

**The role of ethical principles in promoting efficient service  
delivery at the Department of Education in the Capricorn  
District of Limpopo Province**

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**A Research Report submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Public  
Administration in the Faculty of Management and Law,  
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Limpopo**

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**Date: 04 July 2011**

## Table of contents

|  | Page  |
|--|-------|
| 1. Chapter 1 Introduction                      |       |
| 1.1 Introduction                               | 1     |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem                   | 2     |
| 1.3 The research questions                     | 2-3   |
| 1.4 Significance of the study                  | 3     |
| 1.5 The aim of the study                       | 3     |
| 1.6 Objectives of the study                    | 4     |
| 1.7 Definition of concepts                     |       |
| 1.7.1 Ethics                                   | 4-5   |
| 1.7.2 Service delivery                         | 5     |
| 1.7.3 Efficient                                | 5-6   |
| 1.8 Ethical considerations                     | 6     |
| 1.9 Chapter outline                            | 6-7   |
| 2. Chapter 2 Literature review                 |       |
| 2.1 Introduction                               | 8-9   |
| 2.2 Code of ethics in the public sector        | 9-22  |
| 2.3 Unethical conduct in the public sector     | 22-25 |
| 2.4 Causes of unethical conduct                |       |
| 2.4.1 Inadequate control and accountability    | 25-26 |
| 2.4.2 Complicated legislation                  | 26    |
| 2.4.3 Inadequate procedures and manuals        | 27    |
| 2.4.4 Ineffectual management and organisations | 27-28 |
| 2.4.5 Psychological factors                    | 28    |
| 2.4.6 Social factors                           | 29    |

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| 2.4.7 Economic factors  | 29    |
| 2.4.8 Lack of ethical awareness   | 29-31 |
| 2.5 Conclusion  | 31    |
| <br>  |       |
| 3. Chapter 3 Research methodology   |       |
| <br>  |       |
| 3.1 Introduction  | 32    |
| 3.2 Research methodology  |       |
| 3.2.1 Research methodology  | 32-33 |
| 3.2.3 Research design   | 33-34 |
| 3.3 Area of study   | 34    |
| 3.4 Population  | 34    |
| 3.5 Target group and sampling   | 35    |
| 3.6 Research techniques   |       |
| 3.6.1 The interviews  | 35-36 |
| 3.6.2 Structured self administered questionnaires                               | 36-37 |
| 3.7 Data analysis method  | 37    |
| 3.8 Conclusion  | 37    |
| <br>  |       |
| 4. Chapter 4 Data presentation, analysis and interpretation                     |       |
| <br>  |       |
| 4.1 Introduction  | 38    |
| 4.2 Quantitative data analysis  | 38-47 |
| 4.3 Qualitative data analysis   |       |
| 4.3.1 Years of service in the public sector                                     | 47-48 |
| 4.3.2 Induction or orientation course when first employed in the public service | 48    |
| 4.3.3 Punctuality in executing duties   | 48-49 |
| 4.3.4 Discrimination against any member of the public                           | 49    |
| 4.3.5 Employees' dress during office hours                                      | 49-50 |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| 4.3.6 Reporting to the appropriate authority acts of fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and any other act which constitutes an offence or which is prejudicial to the public | 50     |
| 4.3.7 Accepting the responsibility to avail oneself of ongoing and self development throughout one's career  | 50 -51 |
| 4.3.8 Striving to be familiar with and abides by all statutory and other instructions applicable to conduct and duties   | 51     |
| 4.4 Conclusion   | 51     |
| 5. Chapter 5 Conclusions, recommendations and implementations  |        |
| 5.1 Introduction   | 52-53  |
| 5.2 Conclusions  | 53-56  |
| 5.3 Recommendations  | 56-59  |
| 6. References  | 60-63  |
| Annexure A   | 64-68  |
| Annexure B   | 69-71  |

## **Abstract**

In this research report, I present the role of ethical principles in promoting efficient service delivery at the Department of Education in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. I critically present what the codes of conduct are; and explore the challenges and constraints faced by the public regarding behaviour and conduct of public officials

Both the interviews and the questionnaires of the study were conducted at Capricorn District of the Department of Education at Lebowakgomo. The subjects of the study were all the current personnel attached to the Human Resource Management of the district.

The report is concluded with an assessment of the challenges and constraints faced by the district towards acceptable conduct as opposed to unacceptable or unethical behaviour, as well as recommendations for addressing them.

### **Declaration**

I declare that *The role of ethical principles in promoting efficient service delivery at the Department of Education in the Capricorn District of Limpopo* is my own unaided work, that it has not been conducted and submitted before for any degree or examination at another university or tertiary institution, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete sources.

Tsebe Malose Johannes 04 July 2011

Signed.....

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank God for giving me the strength, power and wisdom to complete the research report. My sincere thanks and appreciation to Professor Frederick Ahwireng-Obeng, my supervisor, for his advice and guidance during the course of the report writing. I am grateful for his constructive criticism which helped me to improve the quality of the work.

My sincere thanks to all personnel at the Capricorn District of the Department in the Human Resource Management section who granted me interviews.

Lastly I would like to thank my family (my late mother Ms Mamolealee Tsebe, my late aunt Malekere Pieteron, my late grandparents Madimetsa and Ntsatsa Tsebe, my late great grandmother Mokgaetsi Tsebe) and friends for their inspiration, encouragement and patience during the writing of the report. To my brother, Madimetja, and sisters (Ramatsobane, Mmaketa, Ramadimetja and Ramasela), I am always grateful to be associated with people as in you. The sky is always the limit. To my beloved wife and eternal friend, Rathekeng, keeps the fire burning. You are the pillar of strength and success. May His Light and Grace shine upon you at all times.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

The main purpose of establishing the Department of Education is contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 under section 29 (1) to (4). The Constitution further notes that, in the execution of their daily functions public functionaries have to promote an efficient administration (section 33 (3) (d)). It is expected of all employees to comply with the code of ethics in their sphere of work. Andrews (1985:37) defines the code of ethics as the standard which guide the behaviour and actions of personnel in public institutions., both in their individual and relationships with others (as colleagues and clients). If properly implemented and managed, it is anticipated that these codes will help to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of actions, conduct, and behaviour of public officials to the maximum satisfaction of the clients served.

Although public administration is generally considered honest and able by world standards, it is not without flaws as certain public officials violate their public trust as a result of certain factors such as the misconception of public trust, corruption and subversion (Rosenbloom, 1989:464). It is observed that public officials come to work late, are irresponsible, show disregard for discipline and punctuality, are careless about choice of words and hostile body language, absent from work, cover up for wrong doing, use fraudulent travel documents, misuse letter heads, tolerate incompetence, favour relatives and friends, disclose confidential documents or information, abuse leave days (regarded as a service benefit), tamper with files, work turnover, job dissatisfaction and underperform. This has prompted the researcher to conduct a study on the role of ethical principles in promoting efficient service delivery at the Department of Education in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.



## 1.2 Statement of the problem

In a working environment there is an employer and the employee who keep the activities of the institution rolling in order to achieve the predetermined objectives towards an efficient and effective service delivery. In the case of the public sector such as the department of Education in the Capricorn District, the rendering of services for the general welfare of the community served is the main domain for its establishment and existence. Service delivery in the public sector follows a variety of approaches in terms of value systems, legislation, legal rules and the Batho Pele (People First) principles.

In the execution of their daily functions, public officials cannot discharge their authority at will, but their conduct or behaviour is monitored, controlled, supervised and managed for maximum productivity, hence the code of ethics and/or ethical principles. Embodied in the principles are guidelines from the body politic (such as political supremacy, public accountability and tenets of democracy); guidelines from community values (they include religious doctrines and value systems, fairness and reasonableness, balanced decision making, thoroughness, probity and honesty, and efficiency and effectiveness); and prescribed guidelines (such as legal rules, fundamental rights and code of ethics or conduct, right to information held by the state and administrative justice).

On the contrary, it is found that public officials act in an unacceptable and unlawful manner, hence the word unethical behaviour or conduct. Unethical conduct in government institutions comes about as a result of certain factors hampering efficient and effective delivery. It occurs because of public officials' greed, dishonesty and to a great extent, lack of training and development.

## 1.3 The research questions

The main question that the research study seeks to answer is:

### 1.3.1 How can the Department of Education in the Capricorn District ensure compliance

with ethical foundations in order to prevent and curtail unethical conduct?

Subsumed under 1.3.1 are the following sub-questions:

1.3.2 Do officials live out their obligation to deliver quality services?

1.3.3 Do officials attached to the Capricorn District of the Department of Education accept an oath and obligation to deliver quality and efficient services as guided by the ethical codes, norms, standards and regulations governing their sphere of work?

1.3.4 Are there precautionary measures to eliminate the causes of unethical conduct?

#### 1.4 The significance of the study

The researcher aims to achieve the following results from the study:

1.4.1 the study will highlight the challenges pertaining to ethics, conduct and/or behaviour with which departments at the district level is faced with.

1.4.2 it is hoped that the recommendations from the study will help policy makers in formulating new policies relevant to the present circumstances and situations regarding conduct.

1.4.3 the other aspect concerning the importance of the study is that results will be shared with all other districts within the province for higher authorities to develop rules, policies and regulations governing conduct of public officials.

1.4.4 the results will also be shared with all the research subjects in order for them to be informed about unethical behaviour and refrain from committing such conduct(s) in future.

#### 1.5 The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to identify aspects of ethical principles that can be implemented in the Department of Education to promote efficient service delivery.

## 1.6 The objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

- 1.6.1 to conduct research on the role of ethical principles in promoting efficient service delivery at the Department of Education in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.
- 1.6.2 determine the challenges and constraints which hinder the proper management and implementation of sound ethical principles in the district.
- 1.6.3 ultimately the study will provide conclusions and recommendations.

## 1.7 Definition of concepts

The term definition is a statement of the meaning of the word, term or phrase. So the main idea in defining concepts applicable in this research is an abstraction from observed phenomena (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2006:94). A concept is defined as a directly conceived object of thought in a word that states that the commonalities among those observed events and situations for the convenience of both the researcher and the reader (ibid, 2006:94). The following are the key concepts defined and discussed for the purpose of creating a clear picture of their meaning as used in the subsequent chapters of this research namely service delivery, ethics, and efficient.

### 1.7.1 **Ethics**

According Mafunisa (in Kuye *et al*, 2002:192), ethics is defined as the branch of philosophy dealing with values that relate to human conduct of specific actions and to the goodness or badness of the motives and ends of such actions. Andrews (1985:35) defines ethics as the standards which guide the behaviour and actions of personnel in public institutions, and which may be referred to as moral values. Ethics is more concerned with an individual's personal beliefs regarding right or wrong behaviour, acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, can vary from one person to another, are relative and not absolute, social norms and values are the building blocks; provide sensitivity about responsibility and accountability; provides

the basis the basis for humanity in society; and determine how authorities serve their people (Du Toit *et al*, 1998:97).

It can be deduced from the definitions that ethics is concerned with the conduct of public officials in the execution of the daily functions in preventing unethical acts such as nepotism, victimization and corruption. For the purpose of this research study, the word unethical will be construed as that which is contrary to what is regarded as being ethical. Therefore, pertaining to this research study unethical conduct is a transgression of acceptable norms, rules, standards and codes of conduct in such a way that officials may be tempted to be involved in fraudulent and corrupt activities for self enrichment and prejudicing clients, thereby, impacting negatively on service delivery.

