influence awareness programmes. The external or macro-environment includes international conventions, protocols and treaties with which countries such as South Africa should comply. These include:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Humans and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa;
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and
- The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development 2008.

It also includes best practices emanating from the assessment of GBV programmes conducted at universities globally. One of the key aspects of this model is SRCs and universities adopting international best practice principles.

Nationally, the external environment includes the HEI context, social dynamics, as well as the statutory (legislative) and regulatory framework that governs GBV in the country. HEIs should design GBV-related policies in line with the stipulations and obligations of this framework. The statutory framework includes:

- The Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977;
- The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996;
- The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998;
- The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000;
- The Criminal Law Amendment Act 32 of 2007; and
- The Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011.

As far as the regulatory framework guiding GBV in South Africa is concerned, it includes:

- The Minimum Service Standards Charter;
- The Service Charter for Victims of Crime;
- The Integrated Victim Empowerment Policy;
- The National Policy Framework for the Management of Sexual Offences;
- The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training; and
- The Department of Higher Education and Training Policy.

## **B: GBV research in HEIs**

The findings revealed that there is a widespread shortage of GBV research in the country, with South African universities being no exception. As a result, universities should make performing GBV-related research a standard practice to better understand the nature and breadth of GBV at their institutions. One of the key concerns raised in the research is under-reporting. GBV events on university campuses are under-reported for a variety of reasons, including fear, victimisation, and a lack of skills and understanding in social interaction and dispute resolution. Campus culture has a significant impact on how institutions and their SRC members manage their operational tasks. This also means that if a university ignores certain concerns and does not address them, it reflects the conduct on campus. As a result, for the purposes of this model, it is critical that campus culture be evaluated through culture and climate surveys in terms of GBV as well as how the university promotes gender equality.

## **C: SRC role and mandate**

The SRC is represented by the model's fourth dimension. It is critical that all SRC members have a thorough understanding of the nature and scope of GBV

in general, as well as the support services and structures accessible to students. This calls for strong collaboration between the SRC and the university administration. As a result, university administration and SRCs should form and maintain a strong alliance. SRCs should be given more power. Furthermore, SRCs should be involved in the development and execution of GBV awareness programmes. Because SRC members are themselves students, they understand the realities on campus and the experiences of their peers; this will improve the credibility and effectiveness of these programmes.

## **D: University management**

University management, as the fourth element of the model, entails leadership and the establishment of sound relationships with the SRC, with whom they form a partnership. University management should allow the SRC to participate in GBV awareness programme design and implementation. Based on GBV research and statistics, university management should address typical challenges identified by SRC members. This includes the provisioning of resources, funding, and general management support.

### ***D.1: GBV policies, resources, funding and victim support services***

University management has legal and moral obligations to formulate and execute policies and directives to deal with GBV issues on campus. Distributing suitable resources is another area of responsibility for university administration. Distributing resources to the various support structures and services is critical to implementing the GBV awareness model successfully. This includes allocating enough financial resources to university structures and the SRC. The lack of funding was one of the biggest challenges that most SRC members identified. For this model, it is important that university management makes sure there is available funding for the SRC to run awareness programmes.

Constructing and maintaining professional victim support services is another important area of managerial responsibility. University campuses generally have healthcare centres or units to provide various types of support to students who experience GBV. Thus, it is important when adopting this model for SRC members to ensure that professionals assist students. SRC members should also encourage students to speak up and report university staff who do not provide adequate support to victims. Typical support structures and services identified include the following:

- Official GBV policies and disciplinary codes;
- Social workers, psychologists and SAPS support;
- Call centres and 'Thuso 1777' abuse hotlines;
- Centre for Sexuality AIDS and Gender (CSA&G);
- Counselling Development Unit (CCDU);

- Campus HIV Support Unit;
- Gender Equity Office;
- Legal and Transformation Office;
- Central Disciplinary Committee;
- ‘No Excuse’ initiative;
- ‘Try Africa’ programme;
- #SpeakoutUP initiative;
- SRC ‘Current affairs’ wellness week initiative; and
- Support from non-profit organisations.

The model further makes provision for the establishment of suitable reporting arrangements for victims of GBV. It is evident that university students typically do not report GBV cases because they generally have lost trust in the justice system (e.g., SAPS and university management) and fear being re-victimised by perpetrators. University management should thus ensure that the integrity of the reporting system is beyond reproach and that victims fully trust those involved in the process.

## **E: GBV programme implementation**

It is critical that the SRC and university management collaborate to establish awareness programmes that are properly implemented. A devoted team of senior university authorities, SRC members, hostel leadership, and support service workers is needed to accomplish this. The more exposure the entire student population receives, the more probable it is that the programmes’ goals will be met. It is also critical that SRC members use the correct tools to get the word out to students about their efforts. As confirmed by participants, the following are typical methods in this regard:

- partnering with wellness centres;
- campaigns and events;
- vigils, silent and peaceful protests;
- student dialogues and GBV seminars;
- pamphlets and posters;
- self-defence classes;
- media publications and online information on the SRC’s webpage;
- social media platforms such as Twitter;
- hostel actions and dissemination of information via hostel leadership;
- hotlines;
- suggestion boxes;
- anonymous reporting systems; and
- partnerships with support organisations.

GBV continues to be a major issue at HEIs. As a result of adopting this model, universities and SRC members will require cooperation from SAPS for cases to be handled and victims of GBV to receive justice.

## **F: GBV programme monitoring and evaluation**

The monitoring and evaluation of GBV awareness programmes is the final component of the awareness programmes. It is critical to keep track of the programme's outcomes and influence continually. The SRC and university administration must also be able to discriminate between achievements and failures. This necessitates the creation of appropriate performance metrics, such as:

- the number of GBV incidents reported;
- the number of calls received by call centres;
- the number of enquiries at support services;
- the number of counselling sessions conducted; and
- the cost-benefit of programmes, i.e., the amount of time and resources consumed versus the impact of these programmes.

Monitoring and evaluation activities should also make provision for measuring the effectiveness of methods adopted to convey GBV awareness programme content on campus. It will furthermore benefit universities and SRCs to adopt a combination of overall GBV programme assessment tools, namely:

- rights-based assessment tools;
- community-based participatory tools;
- systems approach-related tools; and
- survivor-centred tools.

All this information should be used to improve existing awareness programmes as well as design new initiatives. Such information should assist university administrators in prioritising and reallocating resources, as well as prioritising certain activities. Finally, assessment data should tell the employees of support services and structures about the need for improvement.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article outlines the role that SRCs should play in creating GBV awareness on campuses of HEIs. The findings reveal that there are various challenges associated with the awareness creation role that SRCs should play. Some of the most significant challenges include the general lack of university management support, limited funding for awareness programmes and campaigns, the general apathy of students and

their limited participation in awareness programmes, as well as the general loss of trust in the justice system. It is evident that the prevalence of GBV is unacceptably high, and a comprehensive approach should be followed to address it. The proposed model can add real value in this regard. The collaborative relationship between university management and the SRC needs to be strengthened to fight GBV on campuses by promoting effective and efficient awareness programmes.

The student population can be regarded as a micro-cosm of the larger population of the country. The challenges identified should thus also be interpreted within a broader social context where cultural norms influence conceptions of gender roles and human relations, and power dynamics influence the general priority given to GBV issues. Universities in South Africa are in a unique position to connect society and stand firm in the fight against GBV. In this regard, SRCs are ideally placed to promote GBV awareness with one united, strong voice.

## NOTE

- \* This article is based on Natalie von Meullen's Master's dissertation conducted at North-West University, titled 'Promoting gender-based violence awareness in higher education institutions: The case of student representative councils in selected South African universities', under the supervision of Professor Gerrit van der Waldt.

## REFERENCES

- Alexander-Scott, M., Bell, E. and Holden, J. 2016. *Shifting Social Norms to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls*. London: VAWG Helpdesk.
- Baker, M.R., Frazier, P.A., Greer, C., Paulsen, J.A., Howard, K., Meredith, L.N. and Shallcross, S.L. 2016. Sexual victimization history predicts academic performance in college women. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*. 63(1):685–692.
- Banyard, V.L. 2014. Improving college campus-based prevention of violence against women: A strategic plan for research built on multipronged practices and policies. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*. 15(4):339–351.
- Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr). 2016. *Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in South Africa: A Brief Review*. Johannesburg: CSVr.
- Chang, E.C., Lin, J., Fowler, E.E., Yu, E.A., Yu, T., Jilani, Z. and Hirsch, J.K. 2015. Sexual assault and depressive symptoms in college students: Do psychological needs account for the relationship? *Social Work*. 60(3):211–218.
- Chivers-Wilson, K.A. 2006. Sexual assault and posttraumatic stress disorder: A review of the biological, psychological, and sociological factors and treatments. *McGill Journal of Medicine*. 9(2):111–118.

- Clark, C., Spencer, R.A., Shrestha, B., Ferguson, G., Oakes, J.M. and Gupta, J. 2017. Evaluating a multi-component social behaviour change communication strategy to reduce intimate partner violence among married couples: Study protocol for a cluster-randomized trial in Nepal. *BMC Public Health*. 17(1):1–14.
- Commission for Gender Equality (CGE). 2016. *Fighting fire with (out) fire: Assessing the work of police stations in combatting violence against women*. Pretoria: CGE.
- Corke, E. 2016. *Universities overhaul policies amid protests over rape culture*. Available at: <http://ewn.co.za/2016/05/18/Universities-overhaul-policies-amid-protests-over-rape-culture>. (Accessed on 12 July 2020).
- Crowther-Dowey, C. and Silvestri, M. 2017. The gendering of violent crime: Towards a human rights approach. *British Journal of Community Justice*. 14(3):1–16.
- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). 2016. DHET appoints team to address SGBV in HE institutions. Media briefing held on 6 October 2016. Pretoria. Available at: <https://www.dhet.gov.za/SiteAssets/Media/Statements/DHET%20SGBV%20task%20team%20061016.pdf>. (Accessed on 7 May 2021).
- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). 2017. *Addressing Gender-based Violence in the Post-school Education and Training Sector: Draft Policy and Strategy Framework*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). 2020. *Policy Framework to address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System*. Pretoria: DHET. Available at: <https://www.dhet.gov.za/Social%20Inclusion/DHET%20GBV%20Policy%20Framework%2030July2020.pdf>. (Accessed on 5 May 2021).
- Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). 2017. *Diagnostic Review of the State's Response to GBV. Evaluation Nr. 2014-02*. Pretoria: DPME.
- Du Preez, P., Simmonds, S. and Chetty, D.J. 2017. Critical transformation in higher education: ethical reflections on #mustfall movements and concomitant gender-based violence. *South African Journal of Higher Education*. 31(6):45–60.
- Enaifoghe, A.O. and Idowu, T.A. 2021. The attitudes and perceptions toward sexuality and the social influence on gender-based violence in South Africa. *African Journal of Public Affairs*. 12(1):153–170.
- Enaifoghe, A.O. 2019. Gender based violence and the global gendered viewpoint approach mechanisms in building a peaceful world. *Journal of Social and Development Science*. 10(2):15–25.
- Fan, S., Zhao, J.L., Dou, W. and Liu, M. 2012. A framework for transformation from conceptual to logical workflow models. *Decision Support Systems*. 54(1):781–794.
- Fineran, S., Bennett, L. and Sacco, T. 2003. Peer sexual harassment and peer violence among adolescents in Johannesburg and Chicago. *International Social Work*. 46(3):387–401.
- Finchilescu, G. and Dugard, J. 2018. Experiences of gender-based violence at a South African university: Prevalence and effect on rape myth acceptance. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 36(5–6):2749–2772.

- Fisher, B., Cullin, F. and Tuner, M. 2000. The sexual victimization of college women: Findings from two national-level studies. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Gordon, S.F. and Collins, A. 2013. We face rape. We face all things: understandings of gender-based violence among female students at a South African university. *African Safety Promotion Journal*. 11(2):93–106.
- Gross, A., Winslett, A., Roberts, M. and Gohm, C. 2006. An examination of sexual violence against college women. *Violence against Women*. 12(3):288–299.
- Heilman, B. and Barker, G. 2018. *Masculine Norms and Violence: Making the Connections*. Washington, DC: Promundo-US.
- Hembree, E., Rauch, S.A.M., Grunfeld, E.E., Yadin, E. and Cahill, P. 2009. Changes in reported physical health symptoms and social function with prolonged exposure therapy for chronic posttraumatic stress disorder. *Depression and Anxiety*. 26(8):732–738.
- Institute for Security Studies (ISS). 2019. *What Will It Take to Prevent Interpersonal Violence in South Africa?* Policy Brief. Pretoria: ISS.
- Jewkes, R. and Abrahams, N. 2002. The epidemiology of rape and sexual coercion in South Africa: An overview. *Social Science & Medicine*. 55(7):1231–1244.
- Jewkes, R., Levin, J. and Penn-Kekana, L. 2002. Risk factors for domestic violence: Findings from a South African cross-sectional study. *Social Science, and Medicine*. 55(9):1603–1617.
- Joubert, P., Rothmann, S. and Van Wyk, C. 2011. The effectiveness of sexual harassment policies and procedures at higher education institutions in South Africa. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*. 9(1):47–57.
- Kgosana, R. 2019. SA's universities facing sexual assault crisis. *The Citizen*. Available at: <https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/society/2126634/sas-universities-facing-sexual-assault-crisis/>. (Accessed on 24 July 2020).
- Klemenčič, M. 2012. Student representation in Western Europe: Introduction to the special issue. *European Journal of Higher Education*. 2(1):2–19.
- Krebs, C.P., Lindquist, C.H., Warner, T.D., Fisher, B.S. and Martin, S.L. 2007. *The Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) Study: Final Report*. National Institute of Justice. Washington, DC: Department of Justice.
- Kuki, S. 2018. *This Women's Day Let's talk about Men*. Cape Town: Centre for Constitutional Rights & FW de Klerk Foundation.
- Leburu, G. and Phethlo-Thekiso, N. 2015. *Reviewing Gender-based Violence against Women and HIV/AIDS as Intersecting Issues*. Mafikeng: North-West University.
- Lindquist, C.H., Barrick, K., Krebs, C., Crosby, C.M., Lockard, A.J. and Sanders-Phillips, K. 2013. The context and consequences of sexual assault among undergraduate women at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 28(1):2437–2461.
- Mandew, M. 2003. *A Guide to Student Services in South Africa*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education and Transformation.
- Martin, Z. 2015. *A Tribute: The Women of Fees Must Fall*. Available at: <http://zelamartin.com/the-women-of-feesmust-fall/>. (Accessed on 15 July 2021).

- Mercilene, M., Jina, R., Labuschagne, G., Vetten, L., Loots, L., Swemmer, S., Meyersfeld, B. and Jewkes, R. 2017. *Rape Justice in South Africa: A Retrospective Study of the Investigation, Prosecution and Adjudication of Reported Rape Cases*. South Africa. Available at: <http://www.mrc.ac.za/reports/rape-justice-south-africa-retrospective-study-investigation-prosecution-and-adjudication>. (Accessed on 13 Aug. 2020).
- Merry, S.E. 2009. *Gender Violence: A Cultural Perspective*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Moreku, C. 2014. *The Involvement and Participation of Student Representative Councils in Co-operative Governance in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa*. Bloemfontein: Central University of Technology.
- Morrison, A., Ellsberg, M. and Bott, S. 2004. *Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: A Critical Review of Interventions*. New York, NY: World Bank Group.
- Mozhgan, A., Parivash J., Nadergholi G. and Jowkar, B. 2011. Student leadership competencies development. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*. 15:1616–1620.
- Ntsala, M. and Mahlatji, M.R. 2016. Student representative council: addressing information needs of students and evaluation of information dissemination channels used by the SRC of the University of Limpopo. *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives*. 1(1):102–120.
- O'Connor, L. and Kingkade, T. 2016. If you don't get why campus rape is a national problem, read this. *The Huffington Post*. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/sexual-assault-explainer\\_us\\_5759aa2fe4b0ced23ca74f12](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/sexual-assault-explainer_us_5759aa2fe4b0ced23ca74f12). (Accessed on 20 July 2020).
- Radloff, S., Rau, A., Coetzee, J.K., Nardi, C., Smit, R. and Matebesi, S.Z. 2014. Students perceiving risk: A quantitative assessment on three South African university campuses. *African Sociological Review*. 18(1):65–90.
- Sexual Assault and Misconduct Task Force. 2016. *Georgetown's Sexual Assault and Misconduct Climate Survey*. Available at: <https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/survey>. (Accessed on 12 July 2021).
- Shefer, T., Clowes, L. and Vergnani, T. 2012. Narratives of transactional sex on a university campus. *Culture Health & Sexuality*. 14(4):435–447.
- Shoemaker, P.J., Tankard, J.W. and Lasorsa, D.L. 2004. *How to Build Social Science Theories*. London: Sage.
- Treffry-Goatley, A., De Lange, N., Moletsane, R., Mkhize, N. and Masinga, L. 2018. *What Does It Mean to Be a Young African Woman on a University Campus in Times of Sexual Violence? A New Moment, a New Conversation*. Durban: UKZN Press.
- Van der Waldt, G. 2013. Towards a typology of models in Public Administration and Management as field of scientific inquiry. *African Journal of Public Affairs*. 6(2):38–56.
- Vetten, L. 2014. *Rape and other forms of sexual violence in South Africa* (Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Policy Brief 72). <https://issafrica.org/research/policybrief/rape-and-other-forms-of-sexual-violence-in-south-africa/download-policy-brief-72-pdf>. (Accessed on 21 August 2020).
- Wafula, J.A., Judith, J.S.K. and Kassilly, J. 2018. *Students' Role in Managing Gender-Based Violence in Kenyan Universities*. Nairobi: Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.
- Wazar, M. 2016. The Campaign against Rape Culture. Available at: <http://activateonline.co.za/chapter2-12-the-campaign-against-rape-culture/>. (Accessed on 22 July 2020).

- Wilkinson, K. 2017. *Guide: Rape statistics in South Africa. Africa Check: Sorting fact from fiction.* Available at: <https://africacheck.org/factsheets/guide-rape-statistics-in-south-africa/>. Accessed on 15 July 2021).
- Williams, M. 2003. *Making Sense of Social Research.* London: Sage.
- Wright, A. 2013. *The characteristics of good information.* Available at: <https://prezi.com/rmk05bjnwoyj/the-characteristics-of-good-information>. (Accessed on 4 June. 2020).

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

### **Prof Gerrit van der Waldt**

Research Professor: Governance  
Focus Area: Social Transformation  
North-West University  
Private Bag X6001  
Potchefstroom  
2520  
Tel: 018 299 1633  
E-mail: [Gerrit.vanderwaldt@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Gerrit.vanderwaldt@nwu.ac.za)

### **Mrs Natalie von Meullen**

Centre for Teaching and Learning Support  
North-West University  
Private Bag X6001  
Potchefstroom  
2520

# Challenges to Effective and Efficient Infrastructure of Public Private Partnerships in South Africa

**Z H Dlamini\***

Department of Development Studies  
University of South Africa

**L Botes**

Director of Research Development  
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences  
North-West University

## **ABSTRACT**

To accelerate the programme of infrastructure development and service provision, especially to the many previously disadvantaged South Africans, the government adopted the Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach in the late 1990s, as an intervention mechanism which was reflecting signs of success internationally. Sadly, over two decades later, the outcomes have been somewhat disappointing, especially where infrastructure development, upgrade, operation, maintenance and management is concerned across all three spheres of government as various PPP projects in the country take far longer than necessary to implement, some fail to reach the desired delivery or completion stage, while others are exposed to financial mismanagement, as well as outright corruption. This is evident in the number of incomplete and dilapidated transport infrastructure, incomplete and poorly maintained basic service infrastructure, the embezzlement and misappropriation of infrastructure funds, as well as the mounting infrastructure backlogs. The article collected data through a series of qualitative interviews with professionals in the PPP space with the aim of understanding the key factors that hamper PPP implementation efforts that must be addressed to improve future project outcomes. The article shows a notable degree of consensus among PPP professionals on the view that the PPP approach in its current form in South Africa is

characterised by several weaknesses and gaps that make implementation efforts vulnerable to failure.

## INTRODUCTION

After the advent of democracy in 1994, it became clear to the new government of South Africa that it had to accelerate the provision of public services and the delivery of social infrastructure to the many previously disadvantaged communities in the country, within the confines of limited resources. By the late 1990s, the government conceded that if it was serious about accelerating the provision of basic service and public infrastructure, it needed to explore other alternative and innovative public procurement approaches. According to Habitat III (2016:69–70), the government proceeded and adopted the PPP approach as an alternative public procurement model, in line with international trends. The government hoped that the PPP approach would help accelerate the provision of public infrastructure and other services by attracting much-needed private-sector investment and capacity, as well as improve efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating project-related challenges such as poor governance, poor planning and lack of accountability; while lessening the risks conceded by government when conducting procurement through traditional approaches such as the tendering system, outsourcing and privatisation.

However, after more than two decades of PPP implementation, the results have been somewhat disappointing, especially where infrastructure development, upgrade, operation, maintenance and management is concerned across all three spheres of government. Various PPP projects in the country take far longer than necessary to implement, some fail to reach the desired delivery or completion stage, while others are exposed to financial mismanagement, as well as outright corruption. According to Seeletse (2016:20–21), the failure of PPPs in South Africa is evident in the number of incomplete and dilapidated transport infrastructure, incomplete and poorly maintained basic service infrastructure, the embezzlement and misappropriation of infrastructure funds, as well as the mounting infrastructure backlogs in sectors such as housing, education, energy and health. All this is happening amid a growing demand for various public infrastructure assets to meet various social, economic and developmental needs such as those indicated in the sustainable development goals agenda (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2006:108). In fact, this is not a uniquely South African challenge, as stated by O'Connor (2005:357), while the use of the PPP approach has been on the rise globally,

successful implementation has been somewhat uneven, with only a few PPP projects being successfully implemented, while the majority fail to deliver on promised results.

Using the qualitative approach, involving semi-structured interviews with 33 experienced PPP professionals, this article highlights some of the key factors that hinder efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of the PPP approach that must be given careful consideration if future project outcomes are to be improved. The view of the authors is that failed PPP projects are more likely to exhibit certain common key features that can be methodically identified and addressed to improve future projects.

## **PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN CONTEXT**

The PPP approach is an alternative public procurement approach that brings together resources from the public and the private sectors in a long-term contract for mutual benefits (PPP Unit 2004:17). For the private sector, the aim is usually profit-driven, while for the public sector the aim is ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of public services and the development of high quality and well-maintained infrastructure (Harris 2003:17).

For the National Treasury of South Africa, a PPP is a contractual agreement between a public sector institution and a private entity or entities, in which the private entity or entities assume substantial financial, technical and operational risk for the design, finance, construction and operational phases of public infrastructure or the delivery of public services with a view of financial gain at the end of the project (PPP Unit 2004:17). The PPP approach generally involves three key elements: namely, risk sharing or risk transfer, value for money, and innovation.

### **Risk sharing or risk transfer**

Central to the procurement of any public infrastructure or service through the PPP approach is the need to transfer the majority of or all project-related risks away from the procuring public entity to a contracted private partner. Risk transfer lies at the heart of incremental efficiency in the PPP approach, and it is usually the most important driver of the value for money aspect. This is one of the key elements that makes the PPP approach different from all other public procurement approaches in which the procuring public entity retains almost all project-related risk, such as in the tendering system (PPP Unit 2004:53).

## Value for money

When deciding on the most suitable procurement approach between the PPP approach and other public procurement approaches, it is important that efficiency and effectiveness are thoroughly assessed to ensure that the chosen option is one that will lead to the attainment of value for money (Republic of South Africa 2001:79). The assessment of the value for money aspect must clearly reflect how the PPP approach will lead to better value for the public over the period of the PPP contract. One of the best instruments that can be used to assess this is the Public Sector Comparator (PSC), which is designed to assess required project inputs against projected project outputs over the life of the contract at hand (PPP Unit 2004:56).

## Innovation

The involvement of the private sector in the development of public infrastructure and the provision of public services at a profit can only be acceptable insofar as it will lead to the introduction of innovation, efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of public services (Chi, Arnold & Perkins 2003:17). This includes:

- Construction schedule reduction, leading to savings realisation and earlier use of infrastructure.
- Project costs reduction.
- Maximisation of infrastructure functionality.
- Reliable, uninterrupted and predictable delivery of infrastructure and services to the correct recipients.

Unfortunately, despite continued promises of efficiency and effectiveness, the implementation of the PPP approach remains with a myriad of risks and challenges. These, according to APMG PPP (2016:217) include the reality that PPPs:

- Are highly complex, intensive and extensive.
- Require high levels of expertise.
- Have a high degree of exposure to the political climate of a country.
- Involve high transaction costs.
- Are vulnerable to corruption.
- Can lead to extreme budgetary commitments, putting pressure on long-term fiscal sustainability.

The disadvantages that are noted above reflect the reality that the PPP approach is not a one-size-fits-all solution or intervention to infrastructure development, thus necessitating a thorough assessment before engaging the approach.

## **MANAGING RISKS WITHIN A PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT**

As indicated above, one of the key motivational factors for the PPP approach is the transfer of or sharing of the majority of project-related risks, away from the public sector. However, with several PPP projects continuously requiring government bailouts and guarantees, the question becomes: 'Do South African PPP agreements really consider risk transfer?' For example, in the 2011/2012 budget that was tabled by the Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport, there was an allocation of R259 million in 'patronage guarantee costs' for the Gautrain PPP project (Flanagan 2011:7). The allocation was expected to increase to R360 million the following year if low ridership continued. Indeed, this continued and over the 2017/18 financial year, the Gautrain Management Agency allocated R1,5 billion for 'patronage guarantee' after paying R1,34 billion in the 2016/17 financial year. This means that the government of South Africa pays almost R100 million per month to keep the Gautrain PPP in operation as part of the risk allocation approach that was agreed on. The question again: 'Was risk transfer really considered if the procuring public entity has to pay such a high 'patronage guarantee' fee?'

Risk management should equally be a priority for both the procuring public entity and the contracted private entity, regardless of the amount of risk acquired by each partner in a project (Bouder, Slavin & Lofstedt 2009:322). Effective risk management practices can help project managers to avoid, reduce or modify the chances of the occurrence of the risk event by activating the most suitable alternative or intervention. If engaged effectively, risk management can allow a greater degree of control to certain risks, leading to decreased vulnerability or reduced impact of risk (Bouder *et al.* 2009:323). The view is that effective and efficient human action and intervention can avert or lessen risk and its effects. According to Hodges (2003:15), the problem is largely due to the way risk transfer is determined and classified in most PPP projects. Based on the writings of Murray (2007:56), the process of determining risk allocation is more of an art than a science, and a lot can go wrong if due diligence is not conducted properly; thus, risk sharing must be conducted following a comprehensive analysis and assessment of each risk, its chances of happening, as well as each entity's ability to handle it.

## **MANAGING A PPP PARTNERSHIP FOR EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS**

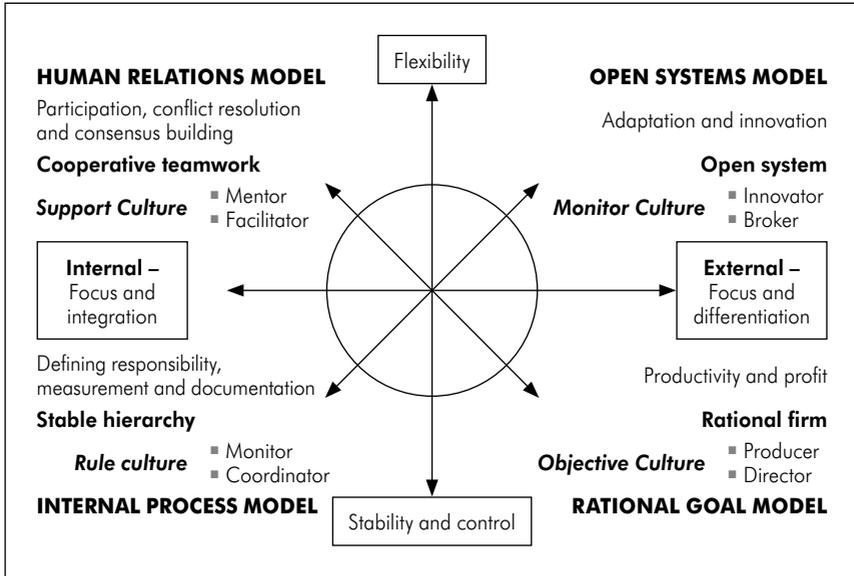
A partnership is a result of an agreement to engage in an activity that promises to yield benefits for everyone involved; benefits that if each partner worked

individually would not have been realised (OECD 2006:67). This is because well-structured partnerships increase efficiency and effectiveness in a project due to the pulling in of resources towards achieving a mutual goal. Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath and St Clair (2007:11), propose the application of a partnership management model to enhance the process. A partnership management model is a mental and social construct and is not static, just as organisations themselves, as well as the means and methods of production evolve all the time. Quinn *et al.* (2007:12) present a framework called the Competing Value Framework, which is underpinned by four pillars that can be used to manage partnerships effectively, including PPPs, while ensuring that performance is enhanced at the same time. The four pillars are:

- **The Internal Process Pillar:** The core anchors of this pillar are monitoring, coordination, stability and continuity in a partnership. The development of project processes such as clear roles and responsibilities, clear workflow linkages and efficient documentation of procedures is of importance. In the implementation of the PPP approach, the relevance of this pillar is evident in situations where a procuring public entity, together with the contracted private entity develop clear project policies, guidelines and frameworks to guide the project at hand.
- **The Rational Goal Pillar:** The core anchors of this pillar are the principles of productivity and profit. Productivity and profit in the PPP approach simply refer to the meeting of performance targets effectively and efficiently, leading to the attainment of 'value for money' for the procuring public entity and the realisation of profits for the private partner. This is achieved by setting clear objectives and goals, using rationality when making decisions and promoting an action-oriented attitude.
- **The Open Systems Pillar:** The core anchor of the open systems pillar is the principles of innovation, adaptability and external support. The adaptability and external support principles are critical to any partnership, especially partnerships that operate in a fast-paced context. This pillar encourages the exploration of innovative ways, as well as the development of new ideas to completing tasks.
- **The Human Relations Pillar:** The core anchors of this pillar are mentorship and facilitation. According to this pillar, effective participation in a partnership and equal commitment by all partners lead to project positives such as effective conflict resolution, congruence in decision-making, openness and equality. In a PPP that has an underperforming contract manager, the Human Relations Pillar would come into effect by addressing underperformance through mentorship and training to improve, rather than dismissal.

Figure 1, shows the flow of the Competing Values Framework.

**Figure 1: Competing Values Framework**



Source: (Quinn et al. 2007)

The Competing Values Framework has two axes; the vertical axis, which ranges from flexibility to control; and the horizontal axis, which ranges from internal processes to external processes, with each pillar placed on the quadrant appropriate to the main action of focus. Each of the pillars and its core assumptions have a perceptual opposite to the other three models. For example, the Internal Process Model, which has control and internal focus as its core assumptions contrasts with the Open Systems Pillar, which has flexibility and external focus as its core assumption. Nevertheless, though these two models contrast with one another, they relate effectively with each other. For example, when developing a business continuity plan, the plan may require some minor adjustments before or after activation, which will require the application of the two pillars when making decisions. There is also a parallel relationship between all four pillars (Quinn et al. 2007:12). The Rational Goal and the Open Systems pillars both have an external focus. The benefit of this relationship is that by applying the principles of both pillars in a partnership decision-making process it can easily lead to financial gain for the private partner, which will be a motivational element to participate in the partnership. It will also offer improved value for money for the procuring public entity. On the other hand, the Open Systems and the Human Relations pillars both emphasise flexibility. This is critical in a partnership as when disagreements arise, they must be resolved in an effective and efficient manner, because

if disagreements are left unresolved it can lead to an unnecessary breakdown in working relations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted using the qualitative approach because of its ability to draw insights from respondents, thus ensuring that a detailed description is given using the insights, experience and knowledge of experts on the topic at hand. In total, 33 semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of the study, involving 21 respondents applying their trade in the public sector (seven in provincial government, five in national government, six in local government and three in public entities). The remaining 12 came from the private sector, involving two Transaction Advisors and 10 officials from PPP private entities. The respondents from the public sector are either at middle or senior management level, tasked with the responsibility of advancing the interests of the public sector in the PPP projects they are part of. Those in the private sector play different roles, either as project managers, finance specialists or as commercial managers in various PPP projects across the country.

## **FINDINGS**

The section below discusses the results of the data that was collected for the study, starting with a look into the manner in which PPPs are categorised to give a picture of how project motivation arises. The following is a discussion focusing on the factors that contribute to the failure of most PPP projects that require consideration to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future project outcomes.

### **Key categories or types of Public Private Partnership infrastructure**

There are two types or categories of PPP infrastructure; namely, economic infrastructure and social infrastructure, on which all the respondents in the study agreed. However, other respondents went further and noted that over the past decade, there has been an emergence of two more PPP infrastructure categories; namely, urbanisation-driven PPP infrastructure and politically influenced PPP infrastructure. According to the respondents, the two emergent categories are becoming more common in South Africa due to the need to correct historical imbalances of the past concerning unequal access to services, as well as the political agendas of some politicians in government to appear sensitive and responsive to the developmental discourse in the country. According to Respondent 06,

politically influenced PPP infrastructure projects differ from other PPP projects because, though the proposed infrastructure may serve a social or economic purpose, its main purpose is to fulfil a political function, which elevates its political risks. The element of risk transfer in politically influenced PPP projects tends to deviate from the approach of other PPP categories. This is because these projects are afforded a significant amount of financial guarantee against the fiscus instead of shifting the risk to the private partner (Respondent 09). Urbanisation-driven PPP infrastructure, on the other hand, differs from the other PPP categories as these projects are implemented with the purpose of promoting rural urbanisation, as well as rural-urban integration (Respondent 03). They can be a hybrid of the economic and social infrastructure categories, and generally follow the normal PPP procurement processes (Respondent 11).

## **Factors that contribute to the failure of Public Private Partnerships in South Africa**

Based on the experiences and perceptions of the respondents in the study, the following can be regarded as the key factors that contribute to the failure of most PPP projects in South Africa and which require careful attention:

### ***Ineffective Public Private Partnership regulation***

Indicated by most of the respondents, in its current form, the PPP project life cycle process that is provided under Regulation 16 of the Public Finance Management Act is lacking in a number of areas and does not promote efficiency and effectiveness. For example, according to Respondent 08, although Regulation 16 lists the stages that must be followed when implementing the PPP approach, the regulation fails to give clear instructions on the required inputs that are necessary to ensure that the various stages lead to successful project implementation, and further fails to indicate the processes that must be followed concerning the assignment of responsibilities to partners to ensure that outputs are standardised for all projects and that there is accountability from those assigned with responsibilities.

In addition, the recommended phases for the implementation cycle are not in line with international standards that have led to successes within some developed countries (Respondent 27). For example, Regulation 16 does not make it a requirement that project appraisal be conducted before a project is registered with the National Treasury (Respondent 27). This is a serious gap considering that project appraisal assists procuring public entities to establish if a true need exists for a project and whether the entity is in a position to implement such a project successfully to avoid delays or project cancellations. Currently, the first phase of the PPP cycle is the Initiation Phase, in which a proposed PPP project has to be registered with the PPP Unit, which leads to the registration of projects

that do not necessarily qualify to be PPP projects and will later be found to have little or no value for money, thus unnecessarily inflating the number of cancelled and failed PPP projects on an annual basis. In addition, the cycle does not make any provision for a pre-procurement phase with the necessary due diligence, but rather moves straight from Feasibility Study to Procurement, which compromises the planning process for procurement (Respondent 20). Further, the project life cycle does not give guidance on issues relating to the management of the partnership between the procuring public entity and the contracted private partner, but rather focuses more on the technical elements of the PPP such as bid evaluations, contract negotiation and contract management. The implication thereof is that entities that engage in the PPP approach do so without any guidance and leadership insofar as partnership management is concerned (Respondent 20).

### ***Ineffective government support and leadership***

The view from most of the respondents in the study is that, though on paper the government of South Africa appears to be in support of the PPP approach, this support is superficial and insufficient, seeing that more work still needs to be done to promote the PPP sector in the country, improve its efficiency and make it the procurement option of choice where assessment and feasibility deems it necessary. According to Respondent 18, who is an engineer in the local sphere of government, there is little clarity from leadership in government as to whether there is support of the PPP approach across all the sectors of society or whether there is a preference of the PPP approach on certain sectors or specific projects. For example, the respondent noted that there is a disjuncture in the motivation to use the PPP approach between the custodian of public finances in the country, the National Treasury, and most public entities at all levels of government. The motivation, according to the National Treasury, through the PPP Unit, for implementing the PPP approach for the public sector should be based on the opportunity to achieve value for money, the transfer of project-related risks to the private sector and the leveraging of value-added long-term planning in the delivery of public infrastructure and other services. However, leadership within public entities that make the ultimate decision on whether to consider engaging the PPP approach or use other traditional procurement approaches, considers the PPP approach based on capital investment benefit, with all other benefits coming second (Respondent 12). This does not only affect policy decisions concerning government support for PPPs, but also has an impact on the attainment of value for money and innovation.

### ***Differences in organisational culture approach between partners***

The PPP approach is a goal-driven approach that is based on the coming together of two or more entities that usually operate in different environments, to work together for a mutual benefit. Due to the differences in working environments

and styles of engagement of the different organisations, it is not surprising that a number of the respondents in the study mentioned clashes or differences in either organisational culture or organisational style of engagement as an element that can lead to operational difficulties between partners in a PPP, thus compromising implementation efforts and project outcomes.

### **Poor business case development**

Failure to develop a comprehensive business case for a project leads to the formation of partnerships that are based on assumptions that may not be beneficial to the project at hand (Respondent 17). The development of a comprehensive business case for a project is a highly critical exercise, as it helps to highlight the justification for undertaking the project at hand, using the projected cost of the project in contrast to the risks and the foreseen benefits and savings to be gained. A well-drafted business case further contributes immensely to the establishment of the strategic and operational direction of the proposed PPP project (Respondent 23).

The process of developing a business case involves a substantial amount of due diligence, which should guide the implementation process. For example, a private partner may bid for a project simply because the project appears to be a lucrative venture, while not understanding the complexities of the project, as well as the strategic and operational demands attached to the implementation of the project simply because there is no business case that clearly reflects the required inputs, as well as outputs for the project to be a success. Poor due diligence leads to the use of projections that are informed by little or no evidence and often leads to major challenges at a later stage. According to Respondent 32, the case of the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital (IALCH) PPP project is a good example, as it highlights the challenges that result from a project that is pursued based on a poorly developed business case. Initially, the business case of the IALCH PPP conceptualised the project as an academic hospital with 1 000 beds. However, as the project reached the procurement phase, it was learnt that the PPP approach would not be the best option for an academic hospital, as teaching hospitals accepted a high number of referrals and offer services to a variety of patients.

Further, academic hospitals work with several universities and research funders, which makes it difficult to reach agreements that satisfy all stakeholders. The project was then changed to an 850-bed regional PPP hospital, as opposed to a 1 000-bed academic hospital, something that could have been identified earlier, had a proper business case been developed.

### **Weak partner procurement processes**

The selection of a private partner is another theme that most of the respondents raised as a major factor in the implementation of a PPP project. This is

because a private partner is a co-owner of the project over the life cycle of the PPP agreement and thus can influence the course of implementation either positively or negatively. Respondent 15 noted that though the PPP Unit in the National Treasury has published best practice guidelines for the procurement of a private partner, these are mere guidelines and are not prescriptive or directive instructions. It is therefore the responsibility of the accounting officer of the procuring public entity to design and manage the procurement process based on the type of project, the capacity needs, or gaps of the procuring entity and other procurement regulations set by government such as the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 (PFMA). However, this allowance gives accounting officers the right to design and manage the procurement process of the private partner according to their terms and opens the procurement process to abuse and corruption, which can lead to the appointment of a partner that is not fit and proper for the specific project.

In the experience of Respondent 19 as a project evaluator, the common feature that he has observed in most PPP projects that have failed often leads back to weaknesses in the procurement process, including the procurement of a private partner. For Respondent 23, the challenge begins with weaknesses in the preparation of procurement and bid specification documents that focuses more on achieving a quick financial close, rather than having a long-term view of the entire project. According to Respondent 15, in one project, despite Regulation 16 instruction that procuring public entities should not initiate the procurement phase of a public partner without obtaining Treasury Approval-I, a memorandum was issued to project officials indicating that a dual process of obtaining a Treasury Approval-I and the pre-approval of shortlisted private partners was underway.

Further, the request for quotation (RFQ) document that was shared with potential bidders was not formal compared to the request for proposal (RFP) and it lacked a lot of the information as required by the PPP Unit in the National Treasury. This is a clear reflection of how some public entities fail to follow regulations when they engage in the PPP approach, which leads to several costly decisions such as the appointment of unfit partners. From a financial position, the key selection criteria for a private partner in a PPP project is the selection of the most financially stable bidder (Respondent 05). However, financial stability does not always mean suitability; thus, it is important for procuring public entities to adopt a procurement approach that is based on multi-focused criteria to ensure that various aspects of partner suitability are assessed such as technical capacity, project management proficiency and project-specific expertise (Respondent 17). In addition, though the procurement process of appointing a private partner needs to be thorough, it is equally important that the process does not become extremely complex and costly.

### **Poor understanding of responsibilities, capabilities and limitations**

According to Respondent 17, in his experience working in the PPP environment, failure to articulate the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the PPP agreement clearly, as well as failure to understand each partner's capabilities and limitations contributes immensely to the failure of a number of PPP projects, both locally and abroad. For example, Respondent 17 worked in a PPP involving the South African National Parks (SANParks) as the procuring public partner and the Natures Group Consortium as the contracted private partner. According to the respondent, for this PPP project, poor understanding of the capabilities and expertise of one partner in the concession who was responsible for the operation phase of the agreement almost compromised the entire project.

The procuring public entity failed to conduct the necessary background checks on whether all the partners in the consortium possessed the necessary capability and capacity to execute their contractual obligations. The issue of limitations became apparent after SANParks had already signed the PPP agreement and the project was already in its operational phase. At this point, the project began underperforming and it was discovered that the partner responsible for operational duties did not have the necessary capability, capacity and expertise to render operational services at the facility effectively. This could have been avoided, had due diligence been conducted.

### **Poor allocation of risk**

Risk allocation is one of the key pillars of the PPP approach and it plays a major role in ensuring that the public sector derives value for money from projects. Poor risk allocation can lead to the total failure of a project by increasing incidents of conflict and costly delays. This was confirmed by most of the respondents in the study, noting that a number of projects in the country have actually had poor outcomes or failed to deliver expected outcomes due to poor allocation of risk. According to Respondent 11, due to the low level of PPP maturity in South Africa, officials working in the PPP environment, especially those in the public sector, are not fully aware of the various risks to take into consideration when implementing the PPP approach, while the private sector is aware of this shortcoming and takes full advantage of this, by passing certain risks to the public sector that should actually be the responsibility of the private sector. These risks include common risks such as:

- Demand risk, which is a product of changes in user or social and environmental demographics, as well as the appetite or need for the PPP service (Respondents 03, 30 and 33).
- Design risk, which is a product of decisions and changes on the engineering and technical design of the infrastructure that can either increase projected construction costs, push the construction period further back, or have an

impact on maintenance and operational costs after construction (Respondents 03, 24, 32 and 33).

- Development and construction risks, which is a product of inadequate management of the construction phase, which normally leads to time and cost overruns (Respondents 03, 15 and 25).
- Cost of operating risks, which is a product of poor estimation of operating costs (Respondents 25, 28, 30 and 31).
- Infrastructure availability and performance risk, which are products of poor performance in line with the PPP contract deliverables or set outcomes (Respondents 02, 22 and 27).
- Policy and political risk, which is a product of changes in the government policy direction, political interference to project implementation and political uprisings (Respondents 10, 15 and 27).
- Revenue risk, which is a product of poor generation of revenue (Respondents 15 and 27)
- Force majeure and environmental risk, with forces beyond partners' control, such as earthquakes and floods (Respondents 02, 22 and 27).

The key factor when taking these risks into consideration is the timing of each risk, as well as ensuring that the partner that is allocated a particular risk is in the best position to handle such a risk (Respondent 27). Furthermore, the respondent noted that failure to cost risk properly can be expensive to the point of halting implementation, thus risk transfer, costing and project finance exercises must be linked. Respondent 29 raised a concern regarding the tendency of partners focusing more on avoiding certain risks during negotiations rather than focusing on developing a mutual strategy for overall risk management and reduction. According to Respondent 29, too much focus on avoiding or shifting risk during negotiation is an early warning sign of a PPP partnership that could be headed for troubles.

### **Unresolved legal issues**

Unresolved legal issues at any point of the PPP project cycle have the potential to create significant delays to the implementation process, especially at the negotiations stage of procurement (Respondent 13). To a greater extent, unresolved legal issues significantly impede the signing process of the PPP agreement and could possibly collapse the entire partnership (Respondent 27). According to Respondent 06, common legal issues for most infrastructure PPP projects tend to involve user rights and regulatory matters. Thus, it is critical to obtain a legal opinion on all aspects of a proposed PPP, especially the extent to which the use of state property can legally be under a private entity, fulfilling a public mandate or delivering a public service at a profit. The same applies to regulatory issues. Proper regulatory due diligence must be conducted, especially on issues that can

impact the private entity's ability to deliver on their obligations, such as tax legislation, labour legislation, environmental and heritage legislation, foreign exchange legislation, competition legislation, as well as sector regulations like health standards and building approvals.

### **Poor institutional arrangement**

Concerning institutional arrangements, Respondents 01, 05 and 27 repeatedly stressed the issue of poor establishment or non-establishment of internal PPP structures within government departments and entities as a major challenge in the country. According to the respondents, it is true that the government of South Africa took a constructive and developmental decision by establishing the central PPP Unit to fulfil the obligations of capacity building, advisory and, to a certain extent, regulation of the PPP environment in the country. However, the government failed to make it a requirement that government departments establish their own internal PPP units to manage the implementation of the PPP approach internally (Respondent 17).

Poor institutional arrangement discourages some public entities from engaging the PPP approach and further leads to overreliance on consultants and transaction advisors, which can be costly both financially and time wise. Institutional arrangement does not only speak to the establishment of internal PPP units within public entities, but also the functionality of these units, as well as their role in opening up the local market for PPP participation, building confidence in the PPP approach to increase participation appetite, and stakeholder mobilisation to gain support and buy-in, especially of local communities and civil society groups (Respondent 05).

### **Poor understanding of social issues and challenges of communities**

PPP infrastructure projects must address social and economic challenges of communities and the nation at large. Poor understanding of social issues tends to lead to the institutionalisation of PPP projects that have little to no value to society and fail to address socio-economic challenges (Respondents 10, 15 and 22). This speaks to the issue of consultation before a project is considered. Communities must be consulted to ensure that there is alignment between government's planning and the needs of society (Respondent 19). It is vital that questions such as 'Why this project?', 'Why now?' and 'Who will benefit and how will they benefit?' are asked before projects are initiated to be clear of the opportunity cost of the projects, as well as whether the PPP approach will add value as opposed to other traditional procurement approaches (Respondents 15 and 22). To increase the chances of success in the implementation of a PPP project, the rationale given in the project business case needs to be defensible, and this can only be achieved by engaging all considerations and addressing them (Respondent 15).

Another concern, according to Respondent 17, is that some procuring public entities begin the PPP process by looking at the best possible way to procure an infrastructure or asset, rather than asking the question ‘What is the social issue that needs to be addressed?’ and ‘What kind of intervention can help address the social issue?’. The respondent went on to say that when public officials and politicians want to look busy and relevant, they focus more on building and procuring infrastructure before consulting communities. The approach of intervention first and problem identification later renders some PPP projects useless, with little to no value (Respondent 17). It further leads to a number of procuring public entities paying millions of Rands in service fees for under-utilised infrastructure and public services that do not address the social needs of communities.

### ***Poor allocation and development of human resources***

Poor allocation of officials or the distribution of human resources to positions in which they have little or no experience and expertise to make meaningful contributions not only compromises implementation, but also affects the motivation and morale of well-placed and effective officials negatively (Respondent 22). This, according to most of the respondents, including respondents from the public sector, is a phenomenon that is common within the public sector. According to Respondent 30, some public sector entities have a tendency to send lower-level officials to negotiations and other critical meetings, knowing full well that those officials have little to no decision-making powers. This leads to an unnecessary waste of time and thus some projects take up to four years to reach financial closure. In addition, the challenge of a high staff turnover from both partnering entities is another major mismanagement of human resources, especially in cases where an experienced and skilled official exits for a project on grounds that could have been prevented such as offering better pay or ensuring good working conditions.

### ***Poor communication and engagement***

Most of the respondents shared similar sentiments regarding the impact of poor communication between partners and its contribution to the failure of many PPP projects. Interestingly, respondents from each sector appear to blame the others, mostly for failure to communicate weaknesses and challenges. The development of a project communication strategy to guide engagements and to prescribe the level and frequency of engagement, as well as guide the sharing of information is hardly a priority for many projects, which leads to ad hoc approaches that are not effective (Respondent 18). According to Respondent 15, the best time to get information from private entities is during the bidding and partner selection phase, because once an agreement has been signed, private-sector entities tend to communicate only what they are asked for and nothing more.