### **1.7.2 Service delivery**

It is explained as the provision of public activities, benefits or satisfactions. Services relate both to the provision of tangible public goods and intangible services themselves (Fox and Meyer, 1995:118). Service delivery forms the basis of all government activities. According to the Integrated Management Development Program for Emerging Management, Course Manual (2003:58), service means the performance of work or duty by an official or an act of helping others, or power to control or makes use of resources, or an organisation or system providing the public with something useful to meet their demands. The act of delivery is defined as producing or performing, handing over, taking goods to the intended recipient, or producing results as promised or expected. Therefore, service delivery is concerned with the provision of a product or service by the government or government body to a community that it was promised to, or which is expected by that community.

### **1.7.3 Efficient**

According to Kroontz and Wehrich (1985:8) efficiency is defined as the achievement of the ends with the least amount of resources. One can consider it to be the process whereby limited resources are optimally used towards achieving best results. It is a prerequisite that

people in the public employ must constantly strive to act in a way which will lead to the improvement of the quality of service by public institutions or departments.

### **1.8 Ethical considerations**

The fact that this research study involves people as research subjects implies that the researcher has to include an ethics statement(s) in the study. This is an indication of the researcher's awareness of the ethical considerations and an agreement to conduct research in accordance with ethical procedures. The goal of ethics is to ensure that no one is harmed from the research activities. In this study, the researcher promises that:

1.8.1 there will be no plagiarism; these authors are going to be scientifically acknowledged.

1.8.2 the identities and interests of those involved will be protected

1.8.3 the confidentiality of the information given the researcher is guaranteed

1.8.4 the researcher will consult with the University Ethics Committee about any unclear ethical issues.

### 1.9 Chapter outline

#### Chapter One Introduction

This is the initial and introductory chapter wherein the background of the study which will form the basis of the understanding of the research study is outlined. It outlines the statement of the problem, the research questions and the objective of the study.

#### Chapter Two Literature review

This chapter discusses the historical perspective of the Department of Education, which resulted into six (6) as a result of the rationalisation process. The codes of conduct will be explained and a base for drawing references developed.

### Chapter Three Research methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology which will be followed in the research process. It will also identify the target or population group, sampling method, the size of the population group and the research techniques.

### Chapter Four Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

This chapter discusses how data will be analysed. The research will determine and select from the general field exactly data which is required for the observation of the code of conduct and corrective measures to be implemented. It will filter the massive amount of data available until only that which is critical to the research remains

### Chapter Five Conclusions, recommendations and implementations

This will be the final chapter of the study. It will give the main conclusions drawn from the study and the recommendations made pertaining to the critical issues raised. Critical issues of further research will also be identified.

## Chapter 2

### Literature review

#### 2.1 Introduction

Literature review is important in that it reviews and looks back into what other authors or scholars have to say about the topic and problem to be researched. Mouton (2001:87) indicates that reviewing a body of scholarship (a literature review) is to get a background of a whole range of research products that have been produced by other scholars.

Public institutions or departments are there to serve the interests and needs of the public, and work with the public funds or money. They are often lauded as beacons of hope regarding conduct. It is basically the main reason that public officials cannot carry out activities in any way they wish. Thus it is found that they (officials) are accountable to the legislature (which is the government of the day), on behalf of which they provide services and/or goods to the public. In order for their actions to be beyond reproach officials have to act within the framework of ethical or conduct or behavioural guidelines.

The fact that a human being is vulnerable, fallible and susceptible to temptations, public officials can and may end up indulging in unethical conduct in order to satisfy their own egos and interests at the expense of the public trust and clients served. Where expectations are not met, public criticism follows and becomes the order of the day. Where people lose trust in the department or institution, they will not seek and get efficient service delivery, to which they are entitled. This will in the ultimate end, lead to a situation where there will be lack or no provision of information (accountability) necessary for delivering or lack of delivering effective and efficient services as embodied in the Batho Pele principles (White paper on transforming public service delivery, 1997). The principles in the paper are consultation, information, transparency and openness, redress, service standards, courtesy, accessibility and value for money. Eventually, people as clients become increasingly resentful of public service(s) activities and actions particularly regarding ethical principles in promoting efficient service delivery.

This chapter, therefore, discusses/explains what is acceptable and unacceptable regarding ethical principles; what the main challenges regarding ethics in the work place are; and a base for drawing references developed.

## 2.2 Code of ethics in the public sector

The strength of any government system lies in the extent to which it earns and upholds the respect of its citizens. This (respect) comes from the confidence which people have in the integrity of the government, together with the services provided. Everyone employed in the state services has a part to play in earning public respect for government and maintaining confidence in the institutions of the government of the day. So everyone employed in the state services has a part to play in earning public respect for government and maintaining confidence in the institutions of the government. In the execution of their daily functions, public officials have to conform to and abide by the code of conduct and ethics governing their sphere of work. Cloete (1986:8-32) talks of the guidelines from the body politics (such as political supremacy, public accountability and tenets of democracy); as well as those from the community values (such as Christian doctrine, fairness and reasonableness, balanced decisions, thoroughness, probity, effectiveness, efficiency and legality).

There are two role players in every working environment, namely the employer (which is the organisation) and the employee (regarded as the cog in the institution) who keeps the activities of the institution rolling to achieve the predetermined objectives of the very same institution attached to. Employees are investments which if effectively and efficiently managed, will provide long term rewards to the organisation in the form of greater productivity (and in the case of the research study will be efficient service delivery). They deserve satisfaction when performing tasks and expect to be rewarded satisfactorily. On the other hand, the organisation awaits for higher and perfect productivity (from employees) leading to profits (if it is in the private sector) and/or rendering high quality goods and/or services in the ultimate. In the public sector, such as the Department of Education in the Capricorn District the rendering of services for the general welfare of the community served in the main domain for its establishment and existence. Service delivery in the public service



follows a variety of approaches namely in terms of value systems, legislation, legal rules and in terms of the Batho Pele principles (Unisa, 2005:114).

In the execution of their daily functions and activities employees, in particular public officials, are unable to discharge their authority at will, as their conduct or behaviour is monitored, controlled, curtailed, supervised and managed by rules and regulations for maximum productivity. Cloete (1985) states that code of conduct should be worded in such a manner that by upholding them, employees will satisfy their needs, for example their need for self respect and their need for the esteem of their colleagues. Ethics can be considered as a form of self accountability or an 'inner check' on public administrators' action (Rosenbloom, 1989:463). The code of conduct emphasises that the final responsibility for the maintenance of high standards of conduct by public officials rests with individuals. The effectiveness of the codes and the standards of conduct of public officials will always be dependent upon the cooperation and judgement of their colleagues, the executive political office bearers, and members of the public. What can, therefore, be done to rebuild the reputation of the department damaged or tarnished by some of the action(s) of its members?

Davis and Newstrom (1985:12) contend that human decisions cannot and should not be made apart from values. At all levels of the government, it is expected that public officials will always conduct themselves ethically. The statement emanates from the fact that government departments are there to serve people of the country. These departments therefore are there to represent the wishes and desire of the whole citizens of the country. The Department of Education at Capricorn District is no exception to this preamble. Kernaghan (2000) indicates that values in the public service are classified in various ways whereby he talks about the ethical values (such as integrity and fairness; the democratic values (such as impartiality and rule of law) and professional values (such as effectiveness and service) that must at all times be observed and applied. These values provide a basis for taking into account the enduring importance of democratic, professional and ethical values in public administration and of emergence of new professional values. The question is, how long and how many times must non compliance with values be left unchecked meanwhile service delivery is suffering?

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994 in South Africa, the Constitution has been the fundamental tool used to influence ethics in state institutions. It is, therefore, imperative for the government of the day to define its policy to give effect to the provisions of the constitution. Specific norms, rules of behaviour and other ethical prescriptions must be determined and laid down according to which officials must act in order to execute these policies uniformly and in unison as contained in the Constitution of South Africa (Chapter 10). The ten values and principles in Chapter 10 of the Constitution are regarded as the cornerstones of the public service in South Africa.

Andrews (1988:34) defines ethics as the application of values to individual behaviour and action. They provide the moral and legal basis for guiding conduct in different circumstances and situations. They are reflected in laws and regulations, codes of behaviour and professional standards. The author goes on to indicate that the origins of the ethical norms and standards relevant to public institution can be traced back to the political, social and physical environment (1988:36).

From the political perspective this research talks about certain democratic doctrines providing standards of behaviour for public officials. The democratic doctrines include, among other things, the following: political office bearers to be representative of the people as they are appointed for the advancement of the general welfare; actions of public officials must be such that the goals of the representatives of the people are effectively pursued and that the rights of the people are not affected; political office bearers are accountable for the actions of public officials; public officials as well must act reasonably and fairly towards people and no public funds are wasted because of ineffective labour performance. The challenge then is what is being done if there is an infringement on non compliance with the democratic principles.

In order to uphold these democratic principles, the political office bearers and public officials are forced by the voters to honour specific ethical norms and standards in the execution of their duties. Among the rules of behaviour to which public officials must

subscribe to are: all dealings must be in the public interest; rights and privileges of individuals are not to be violated; legal prescriptions and regulations must be strictly adhered to; discretionary powers are not to be misused; work performance must be effective to optimize financial resources; individuals are not to benefit or suffer the actions of public officials; and actions of public officials should be above suspicion. Greenaway (1985:357) indicates that practical rules for the guidance of social conduct depend as much upon the instinct and perception of the individual as upon iron formulas; and the surest guide will, we hope, always be found in the nice honour of civil servants themselves. Thus, it is found that the public expects from the public officials a high standard of integrity and conduct.

The social environment perspective suggests actions which have a direct or potential impact on people. It explains that actions are ethical when and only if they are reasonable, impartial and correct (Andrews1986:37). Included in the rules of behaviour is that public interest must always supersede personal or self interest.

The physical environment also has an influence on the ethical behaviour of public officials. An example is that if the Christian doctrine is acceptable to a group of public officials, it will influence public officials by guiding and directing their actions towards acceptable behaviour. Public officials cannot, therefore, perform actions contradicting the accepted values, norms and standards. In the long run, public officials' actions will be honest and incorruptible, reasonable and fair towards all members of the community and striving for efficiency by effectively and economically using available resources.

Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997:43) indicate that codes of ethics are there to serve as a set of guidelines for good conduct. Although these codes do not have any legal authority but are simply guidelines that have been formulated over time, they reflect the genuine desire of public officials to serve their various communities with dignity, respect and integrity. Integrity involves trust which is utmost importance in a working relationship. According to Cloete (1985:25) those vested with authority should in fact hold and exercise such authority in trust for the community. Integrity is sometimes regarded as a delicate jewel in that when

correctly built, the organisation can benefit to a great extent as client will develop honesty and become trustworthy to the organisation, efficient rendering of services in the case of the department of Education at the Capricorn District.

A working environment must therefore be created in which employees are encouraged to develop and utilise their skills to the maximum extent and not forgetting to act within the bounds and limits of all rules, regulations, prescripts and principles governing their sphere of work. Policies, programmes and practices must be created to satisfy the economic and emotional needs of employees.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (WTPSD) of 1997 is another document applicable to the public sector. It contains the eight Batho Pele principles. Easily translated it is known as the 'People First' principles. Embodied in the document are the guidelines enabling the national, provincial and local government departments to apply the principles in accordance with their own needs and circumstances, and those eight principles are consultation and participation; openness and transparency; value for money; information; service standards; courtesy and accessibility.

The African National Congress (ANC) (1994:126) states that the Public Service Commission in terms of the interim constitution must be responsible for matters relating to appointments, promoting efficiency and effectiveness in departments, establishing and monitoring a code of conduct for the public services and introducing a program of affirmative action and other appropriate techniques to eliminate historical inequities in employment. The same publication further talks about the concept of servicing people, whereby services have to be applied impartially and without favour.