### ***Poor management of knowledge, information and continuity***

Due to the long-term nature of the PPP approach, staff turnover is a constant threat to most projects, a threat that requires effective and efficient management of project knowledge and information through the application of effective and efficient knowledge and information management practices to avoid the loss of project insights. Failure to manage project-related knowledge and information effectively featured significantly during interviews as a factor that compromises project implementation efforts, especially when considering the impact this has on project continuity after the departure of some officials. Respondent 21, who has headed the evaluation of more than two PPP projects, indicated that a notable concern that has always come up in projects is the loss of project knowledge whenever certain officials leave projects, leaving newly appointed officials with the challenge of having to start most processes from ground zero. The situation becomes more problematic when a project receives new personnel in decision-making positions, without any knowledge base to tap into to bring them up to speed concerning the project (Respondent 21). This hampers project continuity and hinders progress.

### ***Poor approach to setting of goals and objectives***

Some PPP partnerships and projects fail due to the inability of those involved in the partnership to set realistic and achievable goals. The challenge in this case begins with a procuring public entity that is not sure of what it seeks to achieve from the PPP, as well as what will be required to see the project through (Respondent 32). If the procuring public entity fails to conduct a proper needs analysis and a thorough feasibility study, chances are that there will be gaps in the communication of objectives and targets with the private partner. This compromises the success of the project because the partners in the partnership will work towards different goals, chasing objectives that are not aligned and ultimately, work against each other (Respondent 11).

### ***Poor public consultation and expectation management***

One of the key activities in a PPP project is stakeholder management, which involves conducting extensive expectation and perception management, as well as continuous consultation. If executed effectively, public consultation and expectation management can help reduce a variety of project-related risks that compromise successful project implementation (Respondents 10 and 19). The reality of any project is that there are influential groups that are in favour of the project as much as there are those that are against it, and the position of either group can change at any moment, based on the manner and extent of consultation and expectation management (Respondent 19). Highlighted by several respondents in the study is the threat posed by influential stakeholders who may feel that they

are not adequately consulted and informed about a project that they have a great interest in. Stakeholder consultation and expectation management is even more critical in user-pay PPP projects, especially in a country like South Africa, where paying for certain services is still a challenge in some parts of the country, especially rural and previously disadvantaged areas (Respondent 32).

### **Poor conflict management strategies**

Considering the long-term nature of the PPP approach of up to 40 years in certain cases, conflict is a most likely event, even in cases where the 'give-and-take' style to organisational engagement is applied. Based on the responses given by most respondents, PPP projects tend to face two types of conflicts. The first type of conflict relates to differences regarding financial obligations, which involves the possibility of major financial changes to project implementation or the rise of unplanned cost liabilities that have an impact on the value for money or financial projections of the project. This type, according to at least Respondents 03, 07 and 20, includes the imposition of abatement for underperformance in line with contractual agreements, leading to a push-back by the contracted partner. The second type of common conflict relates to the inability or failure of a partner to fulfil their contractual obligations, which can emanate from the selection or appointment of an unsuitable partner or a misunderstanding of responsibilities due to poor articulation on the partnership agreement (Respondent 07). Further, conflict can arise from partners ascribing different interpretations on how things should be done, or how clauses in the agreement should be interpreted (Respondent 33). If left unaddressed, these differences can have a profound impact on the project at hand.

### **Lack of accountability and transparency**

The PPP approach in South Africa is not tightly regulated, especially considering that the ultimate decision on procurement issues rests with the municipal council in the case of local government, or the accounting authority in the case of national and provincial government departments, as proof of this (Respondents 28 and 14). This compromises key elements of the PPP process, such as transparency, fairness and the fight against corruption. According to Respondent 26, the South African PPP environment does not have a standardised regulatory framework that compels transparency, or standard operating procedures for the procurement process outside the PFMA and the MFMA, which are not effective themselves. If a standardised regulatory framework were to be implemented, this could lead to positive outcomes such as transparency, accountability and the selection of well-suited and qualified private partners. Lack of transparency leaves a number of stakeholders unhappy in most PPP projects (Respondent 13). Currently there are few disclosure requirements within the PPP environment of

the country. Information about projects is made available as and when project teams deem it necessary, which should not be the case, it should rather happen throughout the life cycle of a project (Respondent 13). Transparency should be enforced in all areas of the project, such as the disclosure of the findings of the business case, value for money analysis, project costs and affordability assessment and procurement processes, as well as contracts and agreements, to ensure that all stakeholders are informed of the project (Respondent 11). In addition, transparency and disclosure of information could also help avert corruption in projects.

## CONCLUSION

The motivation for the study is based on recent observations concerning the growing trend in the failure of infrastructure PPP projects in South Africa to deliver on their targeted outcomes. It is clear that the reasons for the underachievement of PPPs in South Africa abound. Many of the factors contributing to the failure of PPPs relate to inefficiencies and unanticipated consequences during the design and implementation of PPP agreements. The study is very relevant because good public infrastructure provision is an important condition for sustainable human development.

## NOTE

- \* The article is partly based on a doctoral thesis under the supervision of Prof L Botes titled: Dlamini, Z.H. 2021. *The Delivery of Public Infrastructure in an Efficient and Effective Way Using the Public Private Partnership Approach in South Africa*. Uncompleted doctoral thesis of Development Studies. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

## REFERENCES

- APMG PPP. 2016. *Public-private partnership certificate guide*. Washington DC: World Bank Publications.
- Bouder, F., Slavin, D. and Lofstedt, R.E. 2009. *The tolerability of risk: a new framework for risk management*. Earth Scan, London.
- Chi, K.S., Arnold, A.A. and Perkins, H.M. 2003. Privatization in the State Government: Trends and Issues. *Spectrum: The Journal of State Government*, Fall 2003. Lexington. United States of America. Available at: [https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/spec\\_fa03Privatization\\_1.pdf](https://www.inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/spec_fa03Privatization_1.pdf). (Accessed on 10 September 2020).

- Flanagan, L. 2011. Democratic alliance fight for transparency in Gautrain's costs. June 22, Pretoria: *The Star Newspaper*.
- Habitat III. 2016. *National Report by the Republic of South Africa for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Harris, C. 2003. *Private participation in infrastructure in developing countries: trends, impacts and policy lessons*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Hodges, J. 2003. Unsolicited proposals: competitive solutions for private infrastructure. Public Policy for the Private Sector. *Viewpoint Note 258*. Washington, D.C.
- Murray, E. 2007. Public-private partnership in transportation: The case of Washington State. *Vilkalpa*. 32(1):53–59.
- O'Connor, J.S. 2005. Policy coordination, social indicators and the social-policy agenda in the European Union. *Journal of European Social Policy*. 15(4):345–361.
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). 2006. Integrating transport in the city: reconciling the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Paris: OECD Publishing
- PPP Unit. 2004. Public Private Partnership Manual. In National Treasury. (Ed.) 2004. *Standardised Public-Private Partnership Provisions*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- PPP Unit. 2008. *Introducing Public Private Partnership in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Quinn, R.E., Faerman, S.R., Thompson, M.P., McGrath, M.R. and St. Clair, L.S. 2007. *Becoming a master manager: a competing values approach*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Republic of South Africa. 2001. *Public-private partnerships: A manual for South Africa 's National and Provincial Government Departments*. Pretoria: National Treasury.
- Seeletse, S.M. 2016. Performance of South African private public partnerships. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*. 14(2):19–26.

## AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS

### Mr Z H Dlamini

Department of Development Studies  
 TvW building 04-26  
 Unisa Main Campus  
 Tel: 060 391 8406

Corresponding author:

### Prof Lucius Botes

Director of Research Development  
 Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences  
 North-West University  
 Private Bag x6001  
 Potchefstroom  
 2520  
 E-mail: [luciusbotes@gmail.com](mailto:luciusbotes@gmail.com)  
 Tel number: 0833552476

# The Relationship Between Leadership and Rules of Conduct in Instilling Ethical Behaviour

## Case of City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality

I A Adetunji\*

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of South Africa

C Alers

Department of Public Administration and Management  
University of South Africa

### ABSTRACT

This research set out to find out what factors drive the ethical conduct of municipal staff members in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM). The rules of municipalities as well as the conduct of the leaders under which the officials serve directly influence the standard of ethics attainable. An understanding of what factors influence the choices made by individual officials is imperative for the attainment of a good ethical standard of behaviour. This will assist municipalities like the CTMM to know what drives its staff members to act and behave ethically at their job, especially when dealing with the public.

In this study, a qualitative approach in terms of interviews as a data collection instrument and unobtrusive research techniques was adopted. Staff members from the Human Resource Division and the Operational Division of the Department of Public Works of the CTMM were specifically targeted for the interviews. Responses were obtained online from front desk officers, supervisors, operational managers and human resource managers within the constraints imposed by the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic restrictions on business operations and the data analysis was coded using ATLAS.Ti. The codes were grouped to extricate the embedded themes and deductions were made from the evolution of the themes.

The research revealed that leadership seems to play a more significant role in influencing the behaviour of staff members, than the rules or codes of conduct of a municipality. Inasmuch as staff members are aware of the rules of conduct and have even been made to sign the code of conduct, it was revealed that these rules are just guiding principles on paper. The behaviour and guidance of their leaders tend to influence staff members' conduct far more than the rules and it needs leadership with integrity to legitimise the rules.

## GENERAL BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Local government is obliged by the Constitution of 1996 in Section 152(1b) to provide services to communities in a sustainable manner; hence, the direct presence of local government in many citizens' lives because it is mostly responsible for maintaining streets, collecting waste and providing public safety (Dory 2015:vi). Since ethics is not about the self in isolation, local government officials interact directly with private individuals within the community and unethical behaviour negatively impacts citizens' quality of life.

Municipalities are not living up to the standard of integrity expected of them by the public. They are at the local sphere of government and are the closest of the three spheres of the executive arm of government to the citizens, therefore, their effectiveness has a significant effect on the citizen's perception of government performance. Municipal officials are employed to serve members of their communities and not their personal interests, however, unethical and unprofessional behaviour, non-compliance to rules, lack of leadership and integrity, are perceived to be widespread among officials.

Ethics, ethical behaviour and integrity are important considerations of government and democracy (Belle & Cantarelli 2017:3). Ethical practices and considerations span across many offices within public administration, from the front desk officer communicating with the public to the background supervisors and decision-makers. Ethics in the public sector refers *inter alia* to moral standards (Chapman 2000:1). Consequently, all public and municipal officials have a role to play to promote integrity and morality in public institutions and municipalities. In essence, ethical behaviour is one's personal and individual choice, reflected in words, actions, decisions and behaviour. Therefore, it is imperative for the attainment of a good ethical standard of behaviour to get to know what drives the choices made by individual officials. This is beneficial for individual officials, government institutions and society at large, especially for municipalities

in a country like South Africa that is dealing with the antecedents of apartheid (Schoeman 2014:3).

The apartheid history of South Africa and the attendant backlog of infrastructure gaps it created, accentuates the imperative of efficient municipalities in bringing development to communities. Communities interact with local government officials through the services rendered by this arm of government with oversight from National and Provincial governments. Such services may include, among other functions: municipal health services (municipal clinics), municipal public transport, electricity reticulation, water and sanitation services, municipal parks and recreation, municipal roads, regulation of street trading, parking and traffic. The provision of these services by municipalities buttresses the importance of integrity and ethics to ensure that these services are properly rendered.

Many factors influence the standard of ethics upheld in government institutions, some of which include the availability and enforcement of rules of conduct and guiding principles, as well as the standard of morals and ethics shown by the leadership of the establishment – which to a large extent has psychological effects on the behaviour of the lower staff members. The standard of ethics and morality, thus upheld, will have an influence on the manner in which services are provided to the public (Downe, Cowell & Morgan 2016:898; Hira & Shiao 2016:17).

Notably, only a few studies have been conducted at different levels of government on ethical and unethical conduct. With this, unacceptable, unprofessional, unethical and ill-disciplined behaviour continues to be present among public office holders. Unethical practices range from corruption to a lack of responsiveness to the needs of clients, misuse of public property, non-compliance with policies and rules, racial discrimination, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness. Certain municipal officials keep taking from the poor by benefiting from services meant for the lower income groups. Civil servants' names appear inappropriately on the database of those that qualify for free water and electricity, and exemption from rates and taxes (Ngoepe 2016). This type of unethical behaviour robs the poor of entitled benefits.

Municipal officials, as individuals, have a constitutional mandate of providing basic municipal services to the relevant community, yet there is little hope for effective service delivery if employees lack moral and ethical conduct (Thozamile 2012:27). Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to evaluate the roles of leadership and rules of conduct as factors driving ethical behaviour among staff members of the CTMM. When ethics and integrity are missing, it results not only in the waste of public resources and lack of service delivery, but also undermines public trust in municipalities (Mafunisa 2008:88). There is, therefore, the need to

research and promote leadership and rules of conduct as factors that can drive ethical practices and behaviours.

This article aims to evaluate how leadership and rules of conduct drive individual and organisational ethical behaviour to maintain a high ethical standard in the operations of the CTMM. The focus was on individual staff members and the managers at the CTMM. The CTMM is a Category A metropolitan municipality in South Africa with large, densely populated areas and strong local economies with exclusive executive and legislative powers (Statistics South Africa 2016:1). This makes the CTMM one of the most important municipalities in South Africa.

With this background information the problem statement is formulated as a primary guiding research question: What does the relationship between leadership and rules of conduct to promote ethical behaviour of staff members in the CTMM entail?

## **ETHICS**

Ethics is a topic that has been of interest to both scholars and the public since time immemorial. People have always questioned the ground upon which they act or make decisions. Some actions are seen as morally praiseworthy, while others are viewed as contrary to the standard of 'right conduct' (Martinez 2009:1). The concept of ethics, generally defined as moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviour, is derived from the Greek word '*ethos*', meaning moral character. The concept of morality comes from the Latin word '*mos*', which means custom (Tzafestas 2016:13). This description of ethics as a moral principle highlights the importance of ethical behaviour in the public sector, and particularly in the local government sphere. This is because local government is a sphere of government whose officials deal directly with the public.

Lynch and Lynch (2009:6), defining the concept 'ethics' view it as the study of the right conduct. It means what is right and wrong, what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, which Thozamile (2012:26) believes is in the eye of the beholder or individuals. That is, individuals view right and wrong behaviour differently. Ethics in government, according to Chapman (2000:1), refers to the moral standards in public service. The Association of Certified International Investment Analysts (ACIIA) describes values that are ethical and highlight that such values set the standard of integrity for everyone in a profession. Such principles include honesty, integrity and fairness; reasonable care, prudence and diligence; prioritising the interests of clients; independence, objectivity and fair judgement; professional competence; prevention and disclosure of conflict of interest; and preservation of client confidentiality (ACIIA 2005). These principles of ethical behaviour are fundamental for professionalism in any organisation (Gilman 2005:5).

Notably, the notion of ethics compliance in local government has always aroused a great degree of interest. This is due to local governments being more prone to corruption and other unethical behaviour because, as already mentioned, interactions between private individuals and officials happen at greater levels of intimacy and with more frequency at the local sphere (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Ababio 2010:414).

Local government ethics is essential to ensure that municipal officials are fair, treating people equally and without favouritism; open, freely accessible; and courteous, polite and considerate in the manner they deal with the public or the community they serve. Kulju, Stolt, Suhonen and Leino-Kilpi (2016:401), argue that ethical practices and competence is about the willingness to do good and having the character strength to do so. It includes attributes such as competence, honesty, diligence and integrity, without which the effective delivery of public services is not likely to occur, hence, the costs and consequences are great, especially for the community. In the words of Tremblay, Martineau and Pauchant (2017:221), ethics may be only instrumental, it may be only a means to an end, but it is a necessary means to an end, and the role leaders play in ensuring this is important.

## **ETHICAL CONDUCT**

The definition of ethical conduct in this study refers to all types of good conduct among the officials of the CTMM. Ethical conduct or behaviour includes all factors contrary to unethical behaviour which goes against all the aforementioned principles of integrity. Mafunisa (2008:89) outlined the concept of unethical behaviour to include the protection (or covering up) of incompetence; lack of responsiveness; moonlighting; and general corruption. It can also include lying, stealing, fraudulent timekeeping and dishonesty in reports (Naude 2004:38). Also included is the unethical use of public office, subjective and arbitrary decision-making, unauthorised disclosure of confidential information, victimisation, and sexual harassment. The list is almost endless, and Mafunisa mentions that this behaviour undermines public trust in the public service and holds local governments back from fulfilling their constitutional mandate.

History has shown that ethical conduct and responsibility among local government officials has changed over the years. Corporate accountability has, for example, been replaced with individual accountability (holding officials accountable for their action and making them take responsibility for the decisions they make), and ethical responsibilities have been decentralised (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Ababio 2010:412), to ensure that each official becomes accountable for their action.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT**

In evaluating the effect of leadership and rules of conduct on the standard of ethics maintained by municipal officials, rules of conduct (also referred to as codes of ethics) have been seen as insufficient in achieving change or governing conduct all by itself without other social processes like the culture of the organisation, of which leadership plays a significant role in helping to set this culture (Downe, Cowell & Morgan 2016:898). Setting up rules of conduct is, therefore, a first step in giving guidance to staff. Employees need to understand that the organisation is serious about the purpose of each rule (Nzewi 2017:3). Codes or rules need to be interpreted and enlivened into actions by human agents (for example, municipal managers and other government officials) who have to take responsibility for this. Rules of conduct act as guidelines that leaders need to internalise. Leaders also decide whether to introduce ethics codes or not, and what their form or content will be (Downe, Cowell & Morgan 2016:900). This should be done in consultation with the employees and other stakeholders. In other words, how public employees interpret principles and codes and how they understand their meaning depends on the ethical culture of the particular public institution. These ethical cultures, codified in rules, only have practical significance when they are exemplified in the behaviour of ethical role models, who are the people who hold positions of responsibility or leadership (Mafunisa 2008:85).

Regarding the effect of codes of ethics without other social influences, literature has shown both positive and negative influences. Two studies show that codes of ethics might have a positive impact on the ethical behaviour of individuals (Ashkanasy, Falkus & Callan 2000; Pelltier & Bligh 2006); while another study classifies codes of ethics as poor predictors of ethical values (Chorafas 2015:17).

## **LEADERSHIP**

Leadership, often regarded as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions, has been said to influence people towards the achievement of goals. Hence, leaders are seen to exercise positive (and negative) influence on others. Leaders impact on the attitude of subordinates and on the ethical conduct of subordinates. This implies that leaders can influence group members by their own example (Caldwell & Anderson 2017:57).

Hence, leadership is widely recognised as one of the most influential factors shaping and influencing behaviour. It exerts the greatest impact on organisational ethics, and should leadership commitment to an ethics code be lacking, it will negatively affect the realisation and maintenance of an ethical culture (Schoeman

2014:98). This supports the contention that leaders make a difference in the conduct of their subordinates and how seriously rules are taken in an organisation.

In research conducted by d'Adda, Darai, Pavanini and Weber (2016), which studied whether leaders influence the unethical conduct of followers or not, they found that leaders influence the ethical conduct of followers both through their statements and through the use of incentives. In their conclusion, they wrote that the main finding is that unethical leaders produce unethical behaviour on the part of followers. In another research by Ogunfowora (2014) on the relationship between ethical leadership, unit-level organisational citizenship behaviour and individual level job satisfaction using the social learning theory and the social identity theory, the result showed a positive effect of ethical leadership on citizenship behaviours and individual level job satisfaction. In 1952, Sweden and Westerlund observed that high-quality performance of supervisors improved the attitudes and performance of telephone operators (Caldwell & Anderson 2017:55).

Notably, leadership interacts with codes of ethics or policy frameworks within an organisation to influence the behaviour of others. As role models, leaders set the ethical standards and policies of an organisation by the values they demonstrate. Without ethical leadership and appropriate frameworks or codes of ethics in place, it will be difficult to identify right and wrong behaviour. When leaders lead by example, their behaviour will influence the behaviour of others, and positive behaviour is promoted within a public institution (Schoeman 2014:58).

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Research methods or approaches are either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed (where blends of both methods are involved). The quantitative method aims to create generalisable knowledge, and research findings are validated by logic, consistency of prediction and control (Wessels & Thani 2014:159). The qualitative method is generally used to understand people's experiences and to express their perceptions (Johnson & Christensen 2014:82), and it typically assumes a constructivist or interpretative paradigm (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:52). Comparing these two methods, Babbie (2016:104) points out that qualitative inquiry focuses on relatively small samples selected purposefully, while quantitative methods typically depend on larger samples selected randomly.

This research adopted a qualitative approach because it is more suitable for this study which seeks to evaluate the drivers of ethical behaviour of individuals. Behaviour is dynamic and not static or predictable as assumed in a quantitative approach. Qualitative research also helps to produce rounded understanding on the basis of rich and detailed data, and the researcher is usually an integral part of the research process (Wessels & Thani 2014:161). This study adopted an intrinsic

case study, which is a single case interpretive research, where an understanding of what drives ethical practices among individual staff members at the CTMM was studied, specifically of the Human Resource and the Operational Divisions of the Department of Public Works (Chilisa & Kawulich 2012:56).

As noted above, the article aims to evaluate the role of leadership and rules as driving factors of ethical and professional behaviour among selected staff members of the CTMM, hence, a nonprobability purposive sampling method was used to select the participants who had extensive knowledge of the workings of the system. The characteristics of the participants included a minimum of five years of service at the Human Resource Division and the Operational Division of the Department of Public Works of the CTMM, the type of duties involved in, knowledge of the code of conduct or rules and role or level within the municipality.

The study also adopted non-statistical, online semi-structured interviews as the main instrument used to collect the data. This enabled an understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences about the ethical practices at the CTMM (Blandford 2013). Writing on semi-structured interview and interpretative research, Vidal, Campdesuner, Rodriguez and Vivar (2017:2) note that the two techniques facilitate infiltration of the unknown, and researchers are expected to notice opportunities and to follow data wherever it leads. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain the ideas and opinions of individuals about the influence of leadership and rules of conduct on the ethical conduct of the staff.

The interview participants were divided into the following categories to establish precise ethical behaviour at the CTMM from 10 participants:

- Front Desk Officers (four participants).
- Supervisors (two participants).
- Operational managers (two participants).
- Human resource managers (two participants).

Data was gathered via online interviews and taking of notes as the participants responded to questions asked. Codes were created based on predetermined keywords and concepts. Moreover, it is generally accepted that qualitative case researchers may improve on the original blueprint as information emerges during data collection. There was, thus, also room for more codes after more information emerged (Mabry 2008:5). The predetermined codes were: leadership drives ethical conduct; rules drive ethical conduct; effect of codes or rules on leadership; effect of leadership on rules; and interaction of rules and leadership. These codes draw attention directly to the research question to see what drives ethical conduct at the CTMM.

The content of the data collected was analysed using ATLAS.Ti. The analytical tool or software was used to identify word dependencies, co-occurrences, and

weak and strong network of words from the inter-relationships among the codes. The complete data analysis and findings is presented in the following section.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

As noted above, the article was undertaken to potentially find what drives ethical behaviour at the CTMM to solve the problem that ethical behaviour is lacking and to find out if leadership plays any role in driving the ethical conduct of subordinates. During the course of this study, there was the challenge of data collection due to the Covid-19 nationwide lockdown. Interviews had to be conducted online instead of face-to-face as initially planned (Unisa 2020:2).

As mentioned in the methodology section, interviews were scheduled with 10 participants, but responses only came from six, none from the front desk officers. Therefore, in analysing the data collected, to ensure a robust interpretation due to lower responses than anticipated from the participants, responses from the participants were interspersed with relevant literature to ensure sound and trustworthy research findings. Conceptual and contextual analyses by way of a literature review were used as the basis for answering questions on ethical and unethical behaviour within municipalities in South Africa and CTMM in particular. The following main codes emerged during data analysis: leadership drives ethical conduct; rules drive ethical conduct; effect of codes of conduct or rules on leadership; and effect of leadership on the implementation of rules. The following sub-codes also emerged: rules are not enough; rules need interpretation; positive conduct towards customers; subordinates look up to leaders; personal ethics; rules are guiding tools; positive conduct towards subordinates; leadership more significant than rules; awareness of code of conduct; and effect of leadership on scheduling and attending ethics training.