The Public Service Regulations (1999) is another document in the public sector, specifically dealing with specific guidelines regarding personal conduct and behaviour of officials and their private interests. According to these guidelines employees must during office hours: act responsibly as far as the use of alcoholic beverages or any other substance with an intoxicating effect concerned; not use their official positions to obtain private gifts or benefits

for themselves during the performance of their official duties nor accept any gifts or benefits when offered as these may be construed as bribes; not use or disclose any official information for personal gain or the gain of others; and not without approval undertake remunerative work outside their official duties or use official equipment for such work.

Public institutions or departments such as the Capricorn District of the Department of Education in Limpopo Province are occupied and manned by public officials. A public official is defined as an officer or employee of a public sector entity or a constituent member of a public sector entity, whether holding office by election or selection but does not include a judicial officer or local government councillor (Queensland, 1994). In the execution of their daily functions and activities, public officials cannot do as they wish, but have to conform to ethical principles that will enable the department to promote efficient service delivery, thus we talk of codes of ethics in the public sector. The value of a code of ethics lies in the fact that they draw attention to pitfalls that can be avoided and, more positively, suggest in broad terms how councillors and officials should behave in the interest of good government and administration (Craythorne, 1990:91). By efficiency it is referred to as the relationship between the cost and expedience of transforming inputs into outputs (Minnaar and Bekker, 2005:128). The cost and quality of the management process is a major consideration in this regard.

Code of ethics is defined as a set of principles and rules prescribed by a higher authority to a specific homogeneous group of employees (or to the members of a social group), with a view to eliciting from them specific behaviour under specific circumstances (Dreyer in Hanekom, Rowland and Bain, 1987:162). According to Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997) the codes usually do not have any legal authority but are simply guidelines that have been formulated over time. They only reflect the genuine desire of the public officials to serve their various communities with dignity and integrity. A code of ethics is necessary in guiding public officials rendering a service to society to safeguard the officials against unjustified claims from society and also improves the view people have of the public service. They consist of a set of provisions/guidelines defining right and wrong behaviour and again establish specific punishment for wrong conduct. According to Mafunisa (in Kuye, Thornhill, Fourie, Brynard,

Crous, Mafunisa, Roux, Van Dyk and Van Rooyen , 2002) their functions are to act as guidelines, governing conduct to public servants to promote exemplary conduct; to promote sound, efficient, transparent and accountable administration; to be honest and accountable in dealing with public funds; to use the public service's property and other resources effectively and efficiently and only for official purpose; and to develop acceptable ethics and accountability in public officials so as not to violate their provisions and be punished where there is a transgression or infringement.

The public service has an extensive influence over people's lives. It is responsible for a large part of the government. Mismanagement or abuse of vested powers and authority can, therefore, have very serious and far reaching effects on service delivery. As public servants or officials, employees as in the Capricorn District Department of Education (Limpopo Province), work for the government of the day. Clients serviced by this very same department are entitled to the high expectations they have of the officials, particularly with regard to conduct and behaviour hereby regarded as ethics principles. It is in this regard that the department is regarded as one of the many government agencies. These ethical principles for public officials playing a sterling role in promoting efficient service delivery include the following, (Queensland, 1994 and Chapter 2 of the Public Service Regulations, 1999):

Respect for the law and the system of government. Public officials should uphold the laws of the country and carry out official public sector decisions and policies faithfully and impartially. To substantiate this statement Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991: 66) indicate that the two ethical norms exclusive to public institutions are political authority and public accountability whereby it is at all times expected of public officials to comply with both the letter and spirit of any provision of the law, regulation and policy governing conduct. According to Longman (1997:263) conduct is described as implying behaviour or rather to behave oneself or to act in a particular fashion. It is at all times expected of public officials to act in a socially acceptable or polite manner.

Respect for persons. The question which always comes to mind is how public officials ought to act in relationships among themselves and how they should live with one another. Do

public officials consider themselves as acting in a wrong or right manner towards colleagues? Public officials are expected to treat members of the public and other public officials as colleagues honestly and fairly and with proper regards for their rights and obligations. Public officials should also act responsively when performing official duties and obligations. Public servants must always behave ethically and be conscientious and competent in their work as the public sector is a place where amateurish display of behaviour and conduct cannot and will never be tolerated and accepted in any way. Hanekom et al (1987: 153) states that adhering to higher ethical standards of behaviour but conducting the public business in an incompetent manner will definitely not satisfy the public or promote the general welfare and could prove to be just as disastrous as unethical conduct.

Integrity. It involves trust which is of utmost importance in a working relationship. According to Cloete (1986) those vested with authority should in fact hold and exercise such authority in trust for the community. Integrity is a delicate jewel in that when correctly built the organisation can benefit to a great extent as clients will develop honesty and trustworthiness to the organisation rendering a good and/or service as in the case of the Department of Education Capricorn District (Limpopo Province). The ethical issues that face public officials, whether elected or appointed, are complex and difficult (Denhardt, 2002:72). Some are concerned with basic issues of human morality such as acting honestly and fairly, and others are bound up in legal prohibitions such as avoiding conflict of interest or providing financial disclosure. In recognition that public office involves public trust, a public official should seek to maintain and enhance confidence in the integrity of public administration and thereby advance the common good of the community the official serves. In order to meet these two obligations, it is expected that a public official should not improperly use official powers, authority, and position or allow them to be improperly used. They must ensure that any conflict that may arise between the official's personal interest and official duties is resolved in the interest of the public; and where possible, disclose any fraud, corruption and maladministration of which the official becomes aware of. Every act of every public official, whether in the formulation or implementation of public policy, carries important value implications.

Any abuse of trust, abuse of resources, abuse of information and personal opportunism corrodes the entitlement of the clients served. Standards of integrity and conduct underpin the way public officials go about their core business of the day, which is mainly efficient service delivery. The way in which public officials go about their responsibilities and the way in which public service as a whole goes about its functions, reflects on the whole public officials within a particular department, in this case the Department of Education Capricorn District (Limpopo Province). It is not what public officials do but how people (as clients and stakeholders) perceive what the officials are displaying regarding conduct towards an envisaged better and efficient service delivery. It is expected of public officials to be seen acting with integrity, diligence, respectfully, responsibility, loyalty and faithfulness at all times.

Diligence. In performing official duties, a public official should exercise proper diligence, care and attention; and seek to achieve high standards of public administration. Public officials are supposed to be very much attentive to duties and activities assigned to them.

Economy and efficiency. In the performance of official duties, a public official should ensure that public resources are not wasted, abused, or used improperly or extravagantly.

Since the dawn of democracy due to the general elections in 1994 in South Africa, the constitution is basically the fundamental tool influencing ethics in state institutions or departments. It is, therefore, important for the government of the day to define its policies clearly to give effect to the provision of the constitution particularly with conduct or what is construed to be ethical. Specific norms, prerequisites, rules of behaviour and other ethical prescriptions must be determined and laid down according to which officials must act in order to execute these policies in unison. The provision of the constitution (Chapter 10) contains the most important values and principles of an efficient public service, requiring them (the public service) to be:

- governed by the democratic values and principles of the constitution
- maintaining and promoting a high standard of professionalism
- promoting efficient, economic and effective use of resources



- orientated towards development
- delivering services impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias
- responding to people needs and encouraging public participation in policy matters
- accountable for its actions
- transparent by providing the public with timely accessible and accurate information
- cultivating good human resource management and career development practices to maximise human potential
- and broadly representative of the South African people with employment practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 Chapter 8 to 10 provides bodies and institutions responsible for ensuring that public funds are not expended as public functionaries and officials wish and desire to. These bodies and institutions function as watchdogs which promote ethical and accountable and responsive behaviour of political office bearers and public officials. Encompassed under these applicable bodies and institutions serving as mechanisms or remedies towards alleviating and curbing conduct are the Public Protector, Auditor General, Public Service Commission and judicial institutions (such as the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeal and the Magistrates' Courts). The question then is, do these bodies and institutions really are committed to their obligations to ensure that acceptable ethical principles towards efficient service delivery are met?

In support of these values and principles enshrined in the constitution, there is one document applicable in the public sector, namely the White paper on transforming public service delivery (WTPSD) of 1997 containing the eight Batho Pele principles. The paper is primarily about how public services are provided, and specifically about improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which services are delivered. It provides a framework on transforming a policy to ensure that Batho Pele is owned and implemented by the whole public service at all levels of government. The principles must be pursued in line with Chapter 10 of the Constitution which identifies the basic values and principles governing public administration. Thus the then President, Mr Thabo Mbeki in his state of the nation address on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2004 when emphasising the need of effective service delivery in the public

service he said that we must be impatient with those in the public service who see themselves as the pan pushers and guardians of rubber stamps, thieves intent on self enrichment, bureaucrats who think they have the right to ignore the vision of the Batho Pele, who come to work as late as possible and knock off as early as possible.

When the then Education Minister, Ms Naledi Pandor was speaking in parliament during her budget speech on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2007, she said that thanks to unacceptable levels of underperformance, her department is nowhere near where it should be. She lamented the fact that too much attention was given to those who are abusive, violent, and disruptive instead of supporting and focusing on scholars, teachers, officials and parents that are achieving excellence – many against all odds. She further indicated that the levels of underperformance in the education system were unacceptably high and unjust subversion of the historic promise of freedom and democracy that was put before our people. The most serious aspect of her speech was based on the fact that the government tolerates public officials who are not up to the task of administrative or professional support, who leave work early, who fails to pay subsidies to schools on time, and who do not yet reflect the objectives and principles of Batho Pele. It is therefore imperative for stronger actions to be taken against those who practise and promote a poor work ethics.

Easily translated Batho Pele is known as the People First principles. Embodied in the document are the guidelines enabling the national and provincial departments to apply them in accordance with their own needs and circumstances and those eight (Du Toit and Van der Waldt, 1999) principles are hereunder mentioned and elaborated upon, namely:

Consultation: It is defined as a process wherein specialised knowledge and skill are made available to those who need it (Brill, 1990:162). There is an obligation by public officials to carry out all their duties by putting people first and responding to their need through consultation and participation. Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the services they receive and wherever possible should be given a choice about the services they are offered with. Consultation can be in one of the following ways such as customer services surveys, annual client satisfaction, interviews with individual users, consultation groups and

meetings with customer representative bodies, joint management meetings with service deliveries partners, questionnaires and hotlines and conferences.

Service standards: The commitment to offer service fairly, equitably, honestly, responsively and without bias is the cornerstone of the service standards. Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what is expected of them. Some of the mechanisms applicable under service standard are the service charters, service standards booklets, service level and performance agreement, service commitments charters and annual service excellence awards. Employees are bound to strive for creativity and innovation and observing standards of services which are relevant, achievable, realistic, measurable and transparent in order to promote the welfare of the people.

There must be a commitment to the code of conduct for the public service and therefore a promise to serve the people with loyalty, respect, dignity, honour and trust (Roux, Brynard, Botes and Fourie, 1997). Deviations from this trust, such as the leakage of personal secrets for the sake of transparency, the embezzlement of public funds or arbitrary decisions are all grounds for claims against the state. Shamsul Hague (2001:72) indicates that public trust in public service does not only refer to the trust of common citizens, but it also encompasses the trust held by public servants themselves, since they constitute a significant part of the citizenry and represent an educated and articulate segment of the public.

Access: All citizens must have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. To ensure that accessibility is attained and achieved, mechanisms that can be applied include, among others, the availability of call centres, toll free lines, websites, emails and help desks for the clients to lodge whatever complaint they do have.

Courtesy: Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration. This can be a success if some of the measures such as complaint handling system, customer care units, responses to queries in official languages of choice and customer care champions are highly taken care of and applicable in an organisation as in the Capricorn District of the Department of Education (Limpopo Province).