Five research papers were chosen to be analysed based strictly on what the papers set out to find. In selecting the papers to be considered for the analysis, a few guidelines were considered. The first is that all papers considered must be related predominantly to municipalities with the remaining being related to government services. Also, it was decided that the papers should have preferably been studied in a similar context to the City of Tshwane, hence, authors that studied some other South African municipalities were preferred, but also, there would be some counterbalancing opinions from other places. Therefore, three of the five papers studied other South African municipalities, while one is from the United Kingdom and the other is from Germany.

In terms of the study themes, one of the papers looked into what determines ethical behaviour in public organisations, another set out to look into whether a code of conduct or ethical leadership influences an employee's attitude. The third

paper looked into the availability of legislative framework for public employees in South Africa and whether this influences a high standard of ethics and professionalism. The fourth paper looked into the effect of purpose-directed leadership in enhancing ethical conduct. Finally, the last paper considers the effect of ethical conduct, legislations and leadership on service delivery in South Africa. These research papers were seen as relevant and fair for the purpose of this research which seeks to look into what drives ethical behaviour at a South African municipality. Also, the papers were limited to five so that their opinions do not dominate the analysis.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

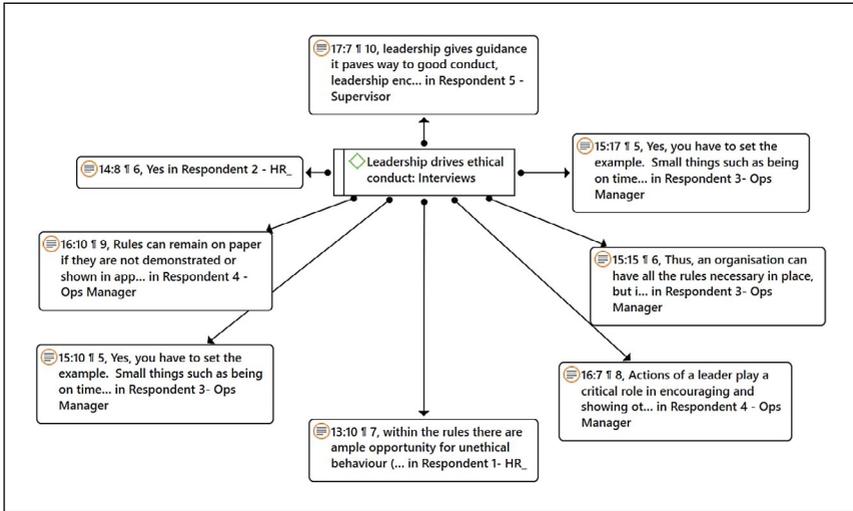
After the process of coding, themes were generated to have a better interpretation of the data. This was done through the aggregation of the codes based on similarity of titles or responses. The following themes were derived from the codes:

One of the major themes identified from the data is the significant influence of leadership on organisational ethics. Many of the codes generated from the data give evidence that supports the influence of leadership on how subordinates respond to ethics. Leadership ensures ethical training; subordinates look up to their leaders and watch their disposition to ethical choices and conundrums. Leadership also plays a part in how rules are interpreted and applied. It is worth noting that all respondents seem to have agreed on the supreme influence of leadership among all factors that have a possible influence on the ethical conduct of the staff members.

The influence of rules seems to be less significant when compared to leadership. One thing that makes this apparent is the lack of consistency among the respondents about the significant role that rules play in the ethical conduct of staff members. Inasmuch as rules are important and act as guiding tools, many respondents mentioned that rules need to be interpreted and are not enough by themselves. In addition, responses suggest that the effect rules or codes have on leadership is less significant compared to the influence leadership has on rules. Generally, codes of conduct are seen to be less significant compared to leadership.

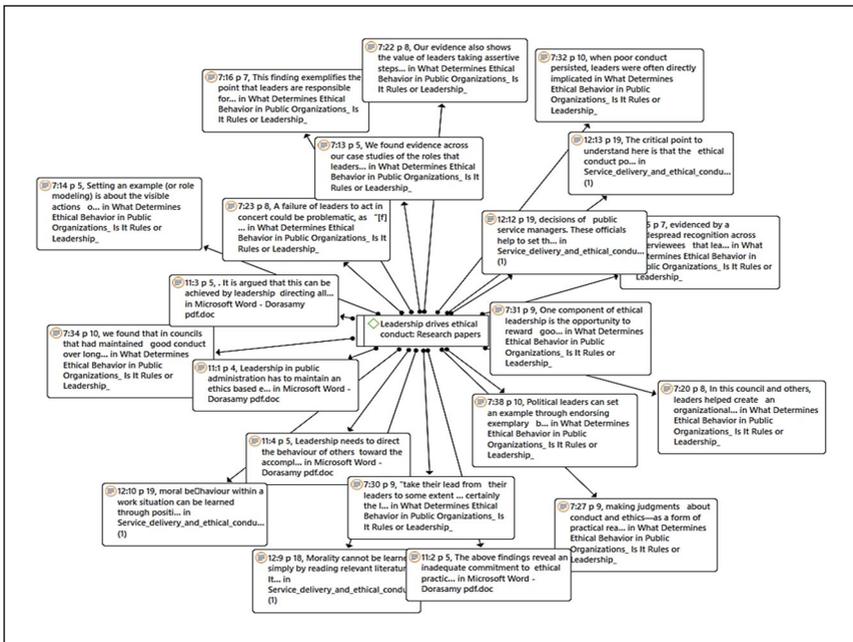
Some other factors that came to light are the influence of personal convictions and religion. These two factors are believed to also play a role in the ethical conduct of the staff of the CTMM. These two factors were brought to light without any mention of them from the research or any mention of other factors that could have guided the respondents in the role they play in their ethics. For these factors to have been mentioned shows that respondents see them as important for their ethical behaviour and they may be important factors to investigate for further studies.

**Figure 1: Leadership drives ethical conduct: Interviews**



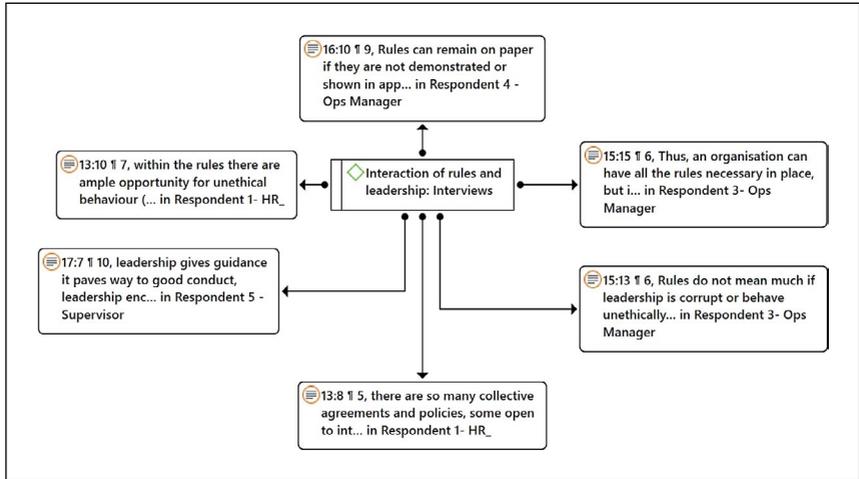
Source: (ATLAS.ti 2021)

**Figure 2: Leadership drives ethical conduct: Research papers**



Source: (ATLAS.ti 2021)

**Figure 3: Interaction of rules and leadership: Interviews**



Source: (ATLAS.ti 2021)

A network analysis on ATLAS.Ti was carried out on each of the predetermined codes to determine the number of quotations attached to each. The first code is that 'Leadership drives ethical conduct'. This code has eight quotations attached to it, which shows that many respondents have things to say about the effect of leadership on ethical conduct, as illustrated in Figure 1.

An ATLAS.Ti network analysis conducted on the research paper's view on the effect of leadership on ethical conduct indicates that many quotations are illustrated in Figure 2. This implies that leadership plays a significant role in ethical conduct within government institutions.

The interaction between the two factors: rules and leadership, as illustrated in Figure 3, shows that both rules and leadership have their roles to play. However, rules can remain on paper and do not mean much if leadership is lacking, and without leadership giving guidance, there will be ample opportunities for unethical behaviour.

The analysis of the research papers and interviews shows that leadership plays a more significant role in ensuring ethical behaviour. Some of the respondents at the CTMM mentioned that they are aware of the code of conduct because they have to sign the document upon joining the municipality, however, leadership plays a significant role in interpreting these codes and helping to understand the codes better. They mentioned that even with the codes of conduct signed by employees, there will be opportunities for unethical behaviour if leadership is lacking. None of the participants mentioned whether rules or codes had any effect on leadership. Comparing this sentiment with the research papers, it was

found to be the same that leadership tends to have more influence on ethical behaviour and on rules. Leadership creates the environment for individuals to thrive and be comfortable. Leaders are also the ones that ensure that individuals attend ethics training and that there is a channel for members to complain when needed. Inasmuch as rules are there to hold staff accountable, without ethical leadership this will not be possible. It was also found that on occasions of unethical conduct rules are just one part of the components (interpreted by leaders) brought together by leaders to handle the situation, that leaders sometimes act or make a decision without even referring to the codes. Downe *et al.* (2016:907) mention that leadership is needed to carefully interpret rules in organisations that are complex, heterogeneous and with many uncertainties.

The concluding highlights from the findings are listed in the following points:

- Supervisors act in a good manner and with a positive attitude towards their customers. Managers also show a concern for ethical and moral values.
- The actions and examples of the leadership of the CTMM play a critical role in encouraging ethical behaviour.
- The managers strongly believe in leading by example and to attend to the needs of their subordinates in an ethical manner. The CTMM should capitalise on the managers' positive attitude to customers and their subordinates.
- The code of conduct guides and prescribes ethical behaviour and has a positive effect on how supervisors and managers attend to the needs of the customers and their subordinates.
- The rules of conduct are available and accessible to all staff members. Unfortunately, the rules play a limited role in encouraging ethical conduct. Rules of conduct alone are not enough to guide ethical behaviour, and require further guidance on how to implement it.
- Interestingly, all the participants elevated leadership above rules of conduct in terms of its role in influencing the ethical behaviour of staff members.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made to the city in respect of leadership and rules of conduct as measures to enhance the ethical behaviour of the employees of the CTMM:

- The level of ethical standard attained by the CTMM depends largely on the values held by leadership, including the supervisors and manager;
- Leadership is crucial in the creation and sustenance of strong ethical standards. It is, therefore important to place premium value on the personal moral and ethical standards of people appointed into positions of leadership in the municipality;

- There is a definite place for rules of conduct in creating and sustaining ethical conduct, so, rules should be made and the rules need to be properly formulated and implemented;
- The implementation of rules of conduct should be made one of the responsibilities of the leaders of the various business units of the municipality; not only to be ethical themselves, but to also demand compliance to high ethical standards from the staff. They need to make it apparent to the staff that leadership places premium value on ethics, that compliance would be praised and that failures would be reprimanded as necessary;
- It is important to create programmes and activities that will engender ethics and capacitate leaders, as well as institutionalise ethical values in the leadership as this will reflect in the entire workforce.

## CONCLUSION

This research leads to the conclusion that the main role of leadership in encouraging ethical behaviour is to develop and apply the right approaches to get the desired behaviours from subordinates, colleagues and managers. Also, it was confirmed that leadership tends to contribute more to ethical behaviour in CTMM than rules of conduct do. This suggests that while it is important for the CTMM to give attention to its rules, it will, however, achieve a lot more in driving ethics in its organisation by giving more attention to how leaders with ethical values are recruited, trained, retained and encouraged to influence the commitment of the officers of the municipality to maintaining a high standard of ethics in the municipality.

There are many aspects that must be scientifically researched to provide further clarity on the roles of leadership and rules of conduct as driving factors of ethical behaviour. It was mentioned during the interviews that religious beliefs, culture and personal conviction may have some role to play in a person's ethical conduct. It may, thus, be useful to have a study that investigates what roles these factors may play in instilling ethics and maintaining positive ethical behaviour at the workplace in the public sector. It may also be worthwhile to investigate how much the implementation of a reward and penalty system for compliance or violation may influence how ethical standards could be attained by the CTMM.

## NOTE

- \* The article is partly based on a dissertation for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree under the supervision of Dr C Alers, titled: Adetunji, I.A. 2021. *Roles of leadership and rules*

of conduct in instilling ethical behaviour: case of City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. Unpublished MPA dissertation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

## REFERENCES

- Ashkanasy, N.M., Falkus, S. and Callan, V.J. 2000. Predictors of Ethical code use and Ethical tolerance in the public sector, *Journal of Business Ethics*. 25(3):237–253.
- Association of Certified International Investment Analysts (ACIIA). 2005. *Principles of Ethical Conduct*. Available at: <https://www.aciia.org/acii-principles-of-ethical-conduct.html> (Accessed on 23 February 2022).
- Babbie, E. 2016. *The practice of social research*. 14<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.
- Belle, N. and Cantarelli, P. 2017. *Do Ethical Leadership, Visibility, External Regulation, and Prosocial Impact Affect Unethical Behaviour?* Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0734371X17721301> (Accessed on 21 February 2022).
- Blandford, A. 2013. Semi-structured qualitative studies. In Soegaard, M. and Dam, R.F. (Eds.). *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Available at: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/book/the-encyclopedia-of-human-computer-interaction-2nd-ed/semi-structured-qualitative-studies> (Accessed on 20 February 2022).
- Caldwell, C. and Anderson, V. 2017. Ethical leadership in troubled times, *International Journal of Public Leadership*. 13(2):54–58.
- Chapman, R. 2000. Introduction. In Chapman, R. (Ed.). *Ethics in public service for the new millennium*. England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Chilisa, B. and Kawulich, B. 2012. Selecting a research approach: paradigm, methodology and methods. In Wagner, C., Kawulich, B., and Garner, M. (Eds.). *Doing Social Research: A global context*. United Kingdom: McGraw-Hill.
- Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C.N. 2018. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications.
- Chorafas, D.N. 2015. *Ethical Values, Efficiency and Effectiveness*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- d’Adda, G., Darai, D., Pavanini, N. and Weber, R.A. 2016. Do leaders affect Ethical conduct? *Journal of the European Economic Association*. 15(6):1177–1213.
- Dory, M.C. 2015. *Ethics in Local Government: Cultivating a Robust Ethical Environment*. Texas: Austin, University of Texas.
- Downe, J., Cowell, R. and Morgan, K. 2016. What Determines Ethical Behaviour in Public Organisations: Is it Rules or Leadership? *Public Administration Review*. 76(6):898–909.
- Gilman, S.C. 2005. *Ethics codes and codes of conduct as tools for promoting an ethical and professional public service: comparative successes and lessons*. Washington DC: World Bank. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/35521418.pdf> (Accessed on 23 February 2022).
- Hira, A. and Shiao, K. 2016. Understanding the Deep Roots of Success in Effective Civil Services. *Journal of Developing Societies*. 32(1):17–43.

- Johnson, R.B. and Christensen, L. 2014. *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Approaches*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. United States of America: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Kulju, K., Stolt, M., Suhonen, R. and Leino-Kilpi, H. 2016. Ethical Competence: A Concept Analysis. *Nursing Ethics*. 23(4):401–412.
- Lynch, C. and Lynch, T. 2009. Democratic morality: Back to the future. In Cox III, R. (Ed.). *Ethics and Integrity in Public Administration: concepts and cases*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Mabry, L. 2008. *Case Study in Social Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mafunisa, M.J. 2008. The role of codes of conduct in promoting ethical conduct in the South African Public Service. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*. 32(1):81–92.
- Martinez, J.M. 2009. *Public Administration Ethics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. California: ABC-CLIO LLC.
- Naude, I. 2004. *Factors impacting on ethical behaviour in organisations*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Ngoepe, K. 2016. *Municipal Officials stealing from the poor – Tshwane mayor*. Available at: <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/municipal-officials-stealing-from-the-poor-tshwane-mayor-20160921> (Accessed on 7 February 2022).
- Nzewi, O.I. 2017. Managing municipal audit compliance through work procedures: A Theory of Planned Behaviour approach. *Southern African Journal of Accountability and Auditing Research*. 19:1–14.
- Ogunfowora, B. 2014. It's all a matter of consensus: Leader role modelling strength as a moderator of links between ethical leadership and employee outcomes, *The Tavistock Institute: Human Relations*. 67(12):1467–1490.
- Peltier, K.L. and Bligh, M.C. 2006. Rebounding from Corruption: Perceptions of Ethics program effectiveness in a public sector organisation. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 67(4):359–374.
- Schoeman, C. 2014. *Ethics Can: Managing Workplace Ethics*. South Africa: Knowres Publishing.
- Statistics South Africa. 2016. *The State of Basic Service Delivery in South Africa*. Pretoria: Statistics SA.
- Thozamile, R. 2012. Professional and Ethical Conduct in the Public Sector. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*. 1(1):26–37.
- Tremblay, M., Martineau, J.T., Pauchant, T.C. 2017. Managing organisational ethics in the public sector: A pluralist contingency approach as an alternative to the integrity management framework. *Public Integrity*. 19(3):219–233.
- Tzafestas, S.G. 2016. *Roboethics: A Navigating Overview*. *Intelligent Systems, Control and Automation*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Unisa. 2020. *Covid-19 Guidelines: Implications of Alert Levels for Researchers and Postgraduate Students*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Vidal, G.G., Campdesuner, R.P., Rodriguez, A.S. and Vivar, R.M. 2017. Contingency theory to study leadership styles of small businesses owner-managers at Santo Domingo, Ecuador. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*. 9:1–11.
- Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. and Ababio, E. 2010. The illusion of ethics for good local governance in South Africa. *The Journal of Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*. 6(2):411–427.

Wessels, J.S. and Thani, X.C. 2014. Research methods in Public Administration. In Wessels, J.S., Pauw, J.C. and Thani, X.C. (Eds.). *Reflective Public Administration: Context. Knowledge and Methods*. Pretoria:University of South Africa Press.

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

**Ms Irete Adedotun Adetunji**

P O Box 14638

PRETORIA

0001

SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 072 721 3458

E-mail: [46336427@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:46336427@mylife.unisa.ac.za)

**Dr Corlia Alers**

Department of Public Administration and

Management

P O Box 392

UNISA

0003

SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 012 429 6286

E-mail: [alersc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:alersc@unisa.ac.za)

# Public Expenditure Management Challenges in Zimbabwe

## Critical Considerations

A Gwiza\*

School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy  
University of Johannesburg

D B Jarbandhan

School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy  
University of Johannesburg

### ABSTRACT

The adoption of public expenditure management (PEM) in Zimbabwe during the early 1990s, was widely accepted as a panacea to transform how public funds were managed and controlled within government institutions. Importantly, PEM would potentially help address the functional and institutional challenges that characterised public financial management systems and processes in Zimbabwe. This article focuses on the PEM reforms and the challenges Zimbabwe has faced since 2000. This period reflects the worsening socio-economic crisis under a single-party dominated government. PEM fosters a culture of fiscal prudence among fiscal authorities, and subsequently improves the quality of public service delivery for citizens. The central thesis of this article is that, despite the wide adoption of PEM in the Zimbabwean public sector, its performance is still under par. Evidence suggests that PEM is underperforming because of a plethora of inhibitive factors, such as inadequate budgetary support from Treasury, a sustained culture of public financial misappropriation, lack of budget prioritisation, limited fiscal space, political issues, lack of compliance with the Auditor-General's and Parliamentary recommendations, socio-economic factors, weak auditing and accounting systems and poor information technology (IT) infrastructure for PEM. To this end, the article recommends a number of measures aimed at addressing the existing PEM challenges to improve public financial management, which, in turn, should enhance public service delivery performance in Zimbabwe.

## INTRODUCTION

The tradition of fiscal control, responsibility as well as transparency must underline the planning, mobilisation and exploitation of national fiscal resources. This is a compelling case, especially in the African socio-economic context, where economic and fiscal policy planning is normally undertaken under harsh resource constraints in providing adequate and quality public services. Zimbabwe is not exempted from this adverse scenario. During the 1990s, Zimbabwe undertook major fiscal reforms aimed at transforming public expenditure management within spending ministries and government departments. These reforms were undertaken in the form of decentralisation of responsibilities for the budget management of public institutions; instituting warrant systems for non-statutory expenditures; adoption of a cash budgeting system; a strong emphasis on independent external audit systems; the creation of parliamentary budget subcommittees; and *ex-ante* and *ex-post* government expenditure reviews (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2003:41-52). Expansionary fiscal policies were designed to address inherited colonial imbalances in terms of resource ownership and control as well as access to public service delivery such as health, education and transport, among others.

This was pursued through increased government subsidies in ministries and departments, provision of welfare grants, extensive allocations to government ministries and the adoption of public sector investment programmes (PSIP). However, a decade into independence, Zimbabwe had yet to record tangible results regarding quality and adequate public service delivery. Instead, there were still rampant cases of poor public service delivery characterised by weak and fragmented public expenditure management and control processes, systems and praxis within government ministries and departments. A sustained culture of inept government expenditure management was reflected in spending units' delays in the submission of annual reports to the external audit agencies, weak accounting systems and weak compliance with parliamentary recommendations remained pervasive (OECD 2003:51; World Bank [WB] 2007:24).

Over the years, significant progress has been noted concerning the rolling-out of the PEM concept within government ministries and departments in Zimbabwe. However, the concept has not yielded the anticipated results. Recurring public demonstrations regarding allegations of public financial misappropriation and poor public service delivery, prolonged government workers' strikes over meagre salaries, among others, are a clear testimony of inept PEM.

## CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATION

This section conceptualises PEM and highlights its genesis in brief.

## Meaning of public expenditure management

A common view among scholars is that PEM refers to the existing relationships between budget preparation, budget execution as well as cash management processes and systems to achieve fiscal discipline in the control of aggregate expenditure. The above linkages are also critical for effective resource allocation and efficient service delivery in the government sector (Potter and Diamond 1999:6). Equivalently, PEM relates to institutional and legislative processes and systems that are used to manage, plan and control public expenditures effectively. Sound PEM requires effective expenditure control systems that enables relevant fiscal authorities to have periodic reviews of the strengths and weaknesses associated with government expenditure management and control systems.

The Department of International Development's (DfID) (2001:12) definition of PEM is considered apt for this article. PEM is defined as the process of allocating and managing public resources to achieve fiscal discipline and strategic prioritisation, as well as to ensure value for money. This definition underlines the importance of PEM as a fundamental tool of government in the process of controlling and managing public expenditures to promote sustained economic growth as well as to improve the quality of public service delivery.

PEM seeks to achieve, among others, improved performance, adequate links between policymaking, effective planning and budgeting, better functioning accounting and financial management systems and an appropriate link between budgeting and other governmental systems (*World Bank's Public Expenditure Management Handbook* 1998:03). Equally important, the above definition also reflects a renewed focus on the fundamental roles and functions of institutional arrangements in influencing budget outcomes. The three basic levels of this approach include aggregate fiscal discipline; allocation of resources in line with strategic priorities; and the efficient and effective use of resources by the implementing agencies. These levels highlight sound institutional frameworks as a precursor to sound public financial performance during the budgeting process (Shah and Hagen 2007:48). Consequently, effective and efficient PEM mechanisms and approaches (policies, priorities, institutions and actions) are critical in enhancing the quality and success of governments in modern societies (Allen and Tommasi 2001:23). PEM should be considered as a new fiscal concept which covers basic activities of management and control of government funds to deliver quality public goods and services to society in a more effective and efficient manner.

## THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

This section provides a brief discussion of the theories that are central to this article.

## Public choice theory

Public choice theory is one of the most important economic theories popularised in a bureaucracy, mainly in recent studies of managerialism. Commonly understood as a fundamental variant of the rational choice theory, the public choice model is usually applied in non-market decision-making (Mueller 2003:8). The theory's genesis provided researchers with a firm conceptual and theoretical pillar to validate the empirical findings that government is too large and underperforming. Furthermore, it provided a sharp contrast to the traditional model of public administration (Hughes 2003:10). Developed in 1965 by Gordon Tullock and James Buchanan, the public choice approach focused on promoting exchange of work as well as ideas in the disciplines of Economics, Political Science and Sociology.

Buchanan's (1987) understanding of public choice theory reveals the application of catallactics, or simply the science of exchanges. His definition underlines the combination of the *homo oeconomicus* view, where individuals are considered as self-seeking entities who are always driven by the desire to achieve their personal interests. The catallactic approach therefore points to the assumption that individual decision-makers exhibit collective action during the political process to realise their own self-interests (Hill 1999:1). This highlights the general notion that public choice theory's underlying assumption is to explain the origins, properties as well as institutions of exchange, and also to interrogate how these institutions function in a bid to recognise individual choices.

The Institute of Economic Affairs (2012:08) argues that, "...public choice theory provides rational economic concepts to the study of how collective choices are made – applying them to such things as the design and workings of constitutions, election mechanisms, political parties, interest groups, lobbying, bureaucracy, parliaments, committees and other parts of the governmental system". Similarly, public office bearers do not function properly when judged from this perspective. The reason for this assumption is that public officials are viewed as "utility maximisers" who try by all means to meet their own personal goals using public offices and resources. Thus, their desire is always to further their own selfish interests at the cost of the general public (Hughes 2003:11). These theoretical arguments are useful to this article. It allows the researchers to establish the nexus between how public officials' behaviour is linked to the PEM-related challenges that Zimbabwe has experienced over the past two decades.

## New public management theory

Traditional administration systems were *inter alia* used to implement large-scale economic management within the public sector, among other remarkable

interventions. The key attributes of traditional administration forms were clearly outlined by prominent classical theorists such as Max Weber, Woodrow Wilson and Fredrick Taylor. A noticeable new administration era emerged from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, which was characterised by a wide re-thinking of governance. This new paradigm sought to come up with major fundamental administrative reforms. Very few governments were not affected by this unprecedented global reform wave, which is understood as the new public management (NPM) paradigm.

NPM is one of the prominent and critical reform efforts that dominated the past quarter century to transform the public sector (Drechsler 2005:1). It entails a refocus on the function as well as governmental performance. According to Batley (2004:32), NPM is viewed as a “shopping list”, “tool box” or simply a “menu” for countries to devise an effective, efficient and economic public management. The NPM’s philosophy was essentially to adopt new administrative mechanisms that could improve public financial management systems as well as the efficiency and effectiveness in public goods and service delivery. Hughes (2003:06) argues that the NPM reform wave was driven by the following divergent underlying theories: that economic motivations dominate all players in government; that private management flexibility provides lessons for government; and that the politics-administration dichotomy does not exist in practice. Based on the above, NPM facilitates the fundamental change from administration to management in modern public administration. The former is about compliance with orders, while the latter relates to producing results as well as taking personal responsibility for doing so.

According to Breul and John (2008:645), “...NPM comprises a common set of managerial values, which focus on entrepreneurial spirit, urge flexibility and downplay rigid procedures”. The NPM paradigm’s key message is the common belief that more market direction in the public segment improves cost-efficiency within governments, without necessarily influencing other aims and deliberations (Ferdousi and Qiu 2013).

For the purposes of this article, NPM provides the necessary theoretical foundation through which PEM as fiscal reform concept can be understood in terms of origin and relevancy in modern public administration.

## **New public governance theory**

Osborne (2006:20) argues that new public governance (NPG) theory forms part of the modern re-conceptualisation of public sector reforms. The NPG movement seeks to address the conceptual assumptions and limitations of NPM. Villanueva (2015:128), who confirms the weakness of NPM as a postmodern administration theory, argues that NPM is an ephemeral stage in the transformation from traditional public administration to what is here referred to as NPG. In simple

terms, NPG focuses on the socio-political aspect of governance in contemporary politics. This is contrary to NPM, which underlines the administrative, managerial or policy element of public administration. Most importantly, the NPG theory highlights policy and delivery aspects as a critical tool to enhance public governance when implementing particular decisions to fully comply with public responsibilities in different social environments.

As the basis of the NPG movement, the idea of social-political governance underscores the essence of interactive, relational partnerships and network governance frameworks in public administration. Therefore, this clearly shows the new, alternative way of governing the society. Within this context, the government values the role of other stakeholders in public policy and governance. Some terminologies often used to describe the NPG paradigm include 'public policy governance', 'administrative governance', 'contract governance' and 'network governance'. As argued by Bao, Wang, Larsen and Morgan (2012:446), NPG underlines public governance as part of the building blocks for promoting trust and legitimacy. Unfortunately, NPM overlooked this critical governance aspect. As such, the NPG paradigm is defined as largely value-centred.

The NPG theory has been widely utilised to provide a conceptual and theoretical foundation for studying PEM reforms and to establish how these reforms may be utilised to help improve and sustain high-quality public goods and service delivery. Within the context of the prevailing resource limitations, government benefits from partnering with non-state actors for funding, as well as technical and material support to improve public service delivery (i.e., health, education, transport, shelter and food). To date, collaborative governance arrangements in the form of public-private partnerships, governance networks and strategic alliances are increasingly used to enhance public value within the context of prevailing societal problems, thinly stretched resources and the limited capacity of individual public organisations (Bryson, Crosby and Bloomberg 2014; Bryson, Crosby and Stone 2015; Moore and Hartley 2008). These multiple interactions bring about the required opportunities to mutually utilise organisational capacities such as expertise, connections, knowledge and financial resources that could culminate in increased public value (Caldwell, Roehrich, and George 2017).

## **PUBLIC EXPENDITURE REFORMS IN ZIMBABWE**

This section discusses the nature, context, and dynamics of PEM in Zimbabwe during the period under review. Zimbabwe is not exempt from the wave of fiscal reforms that swept across several countries during the early 1990s. One of the major drivers behind these reforms was to transform the inherited racially fragmented and inefficient public financial management systems and practices. This

called for major institutional and legislative reforms. Before 2000, fiscal reforms were undertaken as part of efforts to contain public expenditure. However, these reforms failed to produce the anticipated results. Public spending continued to exceed expenditure ceilings. This further negatively affected the national fiscus. As noted, this article focuses on the PEM reforms and the challenges Zimbabwe has faced since 2000. This period reflects the worsening socio-economic crisis under a single-party dominated government. Interestingly, the same period mirrors expanding governance issues beyond the general employment conditions of workers – especially in the government sector. These governance concerns were reflected in the creation of a formidable opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), as an off-shoot of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in 1999. By then, Zimbabwe was already affected by a multifaceted crisis which manifested as a socio-politico-economic meltdown. This crisis had serious implications on public finance, including revenue streams and government spending. Dhlohdhlo and Mabugu (2000 in Dhliwayo 2001:3) argue that by then, “...the fiscal area [in Zimbabwe] had been largely mismanaged to an extent that it was chiefly answerable for many of the other difficulties in the economy”. The section below highlights in brief some of the major PEM reforms over the past decades of Zimbabwe’s post-independence:

### **Adoption of the programme-based budgeting system**

In 2005, another fundamental PEM initiative was introduced. Traditionally, Zimbabwe used a line-item budgeting system. However, in May of that year, the government issued the Results Based Management (RBM) policy guidance circular (OPC General Letter No.6 of 2005) (Zinyama and Nhema 2016:47). As one component of the broader RBM reform programme, results-based budgeting (RBB) was formally adopted in 2006 (Government of Zimbabwe [GoZ] and WB 2017:65) and programme-based budgeting was adopted as a form of RBB. In a Treasury Circular issued in September 2005, expenditure targets were announced as the basis for the submissions of all ministries and departments, requiring them to produce work plans, performance indicators, and sign performance agreements (PAs) for which they would be held accountable (GoZ and WB 2017:65).

In 2010, based on international experience with RBB, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) introduced a set of intermediate reforms. In this regard, an objective of the GoZ was to facilitate the monitoring of the use of resources within each programme and to identify areas of possible cost savings or where more funds were needed (GoZ and WB 2017:65). The MoFED’s target was to roll out PBB to all line ministries in a phased approach by the end of 2018, starting with the social-sector ministries. In 2016, the Ministries of Health and Child Care, Primary and Secondary Education, Public Service, and Labour

and Social Welfare were identified as the lead ministries in the implementation of PBB (Zinyama and Nhema 2016:52). The PBB system was underpinned by the Government Finance Statistics (GFS) system adopted in 2004. The GFS enabled the continuous tracking of expenditure while fostering allocative efficiency and the effective utilisation of public resources (Zhou 2012:39).

## **Adoption of the cash-based budgeting system**

Due to a long period of overspending, the government adopted the concept of cash budgeting in its Revised Budget Statement of March 2009 (Biti 2014:10). As explained in the revised 2009 budget statement, the natural law of cash budgeting is *“what we gather is what we eat”* or *“we eat what we kill”*. This is the basic economic law of hunter-gatherer economies. No ministry or public agency should expect to eat beyond what has been gathered through collection of taxes, fees and any other legitimate sources of revenue. *“What we gather, we eat”* unambiguously places the responsibility not only on the MoFED but throughout all arms of government. Following this new fiscal order, the GoZ also introduced a freeze on recruitment and promotions of civil servants in 2011. This was intended to prevent inflating the government wage bill. In addition, although not an explicit and stated government policy, there were no wage increases since 2014 and performance-related salary increments were also not implemented. As such, there has been no nominal salary progression for civil servants (GoZ and WB 2017:47). According to Zhou (2012:39), the concept of cash budgeting underpinned all national budget statements crafted under the inclusive government concept based on the fiscal theme *“we eat what we kill”*. This was intended to instill fiscal discipline in the public sector in line with the imperative to manage public expenditure in a context of limited fiscal space.

## **New debt servicing management strategy**

Zhou (2012:36) argues that debt servicing has become one of the most visible expenditure items in developing countries' national budgets. Saddled with debt, Zimbabwe introduced the Zimbabwe Accelerated Arrears Clearance, Debt and Development Strategy (ZAADS) on 16 March 2012. The strategy consists of six elements (or steps) namely, the establishment of a debt management office (the Zimbabwe Aid and Debt Management Office); reconciling of debt figures to establish the correct amounts owed; reengagement with all external creditors on arrears clearance; adoption of a comprehensive debt relief programme; mobilising new financing (by implication contracting new loans); and leveraging Zimbabwe's natural resources in pursuit of (debt relief and) economic development (Zimbabwe Coalition for Debt and Development [ZIMCODD] 2012:2). Primarily, ZAADS is

concerned with the clearance of arrears to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Development Association (IDA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) (ZIMCODD 2012:4).

## **Reducing the number of ministries and benefits**

The new dispensation under the Presidency of Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa has witnessed considerable interest in instituting far-reaching reforms. Notably, some of these reforms have implications for PEM and, eventually, fiscal management. Subsequently, the primary theme of the 2018 national budget was to correct fiscal imbalances (GoZ Budget Statement 2018:34). Notable efforts have been recorded that could potentially have a positive bearing on PEM. For example, the new government has reduced the number of ministries from 27 to 21. The 2018 budget statement also outlined several PEM reform interventions that would result in savings. These interventions include merging certain relatively similar ministries to reduce the number of redundant staff (GoZ Budget Statement 2018). Based on observations by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) highlighting inconsistencies in the setting of fuel allocation levels in ministries, the Office of the President, Cabinet and Treasury reviewed and standardised fuel benefit levels, as communicated through Cabinet Circular, No. 12 of 2017 and Treasury Circular, No. 5 of 2016, respectively.

In the spirit of rationalising public expenditures, the Treasury has highlighted its commitment to strengthening its monitoring of adherence to the stipulated limits (GoZ Budget Statement 2018). The government also highlighted its focus on progressively reducing the share of employment costs in the budget to 70% in 2018, 65% in 2019, and below 60% of total revenue by 2020, with the intent to create fiscal space (GoZ Budget Statement 2018:33). Following fiscal reforms under the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP), the employment costs have been placed on a “sustainable footing”, with any salary reviews aligned to economic growth and government revenues. For example, as of October 2020, the employment costs for the year constituted 41.9% of total revenue (MoFED 2020:13). This is in line with the government’s anticipation of a continued downward trend of employment costs to about 42% by end 2020. The target will be to eventually meet the deemed sustainable levels of around 30% of the total revenue. Such a move will then create space for bolstering investment in developmental projects (MoFED 2020:13).

## **Adoption of Audit Office Act, 2010**

In 2010, Zimbabwe adopted the Audit Office Act (AOA) to repeal the Audit and Exchequer Act. The AOA seeks to, among others, support the Audit Office in

ensuring that the government's limited resources are being used effectively, efficiently and economically within spending ministries and government departments. In terms of section 6 of the Act, the AG is mandated to, on behalf of the House of Assembly, audit the accounts of any public entity, or designated corporate body and examine the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which a ministry, public entity, local authority, designated corporate body, statutory fund or other body has used public resources in discharging its functions. The Act requires the AG to ensure that all payments of public moneys have been supported by sufficient vouchers or proof of payment and that all money expended or charged to an appropriation account have been applied according to its intended purpose, as outlined by Parliament.

In terms of section 8, subsection 1 (d), "the AG or any person authorised by him or her may examine upon oath all persons whom he or she thinks fit to examine in relation to the receipt or expenditure of public moneys or the receipt or issue of any State property and in relation to whatever is necessary for the due performance and exercise of the duties and powers vested in him or her". Section 10 requires "the AG to prepare and submit to the Minister, not later than the 30<sup>th</sup> of June in each year, a report on the outcome of his or her examination and audit of the accounts referred to him or her".

## **Adoption of Public Finance Management Act, 2010**

The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 2010 is the most recent PFM legislation that deals with the national budget. It is more extensive, as it focuses on specific issues of PEM. The Act establishes the formal requirements and schedule for producing annual revenue and expenditure estimates, and their submission to Parliament. It also includes rules governing the withdrawal of funds from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF), the authority to advance funds, circumstances under which appropriated funds may be withheld, and the duration of appropriations and warrants. The PFMA also provides for the establishment and roles of key institutional frameworks for sound PEM. These include but are not limited to Treasury, accounting officers, chief accounting officers, internal auditors, audit committees, internal auditing offices within government ministries and departments.

## **Constitutional Amendment No. 20 of 2013**

In 2013, the GoZ amended its Constitution, as reflected in the Constitutional Amendment No. 20. This was done to realign adopted economic, social and political reforms to the national Constitution. These reforms were adopted in line with resolutions by government and opposition parties that led to the formation

of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Importantly, this new constitutional amendment has several relevant provisions seeking to strengthen PEM governance frameworks. Broadly, the PEM governance is provided for in Chapter 17. Part 1, section 298, outlines the underlying principles that should guide PEM. This includes transparency, accountability, responsible public financial management and clear fiscal reporting.

Section 299 provides for the role of Parliament as part of the institutional framework for PEM in Zimbabwe. These roles include Parliament's mandate to monitor and oversee expenditure by the state, as well as all government commissions, institutions and agencies at every level. The Parliament is further empowered to ensure that all revenue is accounted for, as well as to monitor and oversee expenditure-related behaviour within ministries and government departments.

The powers and duties of Office of the Auditor-General (AG) are also provided for in part 5 of the Constitution. In terms of section 309, the AG is empowered to audit accounts, financial systems, and financial management of all governmental departments, institutions and agencies, all provincial and metropolitan councils and all local authorities. In addition, Section 315, subsection (1) provides for an Act of Parliament to outline the procedures for the procurement of goods and services by the state and all government institutions and agencies of government at every level, so that this key activity is facilitated in a transparent, fair, honest, cost-effective and competitive manner. These constitutional provisions have a PEM thrust to ensure that public funds are used efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, it helps ensure that PEM issues are included in the supreme law of the land, as reflected by the critical nature of the subject.

## **PEM CHALLENGES IN ZIMBABWE SINCE 2000**

Despite the discussed PEM reforms, there are still a number of challenges relating to fiscal management in Zimbabwe. These PEM challenges (some of which have been experienced since 2000) include the following:

### **The socio-economic and political turmoil period and quasi-fiscal activities**

After its inception in 2000, the first decade of PEM was characterised by turmoil and duress. It was enforced within a largely unpredictable environment characterised by social, economic and political meltdown. The political meltdown manifested itself in the form of increased interparty violence; a precipitous decline in the value of local currency and liquidity crises; problems relating to the balance of payments; liquidity problems; and a severe shortage of food, fuel, drugs and

electricity (IMF 2003:51). During this period, fiscal performance worsened, especially after 2004 when the new Governor of the Reserve Bank embarked on disastrous quasi-fiscal operations. This saw the Reserve Bank resorting to the printing press and advancing concessionary finances to various sectors of the economy (without due diligence), bailing out loss-making parastatals, importing fertilisers, tractors and agricultural equipment.

As these expenditure components were not financed from the CRF, PEM's core values of transparency and accountability were grossly undermined. The Reserve Bank financed government deficit by printing money. Surprisingly, the then President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, praised the governor for being practical and not sticking to 'textbook economics'. The bank even printed money to buy foreign exchange on the black market to meet external debt obligations and government's day-to-day budgetary requirements. The above experiences clearly show that the Treasury nearly collapsed, and that these monetary scenarios undermined concerted efforts to revamp PEM at all levels of government.

## **Overall government over-expenditures**

Overall, government expenditure increased before and after the formation of the inclusive era, that is, before and after dollarisation in 2009. Prior to 2009, increases in aggregate expenditure were largely due to the hyper-inflationary environment. Expenditure also arose from power generation efforts such as the rehabilitation of the Kariba Hydroelectric and Hwange Thermal Power stations, as well as thermal stations in Bulawayo, Harare and Munyati.

Furthermore, an increase in government spending was partly due to the introduction of drought-related grain (US\$253.5 million), the payment of the December 2015 salary payment arrears (US\$119.4 million), as well as debt servicing (US\$100.9 million). This culminated in expenditure overruns.

Government's over-expenditure was also due to a "bloated" public service and a high wage bill. The number of government employees rose by 9,763 between 2011 and 2015 (GoZ and WB 2017:54). The public service continues to employ a number of public officials who are well beyond their retirement age (GoZ Budget Statement 2018:36). In the 2018 budget, the government stated that, as of January 2018, it planned on retiring staff above the age of 65 through the Public Service Commission. Furthermore, the government also stated its intent to introduce a voluntary retirement scheme to rationalise the public service wage bill, it planned to provide financial incentives to beneficiaries to engage in economic activities in areas such as farming, and the start-up of small business enterprises (GoZ Budget Statement 2018:36). Public service wages represent 87% of the central government revenue, 40% of local government expenditure, and over 20% of the total State-Owned Enterprise(s) (SOE) expenditure (GoZ and WB 2017:x). The increase

in the size of the public service has a negative impact on efforts relating to PEM, particularly in this context of the prevailing limited fiscal space in Zimbabwe.

## **Ministerial vote allocation and lack of prioritisation**

Vote allocation trends were generally in line with those of the second decade, and the Ministries of Health, Education and Defence remained the top three government expenditure priorities. This trend remained visible even after the formation of the inclusive government in 2009, where the Ministries of Health and Education accounted for 8.3 and 7.9% of the total expenditure of US\$2.3 billion, respectively (GoZ Budget Statement 2009).

Lack of expenditure prioritisation also extends to the ZAADS, which first and foremost underlines the need for repayment of debts as well as other pressing national priorities like public goods and service delivery, (education, health, infrastructure development and improving the general welfare of the civil service (ZIMCODD 2012:1). Within the current context, the government focuses on debt re-payments to access funding from the international community and stimulate economic growth. On the other hand, this priority is viewed as immoral and impractical given that the resultant opportunity cost of debt servicing is very high. This is the major concern from civil servants, as there is a general feeling that their health is being neglected. The government's review of their salaries is not in line with the prevailing harsh economic conditions characterised by hyperinflation. Consequently, a stalemate has been reached between government and public health institutions' doctors and nurses. Undeniably, their prolonged strike over salary hikes has undermined the general public's access to decent public health services. Similarly, teachers have also threatened to strike until their salary scale has been adjusted to an equivalent of US\$520. This hampers the quality of education, as most ordinary- and advanced-level students have not received proper tutelage since March 2020 after schools closed due to the national Covid-19 lockdown. Issues relating to expenditure prioritisation are allegedly associated with undue political influence, which undermines sound PEM.

## **Limited fiscal space for economic growth and stabilisation**

Zimbabwe continues to suffer from limited fiscal space to enhance economic growth. Since the dollarisation of the economy in 2009, Zimbabwe has not taken advantage of accessing all four pillars of the fiscal space diamond, namely the access to assistance from the international community; domestic resource mobilisation; reprioritisation and efficiency of public expenditures; and deficit financing. Without re-engagement with the international community, official assistance is off-budget and it mainly targets humanitarian aid. Likewise, deficit financing

through domestic and external borrowing is difficult without re-engagement, arrears clearance and debt servicing.

Recourse to domestic debt is an uphill task in the context of an economy characterised by a debt overhang. As such, Zimbabwe is in serious debt distress. Without the required political will, reprioritisation as well as efficiency of public expenditures remain a daunting task. By implication, Zimbabwe relies heavily on domestic resource mobilisation – particularly taxation. Upheavals during the past two decades, characterised by company closures and the informalisation of the economy, points to narrowing domestic revenue streams in Zimbabwe. Cumulative revenue from January to October 2016 amounted to US\$2.876 billion, against a target of US\$3.158 billion. This is 1.5% below 2015 and 9.8% lower than budgeted estimates (Kanyenze, Chitambara and Tyson 2017:13). Even though Zimbabwe’s domestic revenue streams are severely compromised and have been progressively narrowing, expenditure has remained high and has reached levels inconsistent with revenue mobilisation.

### **Lack of political will to reform**

Evidence suggests a lack of political will to reform. For instance, during the 18<sup>th</sup> Cabinet Meeting of 13 June 2017 and the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting of 24 October 2017, Cabinet made decisions directing the Treasury to engage line ministries on expenditure reduction and revenue raising measures (GoZ Budget Statement 2018:34). However, there was no meaningful follow-up on the implementation of the resolutions. Thus, the government acknowledged that fiscal reform would require discipline and the political will to implement the necessary measures, as well as adherence to agreed Cabinet policy positions (GoZ Budget Statement 2018:33). In his presentation of the 2018 budget, the Minister of Finance noted that, “Central is the implementation of decisions Cabinet has already taken, realising the unsustainability of our public finances, but on which government prevaricated when the political will to implement was called for” (GoZ Budget Statement 2018:35). It has been argued that the institutional framework for control over central government public spending is comparatively well developed but is not widely applied (GoZ and WB 2017:xi).

### **Weak enforcement of transparency and accountability mechanisms in PEM**

Zimbabwe has historically faced a misaligned budgetary process, a near-sighted budget perspective, weak transparency in financial reporting, and insufficient capacity to implement internal and external audits (GoZ and WB 2017:60). In addition, the media, both print and electronic, is saturated with stories of government

corruption and failure to follow prescribed procedures, the C&AG lacks adequate powers to formally expose such corrupt activities, especially if they are associated with high-ranking public officials (Zinyama 2013:269). It is also evident that the C&AG in Zimbabwe lacks sanctioning powers in which it provides recommendations that are never implemented. All these factors weaken the effectiveness of the C&AG as one of the key PEM regulatory frameworks in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the above experiences give the general impression that follow-up on issues of financial irregularities, as reflected by reports of the Public Accounts Committee and Comptroller and the AG, are not taken seriously and therefore ignored. Such a scenario continues to compromise the national fiscus.

Zimbabwe has also experienced obstacles in proper accounting regarding government expenditures, particularly given that public services are increasingly financed outside the ambit of the Parliament's budget process, where oversight and coordination is relatively weak and fragmented (GoZ and WB 2017: xiii-xiv). Similar to previous periods, the 2013-2015 period also experienced PEM-related challenges like poor maintenance of accounting records, weak internal controls, unsupported expenditure, and violations of legal, policy, and regulatory framework that continued to drive public funds leakages (ZIMCODD 2016:2-3).

## **Corruption in the public expenditure process**

Corrupt activities by public officials continues to compromise government's concerted efforts to strengthen Zimbabwe's PEM. Considering the scale of public spending in Zimbabwe, all forms of corruption have a far-reaching effect on the economy –particularly concerning the public procurement process. Chigudu (2014:21) argues that public procurement often involves large sums of money. In terms of corruption, cases of violating the rules and procedures in the procurement process are rampant in Zimbabwe. Chigudu (2014:21) points out that public officials manipulate tender procedures in procuring public goods and service for personal gains. This negatively affects the value for money principle that should govern the entire public procurement process. For instance, where there is insider trading and lack of transparency, quotations may be inflated, and service delivery may be awarded to less-qualified providers. Ultimately, the government incurs more costs than would otherwise be incurred if proper procedures had been followed. Furthermore, this would likely lead to poor service delivery that falls short of the awarded expenditure.

## **Limited capacity for effective use of fiscal policy**

Since the deceleration of growth in 2012, there has been intensifying pressure to use macro-economic and fiscal policies to support growth. However, the GoZ has increasingly exhausted instruments to implement fiscal policy (GoZ and WB

2017:xii). During the high-growth years after adopting the multi-currency regime in 2009, Zimbabwe failed to adopt a counter-cyclical fiscal policy that would have helped the GoZ to manage long-term growth. Thus, few reserves were accumulated (GoZ and WB 2017:xii). As such, there is a need for adequate capacity to fully utilise fiscal policy to address the current macro-economic challenges in the country.