Information: Citizens should be given full and accurate information about services they are entitled to receive.

Openness and transparency: Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost and who is in charge. Openness and transparency can only be ensured by providing accessible, accurate and reliable information to people at all times.

Redress: If the promised standard or service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made citizens should receive a sympathetic positive response. Thus one can talk about the word responsiveness. According to Denhardt (2002:73) responsiveness simply means that people want to know that those in government are listening and that they will respond if at all possible.

Value for money: Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money. Public officials must, at all times, be prepared to honestly explain and be accountable for any action undertaken in the line of duty and will use official facilities and equipments economically, effectively and efficiently. The public servants must not accept any bribes, gifts or benefits that might be seen to prejudice or endanger any position or lead to conflict of interests.

The main challenge and constrain in the public sector is whether proper management and implementation of the sound ethical principles in public departments are adhered to and applied to the letter and spirit with which they are created for. In support of the ten principles the following factors are indicated as the more clear-cut features of the public service according to Holtham (in Wilcocks and Harrow, 1992:85-86): generally cannot choose customers; roles limited by legislation; politics institutionalised conflict; complex accountability very often to scrutiny; and objectives-output difficult to measure/state.

According to Lane (1993) the following are regarded as the basic public administration

principles according to which the public sector is or should be structured, involving the institutional structure, the motivation of public employees and the status of the public interest: the task of public institutions are to be decided by politicians but executed by administrators in order to satisfy the model of rational decision making; administration is based on written documents and this tends to make the office (bureau) the heart of modern government; public tasks are organised on a continuous, rule governed basis; the rules according to which work is conducted may be either technical or legal, in both cases trained individuals are necessary; the tasks or functions are divided into functionally distinct spheres, each furnished with the prerequisite authority and sanctions; offices and tasks are arranged hierarchically; the rights of control and complaint being specified. There is preference for centralisation, all other things being equal; the resources of the organisation are quite distinct from that of the members as private individuals; the office holder cannot appropriate own office for private issues; public employees orientate towards the tasks within the public sector in terms of vocation or a sense of duty to fulfil the obligations of their roles; and in the public sector there is one dominating interest, the public interest which sets the limits to the influence of self interests in politics and administration.

The foregoing discussion indicates that there are ethical expectations from public officials in the work sphere. This is an indication that people in the public employ are working not for themselves or for an impersonal organisation, but in the service of the public. To a great extent the opposite is the case. It will be found that public officials' behaviour is unethical and resultantly has a negative effective on service delivery.

### 2.3 Unethical conduct in the public service

Unethical conduct is a scourge, a problem and disease that has been there since time immemorial hence the saying that it is as old as humankind or mankind himself. This is evident from the Bible as cited in the book of Genesis that God Himself told the first creature and man (created in His image) not to eat and consume a tree in the middle of the field at Eden, even though himself was given a variety of other trees to taste and eat, he did the opposite. It is defined as an action or conduct which violate the principles of one or more

ethical systems or which counter to an accepted ethical value such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, dignity or respect (Hanekom et al, 1987:153). In transgressing the acceptable norms, rules, standard and code of ethics public officials may be tempted to be involved in fraudulent and corrupt activities for self enrichment purposes and thereby disadvantage clients by impacting negatively on service delivery. Alternatively employees can engage in 'unofficial' or 'informal' forms of behaviour which exist alongside or which may break or bend formal rules and regulations (Keen and Scase, 1998). These can result in the more effective achievement of end grouping's own sectional interests, which may or may not align with formal organisational goal achievement.

The clients expect the department to comply with rules, regulations and policies governing their conduct in the work environment and situations. It is expected of officials' decisions to be made fairly and impartially; public money to be spent wisely; public assets to be used and utilized and cared for responsibly; and for public officials to always behave ethically and be competent in their work as the public sector is a place where amateurish display of behaviour and conduct cannot and will never be tolerated and accepted in any way. Henekom et al (1987) states that adhering to higher ethical standards of behaviour but conducting the public business in an incompetent manner will definitely not satisfy the public or promote the general welfare and could prove to be just as disastrous as unethical conduct.

Mafunisa (200:5) states that that which is construed to be unethical behaviour includes the protection of, covering up of, incompetence; lack of responsiveness to the needs of clients; tardiness in the discharge of assigned and accepted duties; the manifestation of inefficiency and ineffectiveness; corruption; incompetence; fraud; bribery; sexual harassment; nepotism; favouritism; victimization; subjective and arbitrary decisions; disclosing of confidential information; tax evasion and speed money. Additional to these unethical behaviour which Hanekom et al (1987:151-152) regards them as ethical dilemmas as a result of public officials not adhering to the *intra vires* regarding conduct are the following: administrative discretion; conformity; administrative secrecy; values; information leaks; public accountability; policy dilemmas; the relationship between appointed officials and elected office bearers; the influence of pressure groups on the ethical conduct of public administration; the political

activities of appointed public officials; and the interest revealed by the public in the behaviour of public officials. Intra vires entails acting in accordance with the formal prescriptions of the laws. These are the indications that officials' conduct and behaviour in the public employ must at all times be beyond reproach as they are forever scrutinised by the whole public towards a better and efficient service delivery.

What is construed as unethical or unscrupulous in professional conduct or behaviour is based on the fact that is gauged against ethical code of conduct as contained in both Chapter 10 of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; Explanatory manual on the code of conduct for the public service, of 2002 and Chapter 2 of the Public Service Regulations, 1999. The main purpose of the ethical code is to set standards for the way officials go about their daily obligations with regard to efficient service delivery. Everything a public authority does should be capable of being observed, instigated and judged (Cloete, 1986:24-25), which is an indication that activities or public institutions or departments and authorities should wherever possible take place in the open than being shrouded in a in a veil of secrecy.

Unethical conduct in government institutions occurs as a result of certain factors. Unethical conduct occurs because of the public officials' greed, dishonesty and to a great extent lack of training and development. The following according to Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997:48-51), Mafunisa (2000:5-8) and Mafunisa in Kuye et al (2002:194-195) are some of the main causes contributing towards unethical conduct, namely inadequate control and accountability, complicated legislation, inadequate procedures and manuals; corruption; nepotism and favouritism; psychological factors; ineffectual management and organizations; social factors; lack of ethical awareness; role models; lack of appropriate education and training in ethics; fragmentation of the public service; lack of personal accountability through effective delegation; and lack of proper application of the merit system in the placement of new recruits / appointees. These causes will be discussed and elaborated upon later on in this chapter.

Once we have established and determined the causes of unethical conduct we are bound to come up with suggested solutions, remedies, mechanisms and measures to prevent unethical conduct in order for service delivery (which is the main core and domain of the creation of the

government institutions) not to be impacted negatively but at all times be of high standard and efficient. Included (according to the authors mentioned when the causes of unethical conducted were listed) among those remedies are the following, ethics education and training in Public Administration; Constitutional mechanisms; exemplary ethical behaviour by political office bearers and senior public officials; Public Protector; Auditor General; Public Service Commission; Judicial institutions; communication media; professional associations; Ad hoc bodies; and codes of ethics and of conduct.

## 2.4 Causes of unethical conduct

The following are the main causes contributing towards unethical conduct, hereunder mentioned and discussed.

### 2.4.1 Inadequate control and accountability

Fox and Meyer (1985:28) define control as the degree of influence that management has for directing the behaviour of organisation members and activities and/or an effort to try and get others to change themselves or to change their attitudes, opinions, behaviour or to try to restrict their choices available to others or to influence their behaviour in making choices. In as far as Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997:201) control is defined as the process assuring that actual activities correspond to planned activities. From the definitions it can be deduced that control is an uninterrupted monitoring process from comparing planned results with the actual results and is more concerned with unacceptable behaviour.

Fox and Meyer (1995:1-2) define accountability as the responsibility of a government and its agent towards the public to realise previously set objectives and to account for them in public, or commitment required from a public official to accept public responsibility for own inaction of the obligation that a subordinate has to keep own superior informed of the execution of responsibility. Danee Fard and Anvary Rostamy (2007) indicate that public accountability influences the public trust by improving citizens' satisfaction and a lack thereof is a fertile ground for the creation of distrust on the part of the citizenry.



Accountability in the public sector is very much needed and must be fostered. It entails answerability for action carried out and performance achieved by others for example by manager to his superior or by the board of directors to its shareholders (Johannsen and Terry, 1996:8). Elements of accountability are responsibility conferred, obligation to report back on the discharge of the responsibility, optional monitoring to ensure accountability and possible sanctions for non performance.

From the definitions of these two concepts, control and accountability, it can be deduced that if there is a lack of or deficient or inadequate control and accountability in a government institution, it usually leads to dishonest public officials exploiting the situation for own benefit and interest. This, in the long run, will make service delivery to suffer as resources will be utilised in the wrong way than for the general welfare of the community served. Lack of control and accountability usually leads to inefficient standardised actions, poor planning on the part of top management and help increase malpractices and wastes towards available limited resources in meeting an ever increasing wants.

#### 2.4.2 Complicated legislation

One most generic contributory factor towards unethical conduct is complicated legislation lacking understanding and meaning to public officials. The application and implementation of such legislation contributes, in most cases, to unethical and ineffective and inefficient conduct towards service delivery. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997:49) indicate that because of the complexity of the legislation and technical points, their implementation and control may at times be at variance with their actual purpose. Thus, managers are solely the ones responsible to at all times be aware of such situations (of complex legislation) and implement control beneficially towards acceptable and satisfactorily service delivery.

#### 2.4.3 Inadequate procedures and manuals

When procedures or activities to be followed and carried out by public officials are inconsistent with what the officials experience in practice, it leads to uncertainty about how to

conduct oneself appropriately. This in itself is a fertile ground for unethical conduct to take place, which in the long will impact negatively on service delivery. Manuals must be written and be practical in a way that is relevant to specific circumstances (Van der Waldt and Du Toit, 1997:50). Otherwise any judgement which is not contained in the manuals will be in conflict with the main objectives of the departments or institutions.

#### 2.4.4 Ineffectual management and organisations

Management is defined as a process whereby people in leading positions utilise human and other resources as efficiently as possible in order to provide certain products or services, with the aim of fulfilling particular needs and achieving the stated goals of the institution (Marx in Kroon, 1995:7). Ineffective management of institutions is a contributory factor towards unethical conduct as it leads to ineffective or even not at all products and/or services. Where there is no proper evaluation and measurement of products or services rendered, it is easy for officials to exploit products for their own benefits or enrichment which is contrary to predetermined objectives. Management is necessary to enable the institution to achieve its objectives at the highest possible level of productivity; to direct an institution towards effective achievement of objectives and to keep the institution in balance with its environment.

According to Cloete (1994) organising consists of classifying and grouping functions as well as allocating the groups of functions to institutions and workers in an orderly pattern so that everything the workers do will be aimed at achieving predetermined objectives. Thus organising entails having a clear idea of the officials' responsibilities, authority they have and the person to whom they have to report.

Thus, without proper management and lack of basic form of organisations, public institutions are not likely to achieve predetermined objectives. Thus ineffectual management and organisations of institutions are a contributory factor towards unethical as it will lead to ineffective and inefficient or even not at all products or services. Where there is no proper evaluation and management of products or services rendered, it is very much easy for officials

to exploit products for own benefits which is detrimental to predetermined objectives and ideas.

#### 2.4.5 Psychological factors

People are creatures with desires such as greed for power and money. If a situation arises wherein own interests and desires are not achieved they may be vulnerable to temptations which result in personal interests coming before public interests. Thus it is always talked about corruption in the public sector. It is the manager's responsibility to identify these situations and do their utmost in eliminating if not eradicating or reducing them.