For instance, Zimbabwe is still grappling with public debt. As of 2017, overall public debt, including international arrears, represented 79% of the GDP (GoZ and WB 2017:x). As such, there is a pressing need to analyse the issue of debt servicing, given that most critical sectors of the economy are yet to reach full production levels (GoZ Budget Statement 2012 in Zhou 2012:36). Debt servicing entails an opportunity cost where finite resources are not available for use in other productive sectors of the economy and service provision. Paradoxically, debt servicing is believed to be necessary for the resuscitation of Zimbabwe's collapsed economy, as it is envisaged to open new lines of credit for the country. Zimbabwe therefore faces a complex situation where a balance needs to be struck between debt servicing and channeling financial resources towards capital expenditure, while at the same time maintaining quality public service delivery.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested to improve PEM in Zimbabwe:

- The government must consider options for widening the fiscal space for public spending, possibly, by exploring other internal revenue mobilisation sources, as well as strengthening public-private partnerships (PPPs). Nevertheless, it will be necessary to closely monitor and regulate PPPs so that these arrangements do not result in the privatisation of public services beyond the reach of ordinary people.
- The government must also consider widening its tax base by avoiding illegal financial flows, broadening its revenue channels as well as pushing for the private sector to invest in the government sector (education, health, transport, etc.) as part of its corporate-social responsibility/investment. A policy framework can be developed that encourages private-for-profit investment in these economic sectors as a domestic resource mobilisation strategy.
- To create the fiscal space and access funds, government needs to normalise its relations with the international community. Government's efforts towards the rationalisation of the civil service must be strengthened. This implies ridding the government of duplication and redundant posts that compromises its general efficiency. Overall, there is a need to strengthen the government's commitment to cutting expenditure relating to non-priority current and capital expenditure to prioritise other critical government expenditures.

- The government should improve its budgetary allocations within spending units. There is a need to effectively coordinate and report off-budget financing. This will enable government to consolidate the planning and implementation of public sector resources. In terms of public financing, there is also a need to effectively utilise potential partnerships with the private sector. This article further suggests that effective evidenced-based resource allocation approaches be adopted to deal with the current skewed and inefficient allocation of resources in the government sector. In doing this, there should be proper coordination of all government funding options to avert public expenditure duplication and asymmetry (e.g., health and education). Importantly, the government can benefit from decentralisation (and properly coordinated) tracking, budgeting, and management and control systems in line with resource mobilisation and public needs.
- There is a need to retain the best staff in the government sector. This can be done by adopting staff retention schemes funded by government and other relevant stakeholders. Treasury must be reviewed to address the unsustainable share of employment costs in government expenditure. Zimbabwe can learn from countries like Rwanda, as well as other OECD countries that pay non-fixed, top-up allowances in line with public employee performance. The government and its relevant partners should also consider fully utilising management tools like results-based financing (RBF), which can be used for off-budget public employee allowances.
- Role-players should effectively deal with the causes of generalised and specific corruption at both the policy and institutional levels. On different levels and in varying cases of corruption, certain attributes are visible as key drivers. These need immediate attention. These features are ‘motivation’ where the individual has an incentive (or cause) to be involved in fraudulent or corrupt activities; ‘opportunity’ where the individual can find an opportunity for corrupt and fraudulent activities; and ‘justification’ where the individual is able to justify their acts of committing fraud or corruption.
- At central government level, there is a need to consider adopting the e-Government Procurement (e-GP) system to address the current procurement irregularities. From a medium-term perspective, initial steps by the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe could include the formation of an inter-ministerial high-level steering committee to strengthen leadership around the development and implementation of the new system; securing the necessary funding from the budget or development partners; and establishment of a technical committee to plan and manage the implementation process.
- The government should consider strengthening domestic funding options to meet the increasing public expenditures. In particular, the government needs to increase health budgetary allocations to ensure that the health sector implements global health standards. In effect, realising universal health coverage

requires sufficient funding; a supportive and enabling government health legislation; and an accommodating, responsive and reliable health system.

- To improve accountability and transparency in government, the current PEM institutional framework must be further strengthened. These institutions include, but are not limited to Parliament, Treasury and C&AG. For instance, the C&AG office should be strengthened to promote transparency and accountability in PEM. Parliament, instead of the Public Service Commission (PSC), should be consulted concerning the appointment of the C&AG. This is important to ensure the independence of this institutional framework when conducting its fundamental audit functions.
- The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) needs to be strengthened to improve its core PEM functions. There is an urgent need for amending the RBZ Act concerning the following aspects: to clearly separate the objectives, functions as well as powers of the RBZ; to simplify the wording of legal tenders; to impose strict limits on monetary financing as well as quasi-fiscal activities; to remove the extensive list of provisions that promote undue political influence concerning the RBZ's operations. Further, to safeguard the independence of the internal auditor; and to ensure that the RBZ provides all requested information to Parliament, with safeguards on confidential information.
- Overall, the Treasury must take a leading role in reinforcing the fiscal reporting within government ministries and departments. It is the fundamental role of the Treasury to ensure that spending units comply with the constitutional and legal requirements in respect of the entire PEM process. The Treasury should also promote effective coordination across ministries in the process of sharing both fiscal and debt data for all public sector entities.

## CONCLUSION

Internationally, there has been an effort to improve PEM. To this end, a number of interventions have been undertaken to strengthen the institutional and legislative frameworks in the management and control of public funds in all spheres of government. The GoZ has made considerable strides in reforming PEM and several measures have been adopted. These measures include constitutional amendments such as Amendment No. 20 of 2013; the promulgation of the PFMA and Audit Office Act (AOA) in 2010, treasury and parliamentary reforms, adopting a cash budgeting system, the new debt servicing strategies and a reduction in the number of government ministries. However, due to several challenges, these fiscal reform interventions are yet to bear fruit. More effort is required to address these challenges to improve and sustain sound PEM as well as public goods and service delivery in Zimbabwe.

## NOTE

- \* This article is based on a completed thesis by Gwiza, A, with the title *Public Expenditure Management Capacity Challenges in the Ministry of Health and Childcare in Zimbabwe*, under the supervision of Prof Vain Jarbandhan and co-supervision of Prof C J Auriacombe, at the University of Johannesburg.

## REFERENCES

- Achmad, F.N. 2012. *Public Expenditure Management Reform in Indonesia: An assessment of the Roles of the Treasury and other Institutions*, Doctoral Thesis: Birmingham University. Available at: <https://flex.flinders.edu.au/file/dba2bdb2-1632-4350-8d28-dce05996a36f/1/Thesis-Achmad-2012.pdf>. (Accessed on 15 August 2015).
- Allen, R. and Tommasi, D. (Eds). 2001. *Managing government expenditure: A Reference Book for Transition Countries*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Support for Improvement in Government Management (SIGMA).
- Allen, R. and Tommasi, D. (Eds). 2001. Multi-year budgeting and investment programming. In Allen, R. and Tommasi, D. *Managing government expenditure: A Reference Book for Transition Countries*. Paris: OECD SIGMA.
- Bao, G., Wang, X., Larsen, G.L. and Morgan, D. 2012. Beyond new public governance: A value based global framework for performance management, governance, and leadership. *Administration and Society*. 45(1):443-467.
- Batley, R. 2004. *The Politics of service delivery reforms: Development and change*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Company.
- Biti, T. 2014. Rebuilding Zimbabwe: Lessons from a coalition government. Centre for Global Development. Available at: <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/Tendai-Biti-Zimbabwe-Sept-2015.pdf>. (Accessed on 16 March 2018).
- Breul, J. and John, K. 2008. Federal government reform: Lessons from Clinton's 'reinventing government' and Bush's 'management agenda' initiatives. *Public Administration Review*. 68(6):1009-1026.
- Bryson, J.M., Crosby, B.C. and Bloomberg, L. 2014. Public value governance: Moving beyond traditional public administration and the new public management. *Public Administration Review*. 74(4):445-456.
- Bryson, J.M., Crosby, B.C. and Stone, M.M. 2015. Designing and implementing cross-sector collaborations: Needed and challenging. *Public Administration Review*. 75(5):647-663.
- Caldwell, N.D., Roehrich, J.K. and George, G. 2017. Social value creation and relational coordination in public-private collaborations. *Journal of Management Studies*. 54(6):906-928.
- Chene, M. 2015. *Overview of corruption in the Zimbabwe's health and education sectors and in Local Governments*. Harare: Transparency International. Anti-Corruption Resource Centre.
- Chigudu, D. 2014. Public procurement in Zimbabwe: issues and challenges. *Journal of Governance and Regulation*. 3(4):21-26.

- Christensen, T. and Laegried, P. 2007. The whole-of-government approach to public sector reform. *Journal of public administration review*. 67(6):1059-1066.
- Department for International Development (DfID). 2001. *Understanding and reforming public expenditure management: Guidelines for DfID*. London: DfID.
- Dhliwayo, R. 2001. The impact of public expenditure management under ESAP on basic social services: health and education. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/3238465/The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Public\\_Expenditure\\_Management\\_Under\\_ESAP\\_on\\_Basic\\_Social\\_Services\\_Health\\_and\\_Education](https://www.academia.edu/3238465/The_Impact_of_Public_Expenditure_Management_Under_ESAP_on_Basic_Social_Services_Health_and_Education). (Accessed: 15 March 2018).
- Dhlohdhlo, R. and Mabugu, R. 2000. *Macroeconomic Reforms, Tourism and Sustainable Development*. Harare: ZERO Regional Environmental Organisation.
- Dickinson, H. 2016. From new public management to new public governance: The implications for a new public service. In Book editors. *The three-sector solution: delivering public policy in collaboration with non-profits and business*. Canberra: The Australian National University Press.
- Drechsler, W. 2005. The Re-Emergence of 'Weberian' public administration after the fall of new public management: The Central and Eastern European perspective. *Halduskultuur*. 2(6):94-108.
- Ferdousi, F. and Qiu, L. 2013. New public management in Bangladesh: Policy and reality. *iBusiness*. 5(3):150-153.
- Ghiasi, M. 2014. The role of public expenditure management in the budget systems. *International SAMANM Journal of Marketing and Management*. 2(2):1-19.
- Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ). 2009. Budget Statement: "What we gather is what we eat". Harare: Printflow.
- GoZ. 2010. Budget Statement: Reconstruction with equitable growth and stability. Harare: Printflow.
- GoZ. 2011. Budget Statement: Sustaining efficient inclusive growth with jobs. Harare: Printflow.
- GoZ. 2012. Budget Statement: Reconstruction with equitable growth with jobs. Harare: Printflow.
- GoZ. 2018. 2018. Budget Statement: Towards a new economic order. Harare: Printflow.
- GoZ. and the World Bank (WB). 2017. Zimbabwe Public Expenditure Review 2017 Volume 1: Cross Cutting Issues. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/518431497628882418/pdf/116350-WP-v1-P146472-PUBLIC-JUNE21-6am-ZIMPER-Volume-1.pdf> (Accessed 02 April 2018).
- Gumbo, L. 2013. US\$2.5 million health scam exposed, *The Herald*, 23 December 2013. Available at: <https://www.herald.co.zw/us25m-health-scam-exposed/>. (Accessed on 15 July 2017).
- Hill, P.J. 1999. Public choice: A review. *Journal of Faith and Economics*. 34(1):1-10.
- Hughes, O. 2003. *Public management and administration: An introduction*. New York: Palgrave.
- Hughes, R. and McHugh, J. 2010. Creating fiscal space for growth and development in Zimbabwe: Challenges and policy options after hyperinflation. In Kramarenko, V., Engstrom L., Verdier, G., Fernandez, G. and Oppers, S.E. Available online at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/dp/2010/afr1003.pdf> (Accessed on 15 July 2019).
- Institute of Economic Affairs. 2012. Public Choice: A Primer. Available at <https://iea.org.uk/.../IEA%20Public%20Choice%20web%20complete%202012.pdf>. (Accessed on 12 July 2017).

- International Monetary Fund (IMF). 2003. *Public expenditure management: Country Assessment and action plan (AAP) for HIPC's*. Washington, D.C: IMF and WB.
- IMF. 2006. Public expenditure management reform: IMF Country report No.06/67: Selected African Countries: IMF Technical Assistance Evaluation — Public Expenditure Management Reform. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2006/cr0667.pdf> (Accessed on 12 June 2019).
- Ishikawa, S. 2006. *The poverty trap and public expenditure management: In pursuit of a new development model discussion paper on development assistance No. 2*. Tokyo: Foundation for Advanced Studies on Economics (FASID).
- Kanyenze, G., Chitambara, P. and Tyson, J. 2017. *The outlook for Zimbabwean economy: supporting economic transformation*. London: UKAID.
- Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe. 2016. Wage structure and labour costs in Zimbabwe: an analysis of flexibility, competitiveness and equity: USAID strategic economic research and analysis (SERA) programme. Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-addis\\_ababa/---sro-harare/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_470742.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-addis_ababa/---sro-harare/documents/genericdocument/wcms_470742.pdf). (Accessed on 16 March 2018).
- McQuaid, R. 2006. The theory of organisation partnership: partnership advantages, disadvantages and success factor. In Osborne, S.T. (ed). 2006. *The new public governance*. London: Routledge.
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. 2020. Pre-budget strategy paper for 2021. Harare: Printflow.
- Moore, M. and Hartley, J. 2008. Innovations in governance. *Public Management Review*. 10(1):3-20.
- Mueller, D.C. 2003. *Public Choice III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2003. OECD Best practices for budget transparency. *Journal on Budgeting*. 1(3):7-14.
- Peters, B.G. 1996. *The future of governing: four emerging models*. Lawrence: University of Kansas.
- Potter, B.H. and Diamond, J. 1999. *Guidelines for public expenditure management*. Washington, DC: IMF.
- Premchand, A. 2005. *Controlling government spending: The ethos, ethics, and economics of expenditure management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rajaram, A. and Krishnamurthy, M. 2001. Public expenditure management and accountability: Evolution and current status of World Bank work. Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network Operation Policy and Country Services Network. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/419221468763802853/pdf/264910Public0e1nd0accountability028.pdf> (Accessed on 15 September 2017).
- Republic of Zimbabwe. 2010. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 2010. Harare: Printflow.
- Republic of Zimbabwe. 2010. The Audit Office Act (AOA) of 2010. Harare: Printflow.
- Republic of Zimbabwe. 2013. The Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe (Amendment No. 20). Harare: Printflow.

- Republic of Zimbabwe. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Act. (Amendment Act No.1 of 2017). Harare: Printflow.
- Schick, A. 1999. *A contemporary approach to public expenditure management*. Washington, DC: World Bank Institute.
- Shah, A. and Hagen, J.V. 2007. *Budgeting and budgetary institutions*. Washington, D.C.: WB.
- Stigler, G.J. 1975. *The citizen and the state: essays on regulation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- The Independent*. 2013. Massive corruption at government hospitals, *The Independent*. 13 January 2013. Available at: <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2013/01/18/massive-corruption-at-govt-hospitals/> (Accessed on 15 July 2017).
- Villanueva, A. 2015. The new public governance? Emerging perspectives on the theory and practice of public governance. *Journal of Public Governance*. 1(1):126-134.
- World Bank (WB). 1998. *Public expenditure management handbook*. Washington, D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ WM.
- WB. 2001. Public Expenditure management and accountability: Evolution and current status of World Bank. Poverty reduction and economic management network operation policy and country services network. Available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/Seminar%20PDFs/evolution.pdf> (Accessed on 12 June 2016).
- WB. 2007. *Public expenditure management and financial accountability: Public financial management performance indicators*. Washington D.C: WB.
- Zhou, G. 2012. Fiscal management in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Economics and Business Modeling*. 3(1):152-161.
- Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD). 2012. *ZIMCODD position paper on Zimbabwe Accelerated Arrears, Debt and Development Strategy (ZAADS) paper 1*. Harare: ZIMCODD.
- ZIMCODD. 2016. Public finance management in Zimbabwe: Enhancing public finance management using the office of the Auditor General's reports in Zimbabwe: An analysis of the 2013-2015 office of the Auditor General's reports. Available online at: <http://www.zimcodd.org/sites/default/files/policybriefs/Policy%20Brief%20-%20Enhancing%20Public%20Finance%20Management.pdf> (Accessed: 15 March 2018).
- ZIMCODD. 2016. Research findings report on social and economic impacts of public private partnership agreements to the realisation of the right to health: The case of Chitungwiza Central Hospital. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337868279\\_Exploring\\_the\\_Feasibility\\_of\\_Public\\_Private\\_Partnerships\\_in\\_the\\_Healthcare\\_Sector\\_in\\_Zimbabwe](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337868279_Exploring_the_Feasibility_of_Public_Private_Partnerships_in_the_Healthcare_Sector_in_Zimbabwe). (Accessed on 8 October 2018).
- Zinyama, T. 2013. Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Sector Auditing: An Evaluation of the Comptroller and Auditor General in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2012. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 3(7):267-282.
- Zinyama, T. and Nhema, A.G. 2016. Zimbabwe performance-based budgeting: concepts and success factors. *Public Policy and Administration Review*. 4(1):33-60. Available at: [http://pparnet.com/journals/ppar/Vol\\_4\\_No\\_1\\_June\\_2016/3.pdf](http://pparnet.com/journals/ppar/Vol_4_No_1_June_2016/3.pdf) (Accessed on 15 March 2018).

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

### **Mr A. Gwiza**

Senior Assistant Registrar, Academic Affairs  
Academic Registry Department  
Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences  
and Technology  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
E-mail: [aagwiza@gmail.com](mailto:aagwiza@gmail.com)  
Tel: +267773842059

### **Prof D B Jarbandhan**

School of Public Management, Governance and  
Public Policy  
College of Business and Economics  
University of Johannesburg  
P O Box 526,  
Auckland Park, Johannesburg  
E-mail: [vainj@uj.ac.za](mailto:vainj@uj.ac.za)  
Tel: 011 559 2907

# Employee Health and Wellness Programmes

## Critical Considerations for Supervisors

**S Badul**

School of Management, IT and Governance  
University of KwaZulu-Natal

**M Subban**

School of Management, IT and Governance  
University of KwaZulu-Natal

### ABSTRACT

The management of how employee health and wellness and the rate of absenteeism in the workplace impacts employee performance is one of the primary functions of a supervisor in the public service. Supervisors must be able to execute their duties within a diverse workplace and explore innovative measures to embrace employee health and wellness programmes (EH&WPs). The methodology of the article entails a desktop literature review based on unobtrusive research techniques. This article focuses on how supervisors can identify performance-related problems in the workplace, and implement the EH&WP as a measure to assist in addressing employee problems that impact the performance of employees. The article found that the fit between the establishment of an EH&WP in the context of the role that supervisors fulfil is a significant aspect to enhance performance, productivity and service delivery in public sector institutions.

### INTRODUCTION

The management of performance is a universal problem in all sectors and it can be said, that no single solution can be adopted to mitigate the impact in the workplace. Furthermore, productivity in the public service can contribute to overall quality of service delivery (Public Service Commission (PSC) 2010: vii). The key health trends report, statistics and wellness testing data indicate that many

employees are experiencing impacts of lifestyle diseases, and the burden on the management of non-communicable diseases in the workplace that places an additional responsibility for supervisors to manage and to mitigate the impact on performance (Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) 2012: 9-12).

The South African public service is under constant pressure to ensure that the performance of employees renders effective and efficient delivery of services. Mello (2014b:127) states that institutional performance is the sum total of the performance of each individual, and thus making performance a key determinant of the success of the public service. It is suggested that employees who are motivated and understand the workplace goals would perform at their optimum, provided that they have the necessary tools and support. Although the South African public service has also acknowledged the importance of investing in employees, there is limited documented evidence of the success of measures such as employee assistance programmes to improve performance (Vermeulen 2016:237). Workplace programmes were traditionally known as employee assistance programmes which focused primarily on substance abuse. Contemporary terms used are: employee wellness programme, wellness programme and workplace programme (Consad 1999:5). Within the context of this study, the terms employee assistance programme and EH&WP are used as a holistic approach focusing on a wide range of workplace-based behavioural health programmes with comprehensive services (Attridge 2015:7).

The primary aim of this article is to explore whether the EH&WPs can be utilised by supervisors as a tool to improve the performance of employees. In order to facilitate the delivery of the goals of departments in the public sector, there needs to be ongoing interaction between the supervisor and employees. Therefore, it is essential for employees and supervisors to have a common understanding of what is expected of them in terms of performance outcomes. Notably, the EH&WP, if applied consistently, would contribute to enhancing service delivery.

Supervisors in the public service perform both management and administrative functions. According to Van der Waldt (2016: 164-5), the managerial functions are those that a supervisor performs in conjunction with others in the workplace to reach certain objectives jointly. Van der Waldt (2016:165) states that supervisors draw up operational plans and programmes to be executed by employees of the institution. It must be noted, that lower-level management has a fundamental role in the productivity and functional activities in the workplace, as it serves as a significant link between the employees and higher-level management. The importance of this role is further reiterated, because failure to execute duties has direct consequences on the level of service delivery, and compromises the credibility of government's promise to the citizens. In the event, when employees experience wellness and health challenges, the supervisor is expected to introduce corrective measures to improve their performance.

According to Noe, Hollenbeck and Wright (2008:375), supervisors should be in the best position to understand performance levels, as they are expected to be knowledgeable of the job requirements and responsible for the observation of employee performance. Supervisors are in a precarious position as they are highly dependent on employees to perform and achieve outcomes, and are also accountable for non-performance of the employees. Therefore, feedback provided by the supervisors should be strongly related to performance considerations.

The article highlights the factors impacting performance; contextualises the role of supervisors in the improvement of performance; contextualises the importance of employee health and wellness in South Africa; conceptualises EH&WPs and explains the role of the supervisor in EH&WP referrals.

## **FACTORS IMPACTING PERFORMANCE**

Viedge (2011:130-131) asserts that performance management generally fails as supervisors are not eager to follow the systems that are in place to address problematic areas of performance. The performance management process requires the supervisor to engage with the employee in circumstances of poor performance. Supervisors generally feel challenged, as they do not want to affect the working relationship with their employees. Supervisors often find that the performance feedback sessions are complex, and this usually provokes some degree of anxiety between supervisor and employee. Therefore, the failure on the part of the supervisor to address performance issues would impact significantly the quality of work delivered, and also compromise the effectiveness of the system.

Manyaka and Sebola (2012:303) also argue that supervisors generally find it challenging to assess poor or under-performance. This could be primarily attributed to the fact that standards are not clearly defined, and therefore assessment of work delivered against the standard is not realistic (Manyaka and Sebola 2012:303). While on the other hand, some supervisors opt to ignore poor performance and adopt the approach of redistribution of work to other employees (Manyaka and Sebola 2012:303). This practice can lead to workplace burnout, decreased morale and conflict among peers. Ineffective supervision allows under-performers to get away with poor performance, which invariably contributes to decreased performance in the workplace. Manyaka and Sebola (2012:303), further contend that supervisors are hesitant to give employees unsatisfactory performance ratings out of fear of creating friction in the workplace or demotivation. Therefore, it is imperative that supervisors investigate the reasons for the poor performance, as problems left unattended would invariably affect the quality of performance rendered. Supervisors must also be cautious not to assume and infer a diagnosis upon the employee, as this could be extremely misleading.

Performance targets cannot be achieved if employees are not at work. Waide (2015:25), highlights the role supervisors must play in the workplace when taking measures to manage factors contributing to absenteeism when there has been noted changes in the employees' behaviour. In addition to the supervisors' commitment, it is suggested that early identification of the problem, accurate record keeping and investigation of each individual case is essential to facilitate the proper management of absenteeism. Waide (2015:25) advocates, that absenteeism can be accurately managed through dedicated and proactive management teams within the public service. The principle of leave without pay for incidences wherein employees absent themselves without the necessary authority would not necessary yield positive outcomes. There has been a number of complaints about the rate of absenteeism within the public service, however, there is limited documented research with evidence to indicate what has been done to manage absenteeism and mitigate the negative impact thereof (Waide 2015:25). In addition, Waide (2015:25) states that, programme evaluation or outcome analysis of the programmes implemented to address absenteeism has not been properly documented.

According to Van Eeden and Jordaan (2008:10), "the abuse of sick leave in South Africa is widespread, and is estimated to be as high as 33% of the recorded sickness absence". Waide (2015:20) states that supervisors have an arduous task to ensure that the set objectives are met, and that the responsibility of managing absenteeism is addressed. According to the quarterly Labour Force Survey of December 2012 (cited in Van Eeden and Jordaan 2008:10), the public service employees contributed 36% of the absent workforce. It is the view of Van Eeden and Jordaan (2008:10), that there has been limited published research in South Africa on efforts to manage and control absence due to ill-health. The public service is one of the largest employers and this high rate of absenteeism implies that absent employees would not be in a position to perform their duties. The predominant causes for the absenteeism problem are mainly, "poor management and control, ineffective information systems and frail human resource functions" (Van Eeden and Jordaan 2008:10). The findings from the studies undertaken by the PSC revealed the following aspect as cause for concern, "excessively high levels of uncaptured leave or leave data which did not specify the nature of the illness, poor management and leave administration, leave forms incompletely filled and insufficient measures to monitor absence" (PSC cited in Van Eeden and Jordaan 2008:10). Despite the existence of workplace programmes, the prevalence of absenteeism increased, thus placing an onerous task on management to manage absenteeism (Van Eeden and Jordaan 2008:10).

Waide (2015:23) further stated that absenteeism always has an undesirable effect on productivity for the employees who are at work. Absenteeism of employees results in workload increases thereby impacting the morale of employees

present at work, and placing pressure on employees who are at work to perform the additional work functions. Such practices could increase the probability of emerging health problems, which in turn, would result in increased absenteeism. It is recommended that the negative impacts that absenteeism has on productivity warrants attention by management to alleviate the resulting behavioural risk exposures in the workplace (Waide 2015:24). It was further affirmed that supervisors play a crucial role in assisting to mitigate the impact of absenteeism in the workplace. One could surmise that the lack or poor management thereof, could lead to spiralling negative consequences in the workplace.

The challenges of occupational stress also present a serious risk in the workplace. The negative effect of stress can be noticed by the effects on the employee's health and wellness, and also impacts negatively on the workplace (Sieberhagen, Rothmann and Pienaar 2009:3). The effects of employees' problems can be noticed by the statistics on the rate of absenteeism, high rates of staff turnover and lower levels of productivity, and these have negative ramifications on the economic growth and quality of service delivery (Sieberhagen *et al.* 2009:3).

In addition to the noted challenges, the 'troubled employee' also poses performance problems. According to De Winnaar and Taute (2008:265), a 'troubled employee', is an employee who is suffering from some form of personal or work-related problem which results in the lack of optimum economic and social functioning. One can therefore deduce that a 'troubled employee' is one who is experiencing a challenge in managing the personal and/or work-related problem that resultantly affects work performance.

## **SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF PERFORMANCE**

A supervisor in the public service has to conduct the duties assigned to their position in a manner that upholds the values as enshrined in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. Supervisors are therefore expected to ensure that service delivery is advanced and the lives of the citizens are improved through being cognisant of the micro- and macro-environmental factors that impact performance improvement (Van Dijk 2007:50-52; Van der Westhuizen 2016:5). Performance improvement requires one to assess the entire workplace wherein employees and supervisors find themselves. Denhardt and Denhardt (in Van der Westhuizen 2016:5) explain that all persons employed in the public service are expected to interact continuously in order to attain the institutional goals in meeting the needs of the society. There are elements that impact employee performance, such as the level of employee motivation and their state of safety and employee wellness. These elements are among the micro-environmental

elements that influence performance improvement towards developing affordable and accessible public services.

The role of the supervisor is to ensure that performance improvement results in providing a supportive organisational culture that is based on norms and standards. To this end, employees need to also be engaged when they are in the workplace. Employee engagement is the degree to which employees are committed to what they do in the workplace, for instance, to determine whether employees are present at work, or are they physically at work but not productive. Lefakane (2017:76), indicates that literature confirms that employees who feel a sense of engagement and satisfaction are more likely to remain in the workplace for longer periods. It has also been suggested by the author that the role of the management and employee health and wellness functions are in tandem towards fostering employee engagement (Lefakane 2017:76). There is compounding evidence that a supervisor can impact the level of employees' engagement at work. Robertson and Tinline (2008:42), state that building a committed and engaged workforce requires the commitment and involvement of management, organisational processes and work procedures that promote and sustain psychological well-being.

Manyaka and Sebola (2012:300), assert that the public service requires supervisors to be competent with the aim of having a positive impact on service delivery. In order to achieve this objective, supervisors need management training and managerial commitment. In this context, Van der Westhuizen (2016:15) advocates that the management of the people-related aspects is not the sole responsibility of human resources, but it is also expected of line-function supervisors to be well versed on all aspects pertaining to the human resources to ensure that workplace objectives are achieved.

Noe *et al.* (2008:383), state that "if employees are not made aware of how their performance is not meeting expectations, their performance will not improve. In fact, it may get worse". An effective supervisor is one who provides constructive performance feedback to employees in a manner that produces positive behavioural reactions. Line supervisors in the public service are required to ensure that results are achieved. For example, in the performance management process, performance feedback warrants the supervisor to hold regular meetings with employees to provide them with feedback and to motivate and identify performance challenges before the annual assessment. During these sessions, the focus must be on orienting, coaching, guiding, training, developing and counselling employees (Mello 2014a:132).

Sufficient knowledge of the work performed by an employee, good communication skills, the ability to observe behaviour and the possession of coaching and counselling skills are critical attributes for a supervisor, especially in the current diverse workplace. Supervisors should be in a position to use these attributes in circumstances wherein interventions are required to assist employees whose work

performance is impaired, for instance, as a result of personal or health-related problems. These problems can be identified by assessing productivity levels, the attendance of employees and their rate of absenteeism. Lefakane (2017:76) suggests that supervisors need to understand the workplace factors that drive employee engagement, such as employees' involvement in decision-making, acknowledgement of employees' contribution, employees' development and employer concerns about the employees' health and well-being. The value of the human resources component would yield beneficial outcomes for both the employee and the organisation.

## **CONTEXTUALISING EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

According to Vermeulen (2016:233), a holistic approach to employee health and wellness entails that the workplace must invest in eliciting employee behaviour and performance that would generate the best results towards the workplace's mission and objectives. The author argues that employees who are well generally perform better, and therefore suggests the need to invest in the wellness of employees (Vermeulen 2016:233). The holistic approach to employee health and well-being embraces the 'whole person', and takes into consideration all aspects that have a bearing on the state of well-being and the level of performance of the employee. It is further reiterated by the author that it is imperative for the workplace to be conducive to the inter-relationship and interdependence of employees' emotional, social, physical and financial health (Vermeulen 2016:233).

Employee health and wellness must be proactive, preventative and provide compulsory training and workshops on wellness topics that are prevalent in the workplace (Vermeulen 2016:233). If employees are empowered, they would be more informed to make correct choices towards a healthier and more productive lifestyle.

Gupta and Sharma (2016:59S), state that engagement brings good health and happiness to the employee, who, in turn, gives commitment and loyalty towards the job and organisation. Engagement may also result in positive health effects and positive feelings towards work and the organisation. Wellness and a healthy lifestyle have been observed in the employees who are engaged as compared to those who are non-engaged or actively disengaged (Gupta and Sharma 2016:59S).

Development of support for employees in the workplace can be traced to occupational alcoholism programmes in the United States of America and United Kingdom (Sandys 2015:1). Employers emphasised providing treatment to troubled employees (Winwood and Beer 2008:184). Originally, employee assistance programmes were designed to deal with alcohol and drug issues in the workplace.

The programmes have expanded to be cognisant of the modern-day personal and mental health problems. The expansion was extended to be inclusive of a wide range of clinical tools and organisational services which were aimed at enhancing productivity in the workplace, according to Cagney (1999:59). Hartwell, *et al.* (cited in Hutchison and Vickerstaff 2009:35) stated that the focus was first, on identifying those employees whose problems whether related to alcohol or other personal issues, were causing deterioration in their work performance and productivity, and second, on linking them with appropriate treatment and support services. Emener (cited in Hutchison and Vickerstaff 2009:35) stated that the need for preventative and treatment services for employees continues to expand beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The introduction of employee assistance programmes in the South African context was acknowledged through the workplace interventions in the mining sector. The South African paradigm of care and support emerged out of the need to care for employees who initially presented with substance abuse problems in the workplace, and later it was identified that the problems experienced by the employees extended to other medical, social and psychological conditions (Maiden 1992:5).

The findings of the research undertaken by the PSC on the evaluation of employee assistance programmes in the public service (PSC 2006:x), concedes that employee assistance programmes were introduced in the South African public service to “address a variety of problems such as but not limited to, substance abuse and dependency, adaptation problems in the public service workplace, mental and personal relationship problems, dealing with disease, and providing counselling”.

Prior to the public service dispensation after 1994, employees with substance abuse problems were faced with disciplinary action and part of the sanctions imposed on the employee was to be referred to a treatment facility for rehabilitation. Under these circumstances, employees displaying substance abuse were generally noticed by the supervisor when the problems pertaining to poor performance were identified. In most workplaces, employees with alcohol-related problems were identified by their management or supervisors through the association between alcohol abuse and absenteeism. However, the degree of management involvement was minimal (Trice and Schonbrunn 2009:9).

According to Hughes (2007:273), employers have introduced employee assistance programmes into the workplace for the following reasons: to provide additional support, duty to care, support employees through major change, help relieve stress, support for human resource, encourage retention and address sickness absence. Winwood and Beer (2008:190) explain that an employee assistance programme presents the employer with a cost-effective solution to many of the ‘people problems’ being experienced in the workplace. In recent times,

the world of work has seen numerous changes and been faced with increasing pressures to demonstrate its duty to provide care and support for employees who are experiencing difficulties. According to Schemm (cited in Dickman 2009:54), the primary goal has been to assist employees to regain adequate well-being and mental health. The concerns that have been raised by the employer include employee issues such as stress, anxiety and risky alcohol use. The multi-generational workforce, with growing age differences presents a new opportunity for employee assistance programme professionals to expand the services offered to meet the diverse needs of the employees.

The South Africa workforce also presents supervisors with a unique challenge, as the composition of the workforce is extremely diverse, and therefore the need arises for supervisors to accommodate the diversity in order to meet the transformational agenda.

Kelloway, Teed and Prosser, (2008:27) reiterate the important role a supervisor plays in the workplace, and also highlight the importance of supervisor training to avoid situations whereby supervisors can be construed as the contributory factor to the problem persisting or as a result of poor supervisory skills. Bamberger and Nacharach (cited in Kelloway *et al.* 2008:27) found that under circumstances where supervisors engage in an abusive style of supervision, it is highly probable that the employees are more likely to engage in substance use. Similarly, it was also noted that supervisors who treated employees unreasonably may contribute to health-related behaviours such as the lack of sleep. Greenberg (cited in Kelloway *et al.* 2008:27) reported that employees treated unjustly were prone to display insomnia and recommended that providing supervisors with training on interactional justice would substantially reduce these adverse consequences. While evidence suggests that poor leadership could contribute to unhealthy behaviours in employees, it could also be argued that positive leadership behaviours could significantly serve to encourage healthy lifestyle behaviours among employees. An example cited by Kelloway *et al.* (2008:28) is that leadership has also been associated with the success of health promotion programmes. Supervisors could be responsible for contributing to job stress; however, the element of not being aware of this, impacts the well-being of the employee and could go unnoticed. Although data in this area is limited, the data available does confirm the impact of the linkage of stress inflicted upon the employee by the supervisor, and the well-being of the employee. The abovementioned points indicate that poor supervisors can contribute towards unhealthy behaviour in employees in the workplace. Conversely, one can deduce that positive supervisory behaviour could promote healthy lifestyle behaviour.

It is submitted that supervisors could play an influential role in promoting healthy behaviours, as they can contribute towards the conditions that impede or encourage employees to engage in healthy or unhealthy behaviours. It has

therefore been advocated by the authors, that it is important for managers to be committed to the ultimate objective of the programme, namely, to assist employees whose performance is being impaired. In addition, supervisors can also serve as role models as they connect employees and the workplace. Kelloway *et al.* (2008:28-29) recommend that in order for the information pertaining to health-enhancing activities to be commonly accepted, this information could be mainstreamed into the normal duties of supervisors. Supervisors who personally engage in health programmes, not only improve their own well-being, but also earn the reputation of being a role model. Supervisors, in fact, serve as the expression of the workplace, and therefore their conduct can considerably and significantly influence, promote, support or detract an employee from health-seeking behaviour and positive performance outcomes (Kelloway *et al.* 2008:28-29).

Based on the documented research, the effectiveness of the supervisor interventions towards enhancing organisational well-being and creating a healthy workforce has been demonstrated (Kelloway *et al.* 2008:33). According to the authors, the prevalence of substance abuse in the workplace is high, and documentary evidence confirms the duty of the supervisor in the management of substance abuse. Supervisors should intervene as soon as substance-use problems have been identified and ensure that relevant policies are enforced. Similarly, one would expect supervisors to intervene in other instances, when it is noticed that factors inhibit employees' optimum performance.

It is recommended that employees need to be motivated, and also feel a sense of engagement in the workplace, as this could enhance their psychological well-being. Kelloway *et al.* (2008:33) infer employees benefit from measured degrees of challenge and from achieving goals that they think are important. The workplace is therefore a fertile place to provide the challenging and stimulating feelings of achievement. Robertson and Tinline (2008:42) state that, "the most successful psychological theory of motivation goal-setting provides a convincing support to this view". People have committed to goals if they are set through a process of consultation such as a participative goal-setting process.

## **CONCEPTUALISING EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMMES**

The Employee Assistance Professional Association of South Africa (EAPA-SA) defined employee assistance as "the work organisation's resource, based on core technologies or functions to enhance employees and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues" (EAPA-SA in Badul 2018). The core technology of the EAPA-SA that pertains to this article is training and development of, and assistance to workplace

stakeholders (Badul 2018). These include supervisors, and unions who are aiming to effectively manage the employee who may be experiencing behavioural, emotional and wellness issues, enhancing the work environment; and improving employee job performance.

An employee assistance programme is “a worksite-focused management tool to assist initially in the identification of employees’ concerns, and then develop interventions to assist in the resolution of these concerns” (Winwood and Beer 2008:184). The employee concerns were categorised by Winwood and Beer into personal and work matters. The former refers to health, relationship, family, financial, legal, anxiety, alcohol, drugs and other related issues. The latter refers to work demands, fairness at work, work relationships, personal and interpersonal skills and other related aspects. Notably, it is evident that employee health and wellness programmes are introduced in the workplace as an employer-initiated management tool to retain employees at their optimal level of performance, and that both the needs of the workplace and the employee require attention.

Workplace programmes have become more popular, and are viewed as initiatives to keep employees productive. Employee assistance programmes have been designed to provide counselling, advice, information and various other forms of assistance to employees (Cagney 1999:60). Winwood and Beer (2008:185) advocate for the uniqueness of an employee assistance programme, as it benefits both the individual employee and the workplace by addressing team and individual performance and well-being in the workplace. The success of an employee assistance programme should be defined by programme achievements based on outcomes instead of what the programme comprises of. It is stated that the programme is a strategic intervention and any workplace benefits should be quantifiable by outcomes derived. It represents a cost-effective solution to a number of ‘employee problems’ supervisors face currently. In recent times, the world of work has seen numerous changes and faces increasing pressures to demonstrate its duty to care, and it is suggested that this could be achieved through the provision of care and support to employees who are experiencing difficulties (Grobler cited in Bophela and Govender 2015:506). Grobler (cited in Bophela and Govender 2015:506), asserts that employee assistance programmes are ideal for developmental employers to identify primary reasons for a decline in employee performance. Bophela and Govender (2015:506), further expanded that, “employee assistance programmes are the key instrument for addressing employee well-being and for accomplishing the key organisational milestones of performance, productivity and end results as an important emphasis in this discussion and study”.

The traditional employee assistance programmes were primarily focused on alcoholism (Dickman 2009:53; Bophela and Govender 2015:506). As the workplace becomes more aware of the needs of employees, the design of the

traditional employee assistance programme developed to the extent that it met the needs of the employees in an attempt to circumvent the array of problems and challenges currently experienced in the workplace. This phenomenon is known as the 'broad-brush' approach (Bophela and Govender 2015:506). The advantage of the 'broad-brush' approach is that a larger number of employees can obtain assistance for a greater variety of problems, thus resulting in a positive effect on workplace productivity and the well-being of employees (Bophela and Govender 2015:506).

According to the International Employee Assistance Professional Association (EAPA) (cited in Cagney 1999:60), EH&WPs are defined as "work-site-based programmes designed to assist (a) work organisations in addressing productivity issues and (b) 'employee clients' in identifying and resolving personal concerns (including but not limited to health, marital, family, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal issues) that may affect performance".

EH&WPs continue to provide the services that they traditionally offered, in addition to the new diverse services that are required due to the array of both personal and workplace needs (Bophela and Govender 2015:506). In addition, employers are recognising the benefits of EH&WP interventions, as there are requests for the traditional employee assistance programme to offer more services and benefits to employees. Prevention interventions have been dominating the workplace that has resulted in the employer exploring options and incentives to encourage employees to live healthier lives, as well as to address the behavioural health problems that are observed in the workplace. Sandys (2015:2) expresses that the current approach of EH&WP is more holistic than the previous approach, to include among others, emotional, physical, familial, and organisational impact on an employee's performance. Currently the EH&WP practitioner has become a proponent for prevention, offering a plethora of referral options and workshops targeting employees experiencing such stressors (Sandys 2015:2).

## **Benefits of health and wellness workplace programmes**

Recent research on the effectiveness of EH&WP in the workplace has served to convince employers to implement such measures as per the reasons tabulated in Table 1 (Vermeulen 2016:236-237).

Vermeulen (2016:237) recommends that in order for the programme to be successful, it must be well coordinated and organised to generate the results of efficiency and effectiveness in the public service. This should include, but is not limited to programmes, policies, benefits and environmental provisions aimed at addressing the well-being of employees. This comprehensive and integrated approach has proven to be more effective than programmes operating in silos. The Employee Health and Strategic Framework for the Public Service follows an

**Table 1: Impact of workplace programmes**

Benefits	Impact
Decline in healthcare expenses, costs related from injury on duty.	Reduced incidents
Enhance health and resilience of employees	Healthier employees, decline in absenteeism and increase in productivity.
Employees remain in the organisations for longer periods of employment	Retain institutional knowledge
Healthier employees are likely to have higher morale, reduced stress levels and enhanced liveliness and energy	More productive employees
Employee assistance programmes can assist employees in maintaining 'desired levels of work engagement and productivity as they age'	Engaged employees
Employee assistance programmes may increase an institution's ability to attract employees	Workplace becoming an employer of choice

Source: (Adapted from Vermeulen 2016:236–237)

“integrated approach to EH&WPs and acknowledges the importance of integrating employee wellness, safety, institutional wellness, environmental sustainability and quality management to ensure efficiency and enhance service delivery results” (Vermeulen 2016:237). The collective response in the public service is to work towards instilling a culture of a healthy and productive workforce. This integrated and comprehensive approach proposed by the South African government would yield results if implemented correctly. According to Vermeulen (2016:237), one of the major criticisms of programme failure, is the inability to implement the policies and also the lack of systems for effective monitoring and evaluation.

According to Noe *et al.* (2008:455), an employee assistance programme is a referral service for supervisors or employees to obtain professional treatment for various problems. Supervisors should be trained to use the referral service for employees whom they suspect of having health-related problems, which impacts their levels of performance or productivity. Tiner (2006:26) advocates that the programme: “Assists in the identification of the troubled employee, encourages the employee to seek and accept help, assesses the employee’s problem and determines a course of action, counsels the employee and/or family member(s), offers early intervention to address potential serious problems, refers the employee to proper assistance and follow-up care as appropriate, provides a second opinion regarding current assistance that employees may be receiving through another provider, and consults with managers and supervisors”.

Similarly, employees are also trained to use the system to make self-referrals when necessary. The programmes have become intertwined with wellness programmes to be proactive and pre-emptive in the workplace, with the aim of preventing health-related problems from manifesting. The benefits of these programmes are generally evaluated by measuring the positive outcomes on employees such as return-to-work rates. Bophela and Govender (2015:507) state that the goal is to “achieve engaged employees, high performance, organisational productivity and job satisfaction”.

## **ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR IN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME REFERRALS**

The following section describes the employee assistance programme referrals and the role of the supervisor in this regard.

### **Types of referrals**

An employee can access the services of the programme either via self-referral, informal referral or a formal referral. For the purpose of this article, the primary focus is on the formal referral. A formal referral is one wherein the supervisor refers an employee to the EH&WP, as a result of factors affecting the employee’s rate of performance. The informal referral may be made under circumstances when the supervisor becomes aware of the employee experiencing some form of personal problems, which have not yet affected the employee’s performance (Tiner 2006:26). A self-referral is generally made by the employee who has identified the need for assistance due to some form of problem being experienced.

According to Van Wyk (2015:30), the formal referral of an employee(s) to the EH&WP allows the supervisor to fulfil their responsibilities, and in addition affords the employee(s) the opportunity to get the assistance needed. It has been stated by the author that this aspect of the EH&WP is one of the most effective tools supervisors have available to assist employees who may be experiencing personal issues, performance or disciplinary issues, and other issues in the workplace (Van Wyk 2015:30). The referral may be made by the supervisor as a result of an employee presenting deterioration of work productivity over a period of time. Some of the noted characteristics an employee could present is associative stress-related symptoms, signs of depression, suspicion of having substance abuse problems and/or a decline in work behaviour, among others.

According to Van Wyk (2015:30), in a study undertaken in the Consumer Goods Sector, the formal referral average was 2.4% of all cases presented (313 formal referrals). The formal referral rate was primarily due to supervisors proactively

identifying employees who were presenting a decline in work performance, and this resulted in reduced risks. This evidence illustrates that the employees obtained assistance timeously, and were therefore able to address their problems (Van Wyk 2015:30). According to Van Wyk (2015:30), data evidenced from the highly pressurised industry revealed that the supervisor had been utilising the services of the workplace employee assistance programme and that there was a constant uptake over the review period. Managers can receive guidance on how to assist their troubled employees and those employees who are not performing in the workplace as expected, as this is in line with the employee assistance programme's role to support the manager in their duty to care (Winwood and Beer 2008:190). The support rendered to managers in the workplace must also take into consideration the role of the manager in the workplace and the impact of the non-performance on service delivery. It was further emphasised by the authors that the formal and management referrals must be well structured, detailed and articulated to all stakeholders. The reasonable expectation of the supervisor is that there would be some change in the employees' performance after an intervention by the employee assistance programme.

The PSC revealed that the level of leadership and management commitment of the employee assistance programme is one of the main reasons that impact the effectiveness of these programmes (PSC 2006:xii). The PSC further revealed that the commitment and support of leadership and management varied significantly (PSC 2006:xii). The recommendations from the PSC research listed below are aimed at strengthening employee assistance programmes within the public service through:

- Management support and participation in the programme;
- Establishing means to strengthen management commitment;
- Provision of adequate financial and human resources;
- Strengthen communication of programme services;
- Clearly defined procedures on confidentiality;
- Strengthen employee assistance programmes through performance agreements; and
- Establish a baseline and services and provide regular communication of services offered (PSC 2006:xii).

It is therefore envisaged that if the leadership and management note the abovementioned recommendations, the workplace programmes can be strengthened and could lead to greater efficiency, effectiveness and utilisation of the programme.

The formal referral trends constantly increased which suggested that supervisors were in a position to identify personal and/or work-related concerns. If the supervisors strengthened the essential connection with their employees, more troubled employees would be formally referred to the programme. The increase in referrals by managers and team leaders demonstrated management's commitment

in identifying employee performance, and also their ability in identifying employees who may require assistance. This proactive approach aided in reducing the negative impact on work performance (Van Wyk 2015:30).

## **Employee assistance programme core technology**

The core technology of an employee assistance programme outlines the fundamental elements that must be included in the programme. The core technology that is pertinent for this study is as follows: the provision of consultation, training and assistance to supervisors, rendering confidential, timeous identification and assessment services to employees and family members, utilisation of the process of constructive confrontation, motivation and provision of short-term interventions, the referral of the employee for an assessment, treatment and assistance, and programme monitoring and evaluation (Winwood and Beer 2008:185).

The abovementioned core technology of the traditional employee assistance programmes (Cagney 1999:60) is still applicable in the modern EH&WPs. The South African Chapter of the EAPA re-affirms the importance of the 'core technology' (as cited in Cagney 1999:60). The fundamental aspects that are expanded on in the programmes offered today are the types of services being offered to address the multitude of workplace problems being experienced. Despite the increase in workplace programmes, Cagney (1999:60), raised the concern that the lack of supervisory training fundamentally affects the quality of the programme being rendered.

Bophela and Govender (2015:513) explain that these workplace programmes improve the quality of work life, and that it serves as an investment for a workplace that is committed towards service delivery and meeting the needs of employees. EH&WPs benefit the employer, as the employer does not have to wait for the employee to acknowledge that a problem exists, and the supervisor can proactively refer the employee for assistance. Cagney (1999:62) emphasises that effective management always involves understanding and responding to employees as individuals, as some of these behavioural problems can become a management issue. Emotional problems at work cause a dilemma for most supervisors. There is a tendency among supervisors to want to leave charged emotional issues alone, but on the other hand, there is also the natural desire to offer assistance.