Corruption is defined as a betrayal of the public trust for reasons of private other than public interests and it can either be unilateral or transactional (Rosenbloom, 1989:467). Corruption is a form of anti social behaviour by an individual or group indulging in unjust, unacceptable or immoral deeds, acting dishonestly and fraudulently against the established legal norms and values and prevailing moral ethos of the country. Among others corruption includes the unethical use of public office, subjective and arbitrary decision making, unauthorised disclosure of confidential information, nepotism, bribery, fraud, theft and misuse of public property, victimization and sexual harassment (Mafunisa, 2000). Unbecoming behaviour in the ultimate results not only in a waste of public service resources (such as public funds and equipments), but also undermines public trust in the public service.

In addition to the above five causes of unethical conduct, Mafunisa (in Kuye et al, 2002:194) gives the following as the other causes of corruption (an unethical conduct or act) due to personal greed or dishonesty, hereunder mentioned and discussed.

#### 2.4.6 Social factors

According to Mafunisa (in Kuye et al, 2002:194-195), the following social factors contribute towards corruption, namely where religious and ethical teaching is weak; punishment is

lenient; leaders in key positions fail to exemplify ethical behaviour and large numbers of people are competing for inadequate services.

#### 2.4.7 Economic factors

Economic factors which contribute towards and can be regarded as a fertile ground for corruption will be created where there is a great inequality of wealth and salaries and wages are extremely low compared to the standard of living (Mafunisa in Kuye et al, 2002:195).

Resources in particular irregular financial gain will result in funds used against the envisaged and predetermined objectives thereby resulting in service delivery suffering a lot.

#### 2.4.8 Lack of ethical awareness

Lack of ethical awareness is, sometimes, as a result of lack of educating public officials and the public itself about all conduct regarded as being ethical that usually leads to unethical behaviour within public institutions. This is as a result of not making public officials and the public aware of the ethical conduct governing their sphere of work when one is first or already employed and entering the public service (induction and orientation). If members of the institute do not adhere to the code of ethics in actions and attitudes its success would be seriously impaired (Mafunisa, 2001).

Education particularly with code of ethics in the public sector will enable officials and the public to know what the implications and damage of unethical conduct are to society. Education is defined as that which teaches general skills, relevant to a field of discipline rather than a particular job, to students (Kuye et al, 2002:196). It has an impact to student skills, rules, knowledge and attitude that have broad applicability in an individual's social environment. Lack of ethical awareness will ultimately result into ineffective and inefficient communication between government and the members of the public. Thus training and developments in the public sector are recommended. This is as a result of the constant increasing demand more especially with the standards and demands for effective action.

Andrews (1985:140) defines training as the extension of knowledge for the specific purpose of filling a given position and to effectively perform the work involved. Its aim is the practical application of knowledge as well as the development of specific behaviour patterns, attitudes and motives with a view to realisation of the goals. Development it is a continuation of education and training, for the purpose of gaining satisfactory experience and skills as well as the correct attitude in order to be admitted to higher managerial positions.

The introduction of training, education and development programmes regarding ethics can help improve the skills and ability of public officials. It is highly encouraged that each and every public institution must introduce the ethics training and education programmes in order to inform functionaries on what they should do to ensure ethical conduct and what actions, attitudes and behaviour are regarded as unethical and to be avoided. It is during such sessions that officials can be familiarise with the ethical foundations of Public Administration which are political supremacy; public accountability; respect for social values; democratic values; efficiency and effectiveness; and transparency . Thus it can be deduced that lack of or no training and development in the public sector will have a negative impact on service delivery if it is managed and administered improperly.

Other issues to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness expected from public officials are aspects such as issues dealing with ethical dilemmas, political participation for public servants; misuse of public funds; value choices; negotiating for benefits; the relationship of the public service and public officials with other government institutions and the public exercise of discretionary powers (as contained in the Public Service Regulations, 1999 and the Batho Pele principles). These aspect are to be included in the public administration curricula of technikons and universities. The only snag or stumbling block is that not all students attending higher learning institutions are going to do public administration and that not all public functionaries will be able to attend technikons and universities. Training and development therefore can play an important role in public institutions as public officials are and will be acquainted with issues relating to ethical conduct.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the ethical and unethical conduct. The various methods or generic factors contributing towards unethical behaviour were touched upon, namely inadequate control and accountability; complicated legislation; inadequate procedures and manuals; ineffectual management and organisations; psychological factors; social factors; economic factors; and lack of ethical awareness. Lastly, the research question together with the sub questions was indicated / mentioned.

## Chapter 3

### Research methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research study is to discuss the role of ethical principle in promoting efficient service delivery at the Department of Education in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province in order to determine whether employees really do conform to the codes as expected of them. This chapter focused more on the manner in which the study was designed, the methods followed in collecting data and the procedures followed in sampling and the applicable data analysis method.

#### 3.2 Research methodology

This part of the research study is more concerned with the instrument(s) and data collection methods chosen and applied.

##### 3.2.1 Research methodology

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1982:884) defines research as an endeavor to discover new or collate old facts by scientific study of a study, course of critical investigation; whereas in Huysamen (1994:1) it is defined as the process by which the scientific method is used to expand knowledge in one's field of study. According to Fox and Meyer (1995:81), methodology is defined as a systematic study of processes and principles that guide scientific investigation and research or the study of the processes and principles that guide scientific investigation.

Methodology is therefore more concerned with the processes of acquiring policy relevant knowledge through intuition, first hand observation or mathematical modeling.

Research methodology can, therefore, be defined as the systematic, methodical and accurate execution of the design according to Mouton (2001) whereby various methods and tools are used to collect data in a research. Research methodology is more concerned with the scientific method of attaining knowledge of human behaviour. The most outstanding characteristics of a research methodology according to Mouton (2001:56) are focused on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used; point of departure + specific tasks (data collection or sampling) at

hand; and focuses on the individual (not linear) steps in the research process and the most "objective" (unbiased) procedures to be employed..

The researcher has employed the following process to gather information in an attempt to answer both the research question and address problems in this study. For the purpose of this research study the qualitative research method applied. According to this method researchers tend to keep field notes as they participate in the fieldwork - often in natural field settings (Mouton, 2001:107).

Qualitative research methodology is research which produces descriptive data, generally people own written or spoken words. There are no numbers assigned to observation (Bryanard and Hanekom, 1997:29).

### 3.2.2 Research design

According to Huysamen (1994:10), research design is defined as 'a plan or blueprint according To which data are to be collected to investigate hypothesis or a question in the most economical manner'. In Mouton (2001:55) a research design is described as a plan or blueprint of how you (as the researcher) intend conducting the research. Fox and Meyer (1995:13) refer research design as a selection of units and comparative forms to make descriptive statement or text hypothesis. It can therefore be deduced that the research design is the preconceived plan according to which the data are to be collected for the investigation of the research hypothesis or question.

Mouton (2001:56) considers the following as the most important characteristics of research design: most characteristics of the research design: focuses on the end product: what kind of study is being planned and what kind of result is aimed at; point of departure + research problem or question; and focuses on the logic of research: what kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately.

As far as this research study is concerned the empirical study was applied. Empirical is defined as observation that is based upon sense experiences or the direct logical extensions or sense experiences (Fox and Meyer, 1995). According to Mouton (2001) the use of implementation (process) evaluation research is recommended as it aims at answering the question whether an intervention (program, therapy, policy or strategy) has been properly implemented (process evaluation studies), whether the target group has been adequately covered and whether the intervention was implemented as designed.



A research design gives a clear indication of the means by which the researcher hopes to achieve the research aims, to outline appropriate procedure and to indicate the sources of data to be used in the research study. For the purposes of this research study both the qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Qualitative method refers to research which produces descriptive data and quantitative method uses graphs and percentiles when analyzing data.

### 3.3 Area of study

The area of study has focused on the Department of Education Capricorn District (formerly known as the Central Region) - Limpopo Province. The District is found in the old Lebowakgomo parliamentary buildings situated approximately fifty four (54) kilometers east of the city Polokwane. It is made up of thirty two (32) circuits. It has various directorates, sub directorates, divisions, sub divisions, sections and sub sections. The area that the research is going to focus more on is the Human Resource Management division which comprises of the provisioning and the conditions of services personnel.

### 3.4 Population

A population may be defined as the total collection of individuals who are potentially available for observation and who have the attribute(s) in common which our research hypothesis refers (Huysamen, 1981:2). Population is, once more, defined as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. The population encompasses the total collection of all members, cases or elements about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions.

The population of this research project is, therefore made mainly of 52 (fifty two) public officials attached to the Human Resource Management division of the Capricorn District Department of Education. The main reasoning for choosing the division was that it was manageable and accessibility was easy as the researcher was also attached to the very same division of the District. That in the ultimate would make it easy for the respondents to interact with the researcher and thereby giving timeous responses and get clarity on matters not clearly understood in both the questionnaire and during interviews.

### 3.5 Target group and sampling

A target group is mainly persons, communities or organizations on which a policy or program is expected to have an effect (Fox and Meyer, 1995:127). The whole 52 Human Resource Management personnel were targeted.

### 3.6 Research techniques

The following are some of the techniques and methods the researcher has applied in the research study.

#### 3.6.1 The Interviews

Behr (1988:150) states that an interview is a direct method of obtaining information in a face to face situation. An interview as the main source of data provides access to what is inside a person's head and mind. It is against this background that it is possible to measure what a person knows (either knowledge or information) and what a person likes or dislikes. Sometimes it is found that the interviews are telephonically conducted by the researcher. In the case of this research study a structured or standardized interview was applied. According to this method of interviews the procedures to be followed were determined in advance. An interview schedule was prepared in which the pattern to be followed, the wording of the questions and instructions and the method of coding or categorizing the answers are detailed (Behr, 1988:151). In this context all personnel attached to the Human Resource Management division will be interviewed. The interviews took approximately 25 (twenty five) minutes for each interviewee.

The most important element in conducting a successful interview was for the researcher as the interviewer to establish rapport with the interviewees. Included among those elements were gaining confidence of the interviewee, conveying the impression that the interviewee was the only person in possession of information or knowledge which is needed for the research and which no one else can give or supply. The researcher would at all times apply a formal interview in those problems such as conversation was lessened as the interviewee was open to more opinions. Clarity on issues not properly understood to the respondents was always given on hand. The physical presence of an interviewer was very much valuable in that it created a positive environment and encouraged participation on the part of the interviewee who was the respondent; that in the ultimate was active

interaction between the role players in a research study. Probably the biggest advantage of personal interviews is that the interviewer is in complete control of the interview situation. If the respondent is evasive the interviewer may attempt to gain his or her confidence. Moreover, the interviewer can ensure that the respondent's first response is recorded as well as any changes to it, that all questions are answered and that someone else does not provide the responses on the respondent's behalf. Consequently, the responses obtained are of a high quality.

The researcher has again made use of the tape recorder (where possible) to code the responses from the interviewees. Tape recording provides not only a complete and accurate record of the interview, but it also preserves the emotional and social character of the responses (Behr, 1988:153).

The main idea behind an interview is to introduce the researcher to the respondent and the reason(s) why such a study was done. Basically the research has used a questionnaire as a method of collecting data.

### 3.6.2 Structured self administered questionnaires

According to the glossary in Baker (1994:480), a questionnaire is defined as a written set of questions used to survey respondents. A questionnaire is one other educational tool the researcher is to apply in the research study. Questionnaires were normally distributed and filled by the respondents expected to display ethical conduct (in this case the Human Resource Management division). Questions were asked in a closed format. This format required the respondent to place a tick, make a mark or draw a line alongside one of several provided possible answers (Behr, 1988:156). A questionnaire is the most widely economically used technique of obtaining information from subjects/respondents. It is again extremely widespread among sociologists and most frequently used (Forcese and Richer, 1973:60). With a questionnaire one is able to reach a large number of respondents (thereby saving time) as desired and again due to limited personal resources particularly money. In a questionnaire, the same questions are asked to all respondents to ensure anonymity and consistency.

According to Baker (1994:182) the two most significant rules to remember in a self administered questionnaire are, the first one, questions should be interesting so that the respondent is encouraged to begin and hopefully complete the questionnaires, and the second rule is that questions which the

respondent may be reluctant to answer (such as on income or race) should come near the end of the questionnaire. This was to discourage respondents from refusing to complete the form(s).

The researcher has used simple and understandable language to avoid unambiguous perceptions in the research proposal. Questions on the same subject have been grouped together to keep the respondent thinking about the same material. If the questions are the same, population validity and reliability will be maintained. Population validity is meant the degree to which the findings obtained for such a sample may be generalized to the total population to which the research hypothesis or problem applies (Huysamen, 1994:45). Questionnaires were distributed to respondents where they were required to supply information or data as requested and required by the researcher. The questionnaires were to be completed and submitted to the researcher in a day's time.

### 3.7 Data analysis method

The research will determine and select from the general field exactly data which is required for the observant of code of conducts and corrective measures to be implemented.

### 3.8 Conclusion

The research methodology and design to be followed in the research process have been outlined in this chapter. The area of study of this research study is the Department of Education: a case of Capricorn District (Limpopo Province). The population of the study is the Human Resource Management division at the very same district. The different research techniques namely the structured self administered questionnaire and the interviews have been discussed. And lastly, the data analysis method has been presented.

## Chapter 4

### Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how data would be presented, analysed and interpreted. Data is presented in accordance with the respondents' responses to the self administered questionnaire and interview schedule. Data was analysed quantitatively using graphs and percentiles and described qualitatively. The research has determined and selected, from the general field, exactly data which is required for the observant of codes of conduct and corrective measures to be implemented. The research has filtered the massive amount of data available until only that which was critical to research remains.

Of the envisaged 52 respondents to be part of the research study, only 39 (which was 78% thereof) respondents were able and willing to partake in the process.

#### 4.2 Quantitative data analysis

The data was analysed based on the respondents' answers to the self administered questionnaire (see Annexure A).

Figure 4.2.1

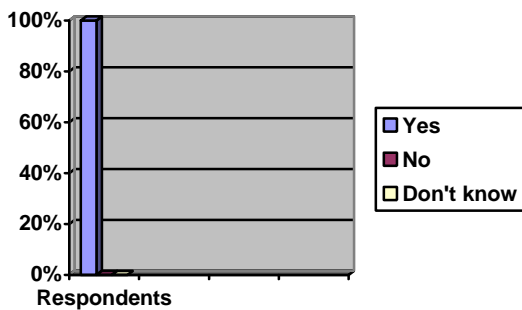


Figure 4.2.1 represents the determination of the faithfulness of the employees towards the department they are attached to. The bar graph represents the responses (from the respondents) in percentages. Respondents were to indicate by saying yes, no or don't know. The results show that 100% (the whole 39 respondents) indicated that they are faithful to their country and in particular to the department where employed. Even though the respondents have indicated their faithfulness to the Republic, it

doesn't mean that the department has to sit in a comfort zone and be fooled by such a situation but at all times check as to whether really employees do abide and honour the Constitution by applying available measures and mechanisms. By that it means that checks and balances have to be applied occasionally.

Figure 4.2.2

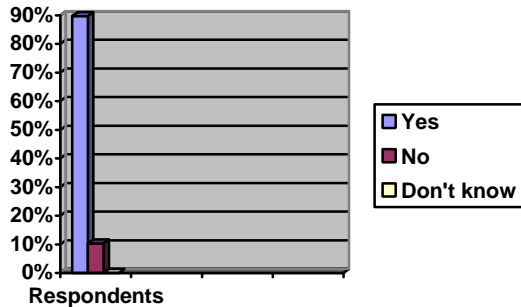


Figure 4.2.2 presents personnel responses towards putting public interest first in the execution of their duties. The main purpose of the question was to determine whether the respondents when taking decisions or making discretions in the execution of daily functions put the interests of the public first and own interests or any other sectarian interest placed subordinate to the public interests. The respondents were to choose from yes, no or don't know. The results show that 34 respondents (89,7%) have answered yes, 4 respondents (10,3% have answered no and none have answered don't know towards putting public interests first than personal interests. The perception is that the majority of employees are aware of this situation of putting public interest first. However the department has to guard against a situation whereby discretionary power is applied which in the ultimate if not controlled will not produce any good results particularly towards efficient service delivery. There will be less fiction in the decision making process and also less critical thought brought to bear on the decisions that are made and so they will be worse decisions.

Figure 4.2.3

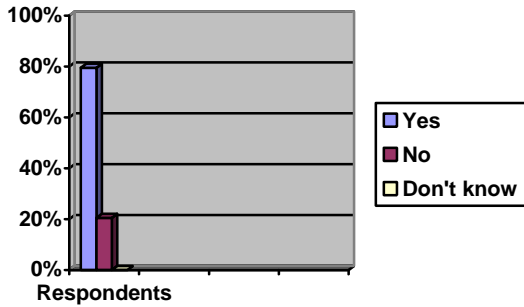


Figure 4.2.3 presents the employees loyalty in executing the policies of the government of the day in the performance of their official duties as contained in all statutory and other prescripts. Public service employees are required to serve the elected government of the day in a dedicated, skillful and faithful manner in executing such policies. The respondents were to choose from the alternative answers often, sometimes or seldom. The results indicate that 31 respondents (89, 7% have answered yes; 8 respondents (10,3%) have given no as their answer and none with regard to don't know. The deduction from the respondents' answers was that the majority of the employees are loyal in the execution of functions to the government of the day's policies. However, the department need not sit in a comfort zone and hope that its employees are loyal and therefore cannot commit acts of corruption, fraud, forgery and misappropriation of funds.

Figure 4.2.4

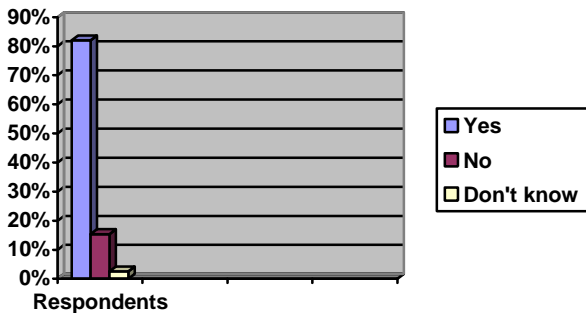


Figure 4.2.4 presents the employees' cooperation with other public institutions established under legislation and the Constitution in promoting the public interest. The Constitution has established a number of institutions or bodies such as the Public Protector, Auditor General, Public Service

Commission to name just a few serving as checks and balances to ensure sound administration. In responding to the question pertaining to such cooperation 32 respondents (82%) have answered yes; 6 respondents (15,4%) have answered no and 1 respondent (2,6%) indicated don't know. The deduction made from the respondents' answers is that the majority of the employees strive to promote cooperation with other departments or institutions. However, the situation needs to be improved for everyone to understand that they are not working in isolation but with other institutions of the government of the day towards a better service delivery.

Figure 4.2.5

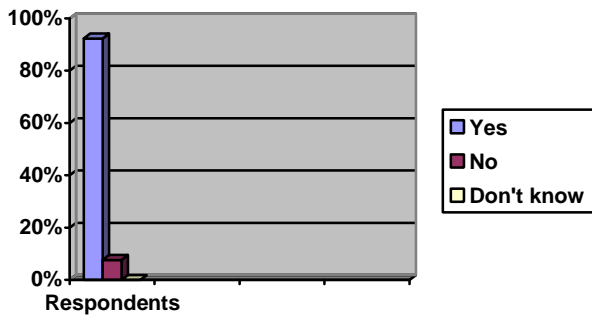


Figure 4.2.5 presents the employees' promoting the unity and the well being of the South African nation in particular those their department is serving. The figure indicates that 36 respondents (96,3%) have shown that they can promote the unity and well being of the South African nation; 3 respondents (7,7%) answered no and none have indicated don't know. The perception drawn was that the majority of the employees soundly interact with the public no matter who, when, where, what and how. However, it is still a challenge for the department as the employer of choice to create a good team spirit so as to avoid a situation of the public crying and grumbling about being mishandled and ill treated by public employees.

Figure 4.2.6

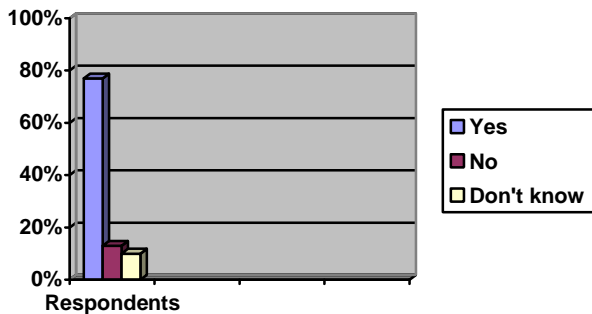




Figure 4.2.6 presents the scenario where employees indicated as to whether they can serve the public in an unbiased and impartial manner in order to create confidence in the public service. The results indicated that 30 respondents (76,9%) serve the public in an unbiased and impartial manner; 5 respondents (12,8% indicated no and 4 respondents (10,3%) indicated don't know towards serving the public in an unbiased and impartial manner. The deduction drawn was that the majority of the respondents (as employees) serve the whole community as was expected of them equally in an effective, efficient and professional friendly manner. But the fact that man is fallible and vulnerable to acts contrary to the required moral standards and practices must always make the department to verify and check as to whether all do adhere and abide by the codes of conduct requested and required of them.

Figure 4.2.7

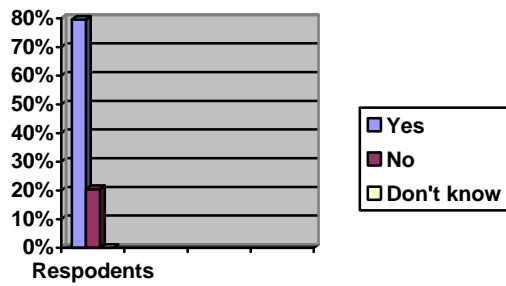


Figure 4.2.7 presents the commitment by employees (as respondents) through timely service to the development and upliftment of the department attached to. When posing such a question to the respondents it was to determine whether they exactly know that they are obliged by law to inform the public about their rights and obligations, the services they are entitled to, the procedures to follow and whom to approach when things are not getting right. It is the obligation of their department to educate the uninformed by providing them with all the necessary and relevant information, guidance and any other help they may require. To this question 31 respondents (79,5%) have answered yes; 8 respondents (2,5%) have indicated no and none with regard to don't know. The perception drawn was that the majority of the respondents work towards the development and upliftment of the department whereas the minority sometimes does. The challenge then is how the department takes the minority left behind on board towards a common direction of developing and uplifting the department they are working for and serving?

Figure 4.2.8

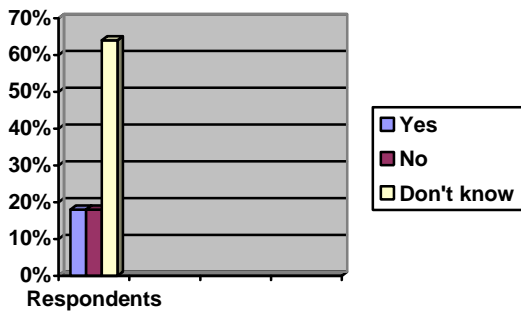


Figure 4.2.8 presents a scenario where one has ever abused one's position in the public service to promote or prejudice the interests of any political party or interest groups. The fact that the public service is for the entire community deters employees thereof from being involved in any matters favouring one group over another. The results showed that 7 respondents (18%) have given yes as their answers; again 7 respondents (18%) have answered no and 25 respondents (64%) answered don't know towards abusing one's position to promote or prejudiced the interest of any political party or interest groups. The main challenge is for the employees to draw a fine line between rendering service in the public employ and the fact that they (public officials) are prohibited from being involved in party political activities or issues as the two cannot mix just like water and oil in the car engine.