Employee problems need to be recognised before they can be addressed, however, recognition can be difficult. It is noted that workplace colleagues and management are generally the first to notice changes in an employee on inception of problem situations as they are not involved in the personal life of the employee. These early signs often go unnoticed by family members. Cagney (1999:62) contends that problems at work appear in subtle ways such as decreased productivity, ambition, quality or interpersonal effectiveness. Cagney (1999:62) adds,

that the EH&WP intervention consists of documenting examples of performance problems to overcome denial, precipitate concern or a crisis, and offer assistance. The EH&WP intervention has evolved to encompass normal supervisory intervention and to combine it with professional assistance through the following six steps, according to Cagney (1999:63):

- Supervisor observation of a performance problem.
- Documentation of observed performance deficit.
- Review of the performance with the employee.
- Identification of specific problem areas and delineation of improvements sought.
- Referring to the EH&WP for assistance in resolving personal problems that may be contributing to poor performance.
- Establish follow-up steps and the consequences if performance does not improve.

In cases of referral to the EH&WP, it is deemed crucial for a supervisor to follow the above-mentioned steps when approaching an employee who has been presenting with job performance problems.

## **Constructive confrontation towards enhancing employee performance**

Beyer and Trice (cited in Trice and Schonbrunn 2009:25) stated that constructive confrontation originated in the early 1950s when supervisors were encouraged to directly confront employees who presented with poor performance, as a result of drinking problems. Cagney (1999:62-63), states that constructive confrontation is one of the specialised services offered by employee assistance programmes to supervisors in the form of training and consultation to determine the appropriateness of an employee assistance programme referral and to guide the supervisor through the intervention and referral. It is through the supervisor that the programme can be offered as a tool that allows supervisors to combine their concern for the employee with an offer of assistance and prior to progressive disciplinary action. It can therefore be advocated that the provision of the EH&WP in the workplace presents a supervisor with an alternative for dealing with employees' performance and productivity problems, instead of the pursuit of disciplinary action. The employee does not have to possess insights into the problem, admit to the problem, or have motivation to seek help (Cagney 1999:62). The supervisor, through the training programme is provided with a means to intervene with techniques at the inception of dysfunction and advice on referring the employee to a professional for assessment and assistance (Cagney 1999:62). Notably, through the development of programmes offered under the traditional employee assistance programme, there has been a limited

focus on the development of supervisor skills to conduct constructive confrontation. As a result, a heightened focus on workplace health screening and test for lifestyle illnesses and prevention programmes prevails.

The availability of the EH&WP relieves supervisors and union representatives of the need to counsel employees and to provide assistance that is most often outside their scope of expertise. Supervisors are therefore encouraged to reinforce that the referral to the EH&WP is beneficial in obtaining assistance in order to improve performance. Supervisors are coached to state the facts of the performance problem, and it is thereafter the role of the EH&WP to focus on the causes with the employee. The supervisory EH&WP intervention also provides the employer with a way to fulfil its social role and helps to assure due process for the employee. The use of the EH&WP provides an alternate workplace intervention to retain valuable trained employees and encourages the return to an effective performance level of employees instead of following disciplinary procedures. According to Cagney (1999:63) “employee assistance programmes can be designed to deliver services with an aim towards productivity restoration, as well as productivity enhancement”.

Since the inception of the workplace programmes for substance abuse to date, the supervisor is the key to ensuring the success of the programme as they play a vital role in identification, confrontation and intervention (Tiner 2006:26).

Cagney (2006:18) states that the supervisor or manager should be referring employees to the employee assistance programme, as a result of observed and documented patterns of deteriorating work performance. Some of the examples cited include, evidence by attendance, relationships on the job, reliability and quality of work.

## **Counselling**

Stoer-Scaggs (1999:42) reaffirms that supervisors play a strategic role in encouraging employees to pursue assistance from the employees’ assistance programme. According to Hughes (2008:275), a supervisor is a key role player in an organisation as they are an integral component in the operations of the workplace, culture and management of employees. It is submitted that supervisors play a pivotal role concerning counselling in the workplace. However, according to Hughes (2008:275), supervisors appear to be the least users of the counselling services, and supervisors have been identified as the cause of employee stress.

## **Supervisory training**

Dickman (2009:48) emphasises the need for the active support and buy-in from senior levels of management in the workplace in order to promote the successful

implementation and utilisation of the programme. It follows then, that the presence of top management support would ensure the following would happen:

- Open and regular communication by employees on employee assistance programmes to all levels of management;
- Adequate financial resources allocated to employee assistance for programmes and services, inclusive of supervisor training; and
- Managers to serve as ambassadors for the programme and visibly demonstrate commitment and programme utilisation.

According to Stoer-Scaggs (1999:42), it stands to reason then, that training on accessing the employee assistance programme serves as an excellent method to market the services and benefits of the programme. Supervisors need to have the appropriate skills to evaluate a difficult situation and intervene in the most supportive and constructive manner possible in order to make a successful employee referral. The importance of supervisor training has been acknowledged, thus resulting in most EH&WPs implementing such initiatives. Heyman (cited in Stoer-Scaggs 1999:42) states that “the goal of employee assistance supervisory training programmes has been to enhance supervisory skills to identify employees experiencing personal difficulties through declining job performance, and to facilitate intervention, and referral through the supportive confrontation strategy”. In addition, Winwood and Beer (2008:190) reiterate the importance of supervisory training, and advocate for the inclusion of a module or training on EH&WPs to be included in the induction training of all newly appointed supervisors. The session should be conducted by someone well-versed on the EH&WP, and the content should include the encouragement of a management referral programme. According to Cagney (2006:18), the relevance of supervisor training is stressed: “management consultation and training related to supervisor referrals are very important aspects of what employee assistance programmes have to offer in the workplace”.

Tiner (2006:25) states that it had been challenging to provide regular training as supervisors had not been able to accommodate the attendance at the training session due to their busy work schedules. Another reason cited, has been that employees were not willing to attend long training sessions (Tiner 2006:25). Taute and Manzini (2009:3) stated that despite the fact that supervisors had been exposed to training on early detection of problems being encountered by employees and the employee assistance programme referral processes, the referral rates were low. Despite the low uptake, training can be offered on an ongoing basis as regular marketing of the programme and capacity building of supervisors would help strengthen supervisors as a referral base (Taute and Manzini 2009:3). Supervisors who have insights into the functioning of the EH&WP and who believe in the benefits of the programme, would access the services of the EH&WP and refer appropriately (Taute and Manzini 2009:3). In order to address this, it

would be beneficial to explore innovative ways to increase attendance at training sessions and ensure implementation of the policies and programmes.

The evaluation of the training intervention in the study presented by Stoer-Scaggs, (1999:44) revealed the following: “increased employee assistance programme referrals including self-referrals and supervisor referrals, increased requested for information from units that have received the training; increased requested for training of the programme’s ability to work with the problems; and informal verbal feedback across the campus about the value of or improvement needed in the provision of training”. Another intervention cited by Tiner (2006:25-26) affirms that the introduction of certificate programmes for training resulted in increased attendance at the training sessions, frequent reference to the training material, increase in supervisor consultations with the employee assistance programme services for advice and increased utilisation rates.

Lefakane (2017:78) advocates the need for ongoing education and training and suggests that the millennial workforce is in constant need to enhance knowledge and skills. It is therefore recommended that the workplace must provide a learning culture that can adapt to the needs of a developmental workplace. Additional to the benefit to employees, the author suggests that providing a learning culture is essential for organisations to remain relevant in today’s constantly changing business landscape. Lefakane (2017:78), suggests “The leadership of an organisation plays a paramount role in the successful implementation of an employee assistance programme, which is why employee assistance practitioners need to conduct training and refresher courses on how to identify ‘troubled employees’... When leadership has undergone such training, then they would be able to see their value in ensuring that their human capital is well”.

Dickman and Emener (2009:63), state that the benefits of the programme to management is increased cooperation, enhanced morale, more troubled workers are helped, enhanced productivity and increased alternatives and options to problem resolution. Referral to the EAPA results in management gaining rather than losing. The benefits to the EH&WP are the importance of collaboration of management and unions which serves to strengthen the relationships with employee assistance programmes. The following points are the most noted benefits as the increased probability of successfully addressing the problem being experienced: increased referrals, joint training session (*enhanced support and collaboration*) and early interventions (*early referrals*).

Dickman (2009:51) stated that training should be offered to the supervisors, and that this training should be offered frequently during the inception of the programme in the workplace and thereafter annually. It is suggested that the content of the training should cover alcohol awareness, family and other problems, drug abuse, and when to get involved. The author proposes that the training should also include practical elements, which include focus areas such as the referral

process, after-hours service, emergency 24-hour services, confidentiality of the programme, costs to the employer and what feedback to expect as a supervisor. The author emphasises that the training groups should be comprised of supervisors, representatives from organised labour and top management. This would ensure all stakeholders in the workplace are capacitated with the same information in order to make strategically informed decisions.

Supervisors should be cautioned to refrain from diagnosing the nature of the employee's problem but rather to note signs of concern, which could include absenteeism, erratic behaviour, tardiness, irritability and a decline in productivity and performance. Supervisors must be advised not to encroach on the privacy of the employee. However, the supervisor needs to know that poor and erratic productivity can often be a sign of an underlying problem. Supervisors must therefore be capacitated to more keenly observe work performance only and base referrals to the EH&WP on actual observations. According to Dickman (2009:54), it is "evident that supervisor referrals have contributed largely to rehabilitation of employees than other modes of assistance". Dickman (2009:54) advocates that supervisors can be used as an effective mechanism to market the EH&WP, and thereby create awareness of the services, benefits and accessing of the services.

Stoer-Scaggs (1999:43), recommends that supervisors follow the guidelines listed below when referring employees:

- Monitor job performance and attendance;
- Document issues related to work performance;
- Informally discuss with the employee a need for improvement;
- Provide a time frame in which improvements must be demonstrated;
- Refer the employee; and
- Discuss the care with department manager.

The application of the fundamental concepts listed in the preceding discussion in the content of supervisor training would serve to strengthen the capacity of the supervisor in the management of employee performance. In addition, this would also demonstrate the commitment of the employer towards building a conducive working environment to meet the needs and challenges experienced by employees.

## **CONCLUSION**

South Africa as a developing country needs public service employees who are committed to serving the citizens, and for supervisors to be accountable in ensuring employees deliver on the predetermined standards, rate of productivity and performance outcomes.

The article focused on an evaluation of existing scholarly literature in the field of employee health and wellness. It discussed the importance of performance management as a key responsibility for supervisors to address areas that affect employee productivity which would lead towards enhancing service delivery. Also provided was a synopsis of the linkage between an EH&WP and the role of the supervisor. There is constant pressure in the public service to be adaptive and responsive to the needs and challenges of both the internal and external environments. Supervisors need to be proactive in the management of performance and promote the services of the workplace programmes. It is important to retain employees in the workplace as they ought to be viewed as valued assets, and EH&WPs should be considered as a core workplace element that can serve to address the problems being experienced by employees.

However, there is criticism that the EH&WPs are generally reactionary. In order for this notion to be dispelled, it could be suggested that the programme should encourage supervisors to take a proactive stance in the management of poor performance. The level of employees' performance before and after the employee assistance programme intervention must be assessed in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the intervention on the performance level of the employees.

The aim would therefore be to promote efficient service delivery and a renewed focus on the management of human resources in the public service. This renewed focus highlights the role of the supervisor regarding accountability and the management of the well-being of employees towards attaining the National Developmental Goals, 2030 of a healthier and more productive workplace. It is therefore imperative for supervisors in the public service to explore avenues to retain employees who are economically active and productive.

## NOTE

- \* This article is based on Sanoosha Badul's doctoral thesis conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, titled: Badul, S. 2018. *Employee Wellness: A strategy for enhancing performance in the KwaZulu-Natal Administration* under the supervision of Professor Mogie Subban.

## REFERENCES

- Attridge, M. 2015. Focusing of Integration of EAP with other Services. *The Journal of Employee Assistance*. 45(1):6-7.
- Badul, S. 2018. *Employee Wellness: A strategy for enhancing performance in the KwaZulu-Natal Administration*. Unpublished Doctor of Administration Thesis. Durban: University of Kwazulu-Natal.

- Bophela, R. and Govender, P. 2015. Employee assistance programs (EAPs): Tools for quality of work life. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*. 13(2):506-514.
- Cagney, T. 1999. Models of Service Delivery. In Oher, J.M. (Ed.). 1999. *The Employee Assistance Handbook*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Consad, 1999. EAP Handbook. Consad Research Corporation. Available at: <http://consad.com/cap.htm>. (Accessed on 18 January 2022).
- De Winnaar, E. and Taute, F. 2008. The role of supervisors in the South African Police Service in the successful utilisation of the Employee Assistance Programme. *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*. 44(3):263-272. Available at: <http://socialworkjournals.ac.za/dx.doi.org/10.15270/44-3-240>. (Accessed on 18 April 2015).
- Dickman, F. 2009. Ingredients of an Effective Employee Assistance Program. In Richard, M.A., Emener, W.G. and Hutchinson, W.S. (Eds.). 2009. *Employee Assistance Programs: Wellness/Enhancement Programming*. Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.
- Dickman, F. and Emener, W.G. 2009. Union Involvement: A key Ingredient to successful Employee Assistance Programs. In Richard, M.A., Emener, W.G. and Hutchinson, W.S. (Eds.). 2009. *Employee Assistance Programs: Wellness/Enhancement Programming*. Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.
- Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). 2007. Employee Performance Management and Development System. Available at: [www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/ep/2007/EPMDS.pdf](http://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/ep/2007/EPMDS.pdf). (Accessed on 25 July 2014).
- Gupta, M. and Sharma, V. 2016. Exploring Employee Engagement – A Way to Better Business Performance. *Global Business Review*. 17(3S):45S-63S.
- Hughes, R. 2008. Whose agenda does workplace counselling serve? In Kinder, A, Hughes, R. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds.). 2008. *Employee Well-Being Support: A Workplace Resource*. London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Hutchison, J.R. and Vickerstaff, S. 2009. The Need and Rationale for Employee Assistance Programs. In Richard, M.A., Emener, W.G. and Hutchinson, W.S. (Eds.). 2009. *Employee Assistance Programs: Wellness/Enhancement Programming*. Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.
- Kelloway, E.K., Teed, M. and Prosser, M. 2008. Leading to a Health Workplace. In Kinder, A., Hughes, R. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds.) 2008. *Employee Well-Being Support: A Workplace Resource*. London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Lefakane, A. 2017. Human Capital and how EAP relates. *Leadership*. 378:75-78.
- Maiden, R.P. 1992. First World EAPs Serving Third World Clients: A U.S. Perspective of the South African Experience. In Maiden, R.P. (Ed.) 1992. *Employee Assistance Programs in South Africa*. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc.
- Manyaka, R.K. and Sebola, M.P. 2012. Impact of Performance Management of Service Delivery in the South African Public Service. *Journal of Public Administration*. 47(1.1):299-310.
- Mello, D.M. 2014a. Contextualising Human Capital Management. Performance Management. In Mello, D.M. 2014. *Managing Human Capital in the Public Sector*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mello, D.M. 2014b. Performance Management. In Mello, D.M. 2014. *Managing Human Capital in the Public Sector*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

- Noe, R.A., Hollenbeck, J.R., Gerhart, B. and Wright, P. 2008. *Human Resource Management: Gaining a Competitive Advantage*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Oher, J.M. (Ed.). 1999. *The Employee Assistance Handbook*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Public Service Commission (PSC). 2006. *Evaluation of Employee Assistance Programmes in the Public Service*. Pretoria: Public Service Commission.
- Robertson, I. and Tinline, G. 2008. Understanding and Improving Psychological Well-being for Individual and Organisational Effectiveness. In Kinder, A., Hughes, R. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds.). 2008. *Employee Well-Being Support: A Workplace Resource*. England: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Sandys, J. 2015. The Evolution of EAPs in the United States: A 20 year retrospective from 26 EAP Vendors. *Employee Assistance Society of North America (EASNA)*. 5(1):1-16.
- Sieberhagen, C., Rothmann, S. and Pienaar, J. 2009. Employee Health and Wellness in South Africa: The Role of Legislation and Management Standards. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikeuldbrondestuur*. 7(1):1-9.
- Stoer-Scaggs, L. 1999. Employee Assistance Programs in Higher Education: The Ohio State University Faculty and Staff Assistance Program. In Oher, J.M. (Ed.) 1999. *The Employee Assistance Handbook*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Taute, F. and Manzini, K. 2009. Factors that hinder the utilisation of the Employee Assistance Programme in the Department of Labour. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*. 45(4):1-9.
- Tiner, P. 2006. Normalising Supervisor EAP training. *Journal of Employee Assistance*. 36(3):25-26.
- Trice, H.M. and Schonbrunn, M. 2009. A History of Job-Base Alcoholism Programs 1900-1955. In Richard, M.A., Emener, W.G. and Hutchinson, W.S. (Eds.). 2009. *Employee Assistance Programs: wellness/ Enhancement Programming*. Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.
- Van der Walldt, G. 2016. *Managing for Excellence in the Public Sector*. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Van der Westhuizen, E. (Ed.) 2016. *Human Resource Management in Government: A South African perspective on theories, politics and processes*. Lansdowne: Juta and Co. Ltd.
- Van Dijk, H.G. 2007. Measuring deliverables and employee ownership through organisational performance management. *African Journal of Public Affairs*. 1(1):49-54.
- Van Eeden, M. and Jordaan, B. 2008. A cure for sick-leave abuse. *USB Leaders' Lab*. August 2008:10-15.
- Van Wyk, A. 2015. Employee Wellness: An analysis of Employee Wellness – Consumer Goods Sector. *Working Well*. 1:26-31. Cape Town: Picasso Headline Publishers.
- Vermeulen, L. 2016. Establishing and maintaining wellness. In Van der Westhuizen, J. (Ed.) *Human Resource Management in Government: A South African perspective on theories, politics and processes*. Lansdowne: Juta and Co. Ltd.
- Viedge, C. 2011. Performance Management. In Werner, A. 2011. *Organisational Behaviour: A contemporary South African perspective*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Waide, P. 2015. Absenteeism in the workplace: A review of the Public Sector. *Working Well*. 1:26-31. Cape Town: Picasso Headline Publishers.
- Winwood, M.A. and Beer, S. 2008. What makes a Good Employee Assistance Programme? In Kinder, A., Hughes, R. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds.). 2008. *Employee Well-Being Support: A Workplace Resource*. London: John Wile & Sons, Ltd.

## **AUTHORS' CONTACT DETAILS**

### **Dr Sanoosha Badul**

School of Management, IT & Governance  
College of Law & Management Studies  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X54001  
Durban  
4000  
Cell: 082 803 1558  
Email: [sbadul@gmail.com](mailto:sbadul@gmail.com)

### **Prof Mogie Subban**

School of Management, IT & Governance  
College of Law & Management Studies  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X54001  
Durban  
4000  
Cell: 082 373 4303  
Email: [subbanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:subbanm@ukzn.ac.za)

# Editorial policy

1. *Administratio Publica* is a quarterly journal. The aim of the journal is to promote academic scholarship in Public Administration and Management and related fields.
2. *Administratio Publica* publishes original theoretical and empirical manuscripts in Public Administration, Public Management and Public governance related fields (teaching, research and learning). This includes articles, debates, research notes, review articles and book reviews in English.
3. All articles, research notes and review articles are submitted to the Chief Editor. The Chief Editor decides whether a proposed article falls within the ambit of scholarly material and research that supports the objectives of ASSADPAM. The article is then submitted to subject specialist referees for evaluation. Normally, these referees are members of ASSADPAM. In the case of any one of two reviewers rejecting the article completely, the editorial committee considers the reports, and may appoint another independent reviewer.
4. Anonymity is maintained by omitting the name of the author and all identifying footnotes or other references in the text. Referee reports may be made available to authors but the names of the referees will be withheld. The particulars of referees will only be made known to the Department of Higher Education, for purposes of auditing the requirements as set out by the Policy for the Measurement of Research Output of Public Higher Education Institutions (Higher Education Act 101 of 1997).
5. Copyright of published material vests with ASSADPAM (Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management). Authors, however, bear full responsibility for the contents of their own contributions. Opinions expressed in the journal are those of the authors, and are not necessarily subscribed to by the Chief Editor, the editorial committee, the Editorial Board, or the Executive Committee of ASSADPAM.
6. Accepted papers will, as far as possible, be published in the sequence in which they were received. A page fee will be charged for all articles approved for publication. This fee is subject to annual adjustment.

## Presentation of manuscripts before publication

### Formatting requirements

- Typewritten on one side of the paper and language edited. A4 format; one and a half spacing with generous margins; statistics are to be presented in table format, and graphic images in boxed diagrams.
- Contributions should preferably be between 6 000–8 000 words. Contributions less than 4 500 words will be considered as viewpoints and not as full articles for subsidy purposes. Each article must be preceded by an abstract (maximum length 200 words). Abstracts should represent the contents of the article concisely.
- Title of Paper (Centre, Bold, 12pt Times New Roman/Arial, Caps), Name and Surname, Affiliation (name of university/institution), (Align left, Bold 12pt Times New Roman).
- Biographical details: Please provide full details of title, surname and initials, and first name, address, fax, cell, work number etc at the end of the references/bibliography and not under the title on the first page.
- **ABSTRACT:** (12pt Times New Roman, Title in Caps), 250 words. Do not format, shade or place in textbox or table.
- **HEADINGS:** Do not number headings in text
  - **HEADING 1** (Bold, 12pt Times New Roman, Caps)

- **Sub-heading 1.1** (Bold, 12pt Times New Roman)
- *Sub-heading 1.1.1* (Bold, Italic, 12pt Times New Roman)
- Sub-heading 1.1.1.1 (Underline, 12pt Times New Roman)
- When listing, please use bullet form.
- Please do not format or use any special style in your article.
- All tables and figures should be numbered and given a heading e.g. Table 1: Population Growth before the table is inserted. The source must be provided at the bottom of the table.
- Remember to give credit to the original authors from which the table or figure was adapted.
- References in the text: Thornhill (2012:128), (Nhlabathi and Mubangizi 2012:55), (Cloete et al. 2008:4). First time three or more authors are used, type out all the authors, thereafter et al.
- **REFERENCES:** Bibliographical particulars arranged alphabetically, no numbering and according to the simple Harvard method e.g.:
  - **Book:** Gildenhuis, J.S.H. and Knipe, A. 2000. *The Organisation of Government: An Introduction*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
  - **Article:** Auriacombe, C.J. 2007. Deconstructing the public interest for application in South Africa. *Administratio Publica*. November 2007. 15(1):28–52.
  - **Official publication:** Public Service Commission. 2008c. Report on the Audit of Reporting Requirements and Departmental Monitoring and Evaluation Systems within National and Provincial Government. Public Service Commission. Pretoria: Government Printers.
  - **Internet reference:** Patton, M.Q. 1999. Utilization-Focused Evaluation in Africa, training lectures presented at the African Evaluation Association, 13–17 Sept. 1999. Nairobi. Kenya. Available at: [www.afrea.org/documents/document.cfm?docID=64](http://www.afrea.org/documents/document.cfm?docID=64) (Accessed on 25 March 2009).
  - **Title of acts in italics** e.g. *Public Service Act, 1994* (Act 103 of 1994) or Public Service Act 103 of 1994. Be consistent with the referencing.
  - **Full reference:** South Africa (Republic). 2000. *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000* (Act 32 of 2000). Pretoria: Government Printers.
- **AUTHOR'S CONTACT DETAILS:** The title, the name(s), e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers and postal address(es) of the author(s), to whom correspondence should be addressed.
- A separate application first page(s) should contain the proof of language editing by a qualified language practitioner, title, the name(s) e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers and postal address(es) of the author(s) names and to whom correspondence and the invoice for page fees should be addressed. The article is to commence on a new page in a separate file. Language editing fees will be added to the page fees if the language editing is not satisfactory.
- Two kinds of references are distinguished; notes and bibliographical particulars. Notes should be numbered consecutively and be inserted at the end of the text and not in footnotes.
- A statement should accompany all manuscripts (at the end of the document when submitting the paper) in which the author(s) state(s) that the contribution has not been published, is not being published, or is not being considered for publication elsewhere, and will not be submitted for publication elsewhere unless rejected by the Editorial Committee. The author(s) need to declare that they are willing to pay the page fee, if the article is approved for publication that the article has not been submitted to any conference proceedings, is not plagiarised and is checked on Turnitin before submission.
- Confirmation of provisional acceptance of articles will be forwarded to authors on receipt by the Chief Editor. Authors will be given notice of the outcome of peer reviews within twelve weeks of submission. It is important to know that an article submitted in the second half of the year may only be published in planned editions of the following year.



# Administratio Publica

ISSN 1015-4833