Figure 4.2.9

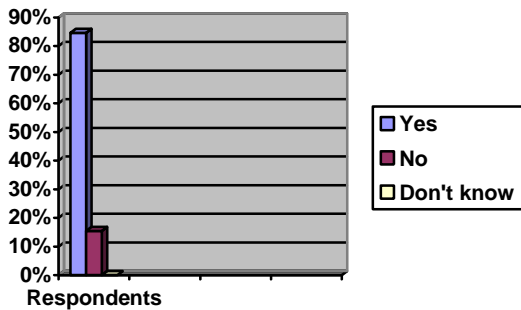


Figure 4.2.9 presented the employees' full cooperation with other employees to advance the public interest and the mission and vision of the department. In every government department employees must make a special concerted effort to cooperate with one another as no employee must independently work in isolation from colleagues. No one feels comfortable around *prima donnas*. Any organisation, the Department of Education inclusive has ways of dealing with employees who subvert the team. Employees are encouraged to be team players by making colleagues and others in their employ look like

stars and demonstrate that they have the greater good of the organisation at heart. The results showed that 32 respondents (84, 6%) have answered yes which was an indication of encouraging teamwork or cooperation; 7 respondents (15, 4%) stated no in encourage teamwork and none regarding don't know. The perception from the answers indicated that the majority of the employees take cognizance of teamwork or cooperation and less few who sometimes don't encourage such mustn't be left out but taken on board through fruitful interventions such as workshops and further training regarding this aspect.

Figure 4.2.10

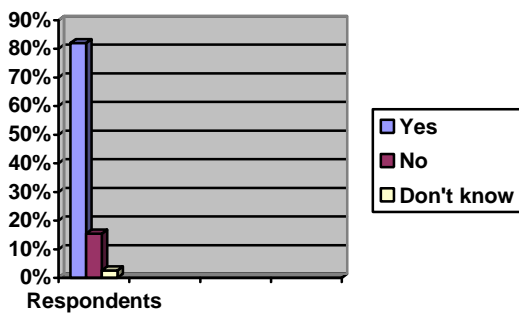


Figure 4.2.10 presents the reasonable execution of instructions by persons officially assigned to give them, provided these are not contrary to the provision of the Constitution and/or any other law. The figure indicate that 32 respondents (82%) understand rules and regulations governing their sphere of work by answering yes; 6 respondents (15,4%) answered no towards carrying out instructions to the letter and 1 respondents (2,6%) don't know in executing instructions which are within the bounds of the law reasonably. The perception brought home was that a large chunk of the employees abides and honour instructions as prescribed in the rules and regulations governing their sphere of work, however the situation (in particular with those who answered sometimes and/or seldom) should be improved for everyone to understand reasonable conduct in carrying out instructions from supervisors as it's constitutionally imperative to do likewise.

Figure 4.2.11

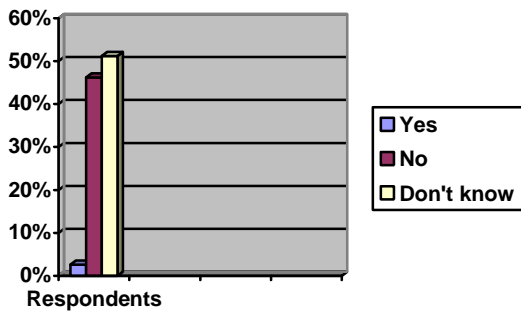


Figure 4.2.11 represents participation in party political activities in the work place. The main aim was to determine (from the respondents) their neutrality when discharging authorities and responsibilities vested (given) them by refraining from political activities in the work place. The results indicated that 1 respondent (2, 6% has answered yes towards the question; 18 respondents (46, 2%) have answered no and 20 respondents (51,2%) have answered don't know. The perception from the responses was that party political activities do take place at work place as was evident from half the respondents (yes and no answers) who said that they participate in party political activities in the work situation. Such a situation must be dealt with in the strongest possible terms as public servants have to remain apolitical when rendering services to the whole community. The general welfare of the community is for the whole Republic and not for interests or benefit of any particular political party or interest group.

Figure 4.2.12

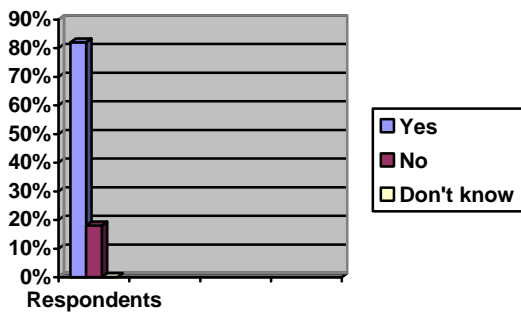


Figure 4.2.12 represents whether employees are striving to achieve objectives of their institutions cost effectively and in the public interest. The results indicated that 32 respondents (82%) have answered yes to striving to achieve objectives; 7 respondents (18%) answered no strive to achieve objectives and none regarding don't know strive to achieve predetermined objectives. The perception was that a large percentage of the employees display a great effort when rendering services to the citizens of the country.

Therefore a concerted effort by both the supervisors and subordinates must be made to see to it that everybody (employed in the public service) strive towards contributing to acceptable meaningful services or results for which their organizational component is responsible for.

Figure 4.2.13

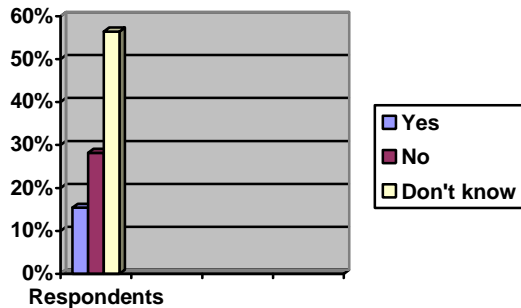


Figure 4.2.13 wanted to determine whether the respondents (as employees) have ever been engaged in any transaction or action which is in conflict with or infringes on the execution of official duties. The results were that 5 respondents (15, 4%) have answered yes; 11 respondents (28, 2%) have indicated no as their answer and 23 respondents (56,4%) have responded by saying don't know to the question. With regard to this aspect the deduction was that the majority of the employees do not engage themselves in unlawful transactions or actions which are in conflict with or infringes on the execution of official duties as compared to the minority who do. Thus few employees need to be made aware about acts such as fraud, theft, an influence on how one does his/her work and interference with the carrying out of duties which to some extent are an infringements which are punishable and can lead to one being dismissed if not discharged from duty. Officials or employees who disgrace their department and therefore the government by involving themselves in corruption must be dealt with accordingly. It is the researchers hope that even community members must assume the positive role in the fight against corruption.

Incidents of corruption must be reported at all times for failure to do such by our own act of omission or commission will make the notion of colluding with those who are actively involved in corrupt activities a reality. Employees' behaviour should be such that they draw trust and loyalty from the public and must be beyond reproach.

Figure 4.2.14

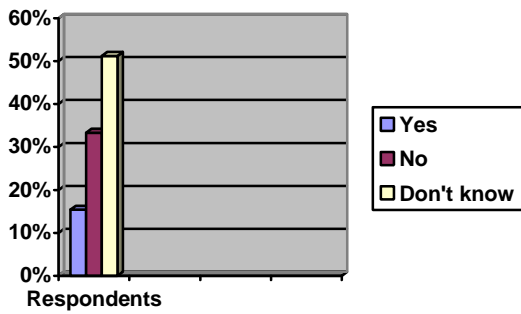


Figure 4.2.14 presents a declaration from the respondents to recuse (withdraw) self from any official action or decision making process which may result in improper personal gain. The results were that 6 respondents (16, 4%) have answered yes; 13 respondents (33, 3%) have answered no and 20 respondents (51, 2%) have given don't know as their answer. The scenario was that almost half of the employees have declared that where they cannot remain objective in performing their work or decision making process or when other people might have reason to believe that they are not able to remain objective due to some external involvement they can immediately withdraw themselves from such activities to protect the image, integrity and trustworthiness of the public service. With regard to the other half (as evident from yes and no answers) they need to be taught that indulging in activities whereby one has an ulterior motive in itself is a crime and very much punishable.

#### 4.2.3 Qualitative data analysis

The interviews conducted were based on the interview schedule (See Annexure B) and the interviewees responded as follows:

##### 4.3.1 Years of service in the public sector

From the data on work experience in years in the public service (which in this case was the Department of Education Capricorn District Human Resource Management) a little percentage (2 respondents which translated to 5,1%) have been in the employ of the department. Their years of experience ranged between 3 and 4 years. This in itself was an indication that they do operate and function through the application of recent forms of administration and practices.

The remaining majority of the percentage of the respondents' experience ranged between 14 and 25 years to the high of 27 years in the public sector. This was an indication that the majority was employed during the previous administration. The main challenge thereof was whether the employees were properly incorporated and integrated into the present administration and whether change was properly managed to an extent that the past will never disturb the employees into acclimatising into the present situation, circumstances and practices.

#### **4.3.2 Induction or orientation course when first employed in the public service**

The main aim of such a question in the self administered interview questionnaire was to determine or establish whether the employees received effective orientation or induction training when first employed in and entering the public service in this case the Department of Education. Orientation and induction entail familiarizing newly employed appointee with and adapting to an unknown work situation or environment. Orientation reduces personnel turnover caused by negative influence and a feeling of ineffectiveness; it saves time as higher management have to spend less time on the training of recruits and again it prevents unnecessary mistakes by ensuring higher productivity and resultant better interpersonal relationships among colleagues.

The majority of the interviewees have indicated that they were inducted and orientated when they entered the public service for the very first time. Some of them have said that they were inducted after six months on being appointed which in the ultimate didn't serve the main purpose of the process as they already had own perception regarding the department's activities than the actual purpose of an induction and orientation process. A few of the respondents have said that they were never familiarize (orientated and/or inducted) in the beginning of their working career. The challenge faced by the respondents was that for the fact that they were inducted after a particular period on entering the public service or totally not inducted in the previous administration to date, change was not properly managed when the democratic era or dispensation in 1994 was ushered.

#### **4.3.3 Punctuality in executing duties**

The main idea in posing such a question regarding punctuality in executing duties to the respondents was to determine whether they do meet or miss deadlines when executing their daily functions. The majority of the respondents have indicated that they attend to their work with the urgency it deserves hence some even coined the slogan that 'the work of today must be finished by today'. A

few of the respondents have indicated that they were unable to meet their obligations due to lack of training especially the persal system which is the main working tool used when carrying out transactions such as appointment of educators, capturing of leave days and service terminations in the computer.

The perception from the respondents' responses was that deadlines were met. If the deadline is today, the first thing is that tomorrow won't cut in. Thus the department has people it can depend on. Missing deadlines is not only unprofessional but it can play havoc with others' schedule and make the whole department look bad and unprofessional too.

#### **4.3.4 Discrimination against any member of the public**

The majority of the respondents interviewed indicated that they don't unfairly discriminate members of the public on account of race, gender, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, political persuasion, conscience, belief, culture and/or language. Some of the reasons advanced in not practising discrimination were that it retards progress in particular with service delivery; it is contrary to the principle of good governance as embodied in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 and equality before the law. The perception was that the majority of the respondents embrace our democracy as change has totally done away with having negative attitudes towards others due to race, colour, sex and others mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, one cannot conclusively and convincingly say that there are no such practices in administrative duties. Therefore it is encouraged that change properly be managed to take everybody on board as different races in the ultimate can be friends and ultimately enhance service delivery.

#### **4.3.5 Employees' dress during official hours**

One of the predominant requirements in the public service is that employees in particular those dealing with or serving the public directly should at all time be neat, presentable, decent, respectable and formally dressed. A number of respondents have indicated that they abide by the department's code of dress by being presentable in formally dressing during office hours in order to promote the respect, integrity, dignity, glory and reputation of both the department and self. However, the main challenge to the department is how to deal with employees who come to work



looking untidy or coming to work smelling liquor as such situations create a negative image of and detrimental to the department and the entire republic of South Africa.

Willy-nilly, appearance does count. People draw all kinds of conclusions from the way an employee presents self regard dressing. So it is advisable not to come to work poorly groomed or inappropriate attire. Employees need to be honest, use proper grammar and avoid slang and expletives. Lastly and importantly they (employees) have to project an image of competence, character and commitment.

#### **4.3.6 Reporting to the appropriate authority acts of fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and any other act which constitutes an offence or which is prejudicial to the public**

The majority of the respondents have indicated that they can report whatever form of fraudulent or illegal activities or actions they come across or recognise in the department. This in itself will lower the level of corruption as those charged will serve as good examples to those who will be attempting and tempted to be indulged in such actions. But there were still some of the interviewees who have indicated that due to their not being sure of their safety and insecurity they won't be able to report corruption activities or dishonest behaviour as soon as they were aware of them.

The general impression was that public employees know and understand the fact that they don't have to indulge in corrupt activities otherwise they need to be reported in order to minimize corruption.

#### **4.3.7 Accepting the responsibility to avail oneself of ongoing and self development throughout one's career**

The majority of the respondents have indicated that they accept the responsibility to avail themselves of ongoing and self development throughout their careers. They recommended on the job training or in service training, workshops, courses related and relevant to their sphere of work and any other developmentally related programmes to be able to be on par with dynamics and new developments governing their sphere of work. This in the end will enable them to be abreast of and developed with the latest administrative trends in the public domain.

The greatest challenge facing the department is whether funds will be available to make further training and development a success, which if properly done and administered will contribute towards achievable public service delivery as the department will be manned, staffed and populated by expert capable of discharging their obligations in a reasonable and economic manner and economic application of available limited resources.

#### **4.2.8 Striving to be familiar with and abides by all statutory and other instructions applicable to conduct and duties**

Discharging administrative duties can never take place in a vacuum but must be guided and be within and be in strict compliance with the law, statutes and other instruction(s) applicable to conduct and duties. Any administrative decision(s) must be taken to conform with existing regulations, policies of their job content and the procedures to be followed. The majority of the respondents have indicated that they do abide to whatever policy, regulations, rules and any other applicable measure governing and guiding their sphere of work by virtue of being public employees attached to a public institution representing the desire and wishes of the majority of the citizens of the country. They cited some of the documents such as the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA) of 1999, *Labour Relations Act* and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,. The main stumbling block or bunker in as far as the respondents which makes it difficult for them to access or acquaint themselves with the contents and application of some of the mentioned documents is the non availability of them or non access to an internet to view them. The most daunting question is whether employees diligently carry the spirit of the policies and regulations governing their sphere of work to the letter as predetermined and expected of them and in the best interest of the public and communities served.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The data was analysed quantitatively through graphs and percentiles for each self administered questionnaire. The responses were qualitatively described to comprehensively get the logical correspondence of the data and where appropriate, the actual responses obtained were compared to existing literature.

## **Chapter 5**

### **(Conclusions, recommendations and implementations)**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The main purpose of the research study was to examine the impact which the unethical conduct of public officials has on service delivery in Limpopo, particularly the Capricorn District Department of Education. Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the republic of South Africa, 1996; a White paper on Transforming Public Service delivery, 1997 and the Public Service regulations, 2002 are some of the documents containing expected ethical and moral conduct and behaviour that public officials have to be seen displaying in their daily work's sphere but sometimes the opposite is the case. The changing value systems has increasingly placed a challenge on public officials in upholding and promoting the integrity of the department when discharging their responsibilities towards service delivery as is constitutionally imperative to do likewise.

Basically the main aim of the research study was to get inputs or contributions from the respondents, who were the employees of the Department of education Capricorn District and attached to the Human Resource Management division about the improvement mechanisms / measures regarding conduct or behaviour of public officials. It was the researchers hope that in order to restore, renew and strengthen the government resolve in relation to ethics and morals we need to pave way to make for peace and harmony in the world amongst all employees of the department.

Public officials are the integral and important functionaries within the public life of people served. They are highly needed as they provide a service that is much specialized. Their actions must be beyond reproach in the execution of their daily functions based on the amount of responsibility and authority vested upon them. It is expected of them to be loyal, diligent, honest, fair, committed and determined in order to promote and uphold the image and integrity of the department and ultimately of the government of the day.

The introduction and general orientation of the research project were indicated in Chapter 1 wherein the statement of the problem; aims and objectives and significance of the study; the research questions; ethical considerations or issues and limitations of the study were brought to the fore.

In Chapter 2 the literature that applied to the study was reviewed to establish the basic principles to be considered in both the organization and planning of the research project. Based on the fact that the researcher presented a variety of views from different authors regarding the research problem under study, it was easy to confront the problem head on with deeper knowledge, insight and understanding background. The researcher was able to plan, carry out the research project and deal with the problem from constitutional and regulative frameworks including manifestations of unethical conduct and behaviour together with the promotion of professionalism in the work place.

Chapter 3 presented the research design and methodology; the methods followed in accumulating data were presented and the procedures in sampling and the applicable data analysis methods were indicated.

Chapter 4 was based on the data analysis from the respondents' answers in the questionnaire and interviews questions. Data was quantitatively analysed with the use of graphs and percentiles for each of the research questions in the questionnaire and thereafter qualitatively described and discussed from the point of view of the respondents' answers of the interview questions and thereafter findings were presented.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The research findings emanated from the responses to self administered questionnaires and interview schedule. Where appropriate the actual responses obtained were compared to the existing literature. Unethical conduct or behaviour is at all costs not accepted in the public service departments such as the Department of Education Capricorn district (Limpopo Province).

The component Human Resource Management of the district in both the provisioning and the conditions of service was manned and staffed by personnel or public officials with a lot (vast) experience and years of service in the public service. The respondents (as employees) have indicated their loyalty and faithfulness to the department attached to and thereby to the government of the day. How was this gauged? This was evident from the respondents who had the decency to indicate it is possible to, at any time, report corruption, fraud, nepotism, maladministration and any other act which constituted an offence or which is prejudicial to the public if noticed in their department. But the fact that there were those who indicated that they were afraid or rather not interested in reporting such unwanted and corrosive acts cast a doubtful conclusive mind to the researcher that actually such

destructive acts do happen without being reported as they are swept under the carpet due to the “I don’t care’ situation and attitude. Corruption happening just in front and under the noses of some of the respondents, therefore, erodes the envisaged predetermined objectives, aims and goals of the department hence limited resources being misdirected, squandered and misused towards individual gain than the general welfare of the whole community served. By leaving such acts unreported makes others to feel tempted into indulging themselves into such acts, thereby totally bringing a collapse of services to the public. This in itself was an indication that unethical conduct was prevalent and alive in the department and eventually impact negatively on service delivery.

With regard to the dress displayed while on duty, the respondents indicated that they were excellently outstanding about compliance with the code of dress as they were at all times formal, neat, look able, admirable and pretty attractive. The most serious question demanding many answers was whether respect, dignity and accolades commanded from their (as respondents) acceptable formal dressing and attire (which promoted the image and integrity of the department) actually translate, reciprocate and yield into acceptable and achievable service delivery. The answer was yes due to certain elements that have indicated or answered yes from questions such as availing themselves to in service or on the job training to abreast, update and develop themselves with the ever changing world of administration; the harmonious interaction and communication with other employees or colleagues while in the employ so as to achieve predetermined objectives with ease, especially where and when one encounters hindrances when attempting to deliver goods and/or services; again the fact that the majority of the respondents put the interests of the public in the forefront than being self centered or arrogant (egoism); an often reasonable execution of instructions by persons officially assigned to give them provided they are within and not contrary to the parameters, limits and provisions of the constitution (which is the supreme law of the country) and/or any other available pieces of legislation, rules and regulations governing and conducting conduct. The conclusion arrived at was that the respondents (as employees) didn’t isolate or dissociate themselves from each other but working as a team. They developed and used relationships with others in the division and profession. Effective networking has an inside track on resources and information and can more quickly make an individual cut through organizational policies to the benefit of the organization and thereby improving service delivery. Research has shown effective networking tend to serve on more successful teams and get better performance reviews thereby enhancing service delivery.

Having given the previous examples of commanding respect and integrity of both the organization and the individual employees themselves, it must be indicated that the no and/or don't know answers to some of the questions was a genuine proof that really unethical conduct or behaviour was prevalent within the department. A scenario that can be cited was an example of an individual visiting a small pond of water whereby when advancing it he saw just a single crocodile crawling into the water. That individual will then be whole heartedly be convinced that the pond has crocodiles instead of the only one seen. The scenario really is a proof that one rotten potato can spoil the whole bag of potatoes. A large percentage of the respondents indicated in their answers (as dominated by sometimes and seldom) that they can recuse or withdraw themselves from any official action or decision making process which may result in improper personal gain or when people might have to believe that they were not able to remain objective due to some external involvement to protect the image, integrity and trustworthiness of the public service.

Pertaining to induction and orientation of new recruits or employees who entered the public service for the very first time, thankfully, rightfully and deservedly the majority of the respondents received such training. This was indicative of the fact that respondents were able to be introduced, familiarize and then adapted to the new unknown work environment or situation. But the least percentage who indicated that they underwent orientation and induction after six months on being appointed and those that have never undergone such a training made such respondents to create own perceptions, ideas and misconceptions about the department, thereby creating tension, confrontation and confusion within the respondents by not knowing acceptable moral standards and norms governing and guiding their conduct as applicable within the department employed. This eventually create room and fertile ground for unethical conduct of public officials for their actions will defeat the preconceived and desired actions which could have been imparted to them on their very first day of their entry into the public employ. This in the ultimate will result in service delivery being negatively impacted.

In conclusion it can be deduced that unethical conduct of public officials was prevalent in the department and if not confronted head on, it can negatively impact service delivery. The provisions as contained in the documents such as Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; the *Public Service Regulations*, 2002 and the White Paper Transforming Service Delivery, 1997 (containing the eight *Batho Pele* principles) were not effective, efficient and properly adhered to and complied with and therefore as a matter of urgency corrective action(s) or measure(s)

and mechanism(s) to minimize if not uprooting unethical conduct have to be implemented right away.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The following are the major recommendations drawn from the critical issues in the report findings. These recommendations, drawn from the findings of the research project, are solely aimed at ensuring that efficient and effective service delivery is not hampered and dampened by unethical, unbecoming and unacceptable conduct and behaviour of public officials, in particular those who serve as pilot study for the research project namely the Human Resource management public officials in the Capricorn district of the Department of Education (Limpopo Province). It is the hope and desire of the researcher that the recommendations will instil and increase the level of professionalism, commitment, dedication, determination and competency in the department.

The study revealed that there was lack of professionalism in the department mainly on the part of public officials. Professionalism is defined as the way in which public managers and their subordinates officials behave and to the fact that this conduct is evaluated according to standards unique to the activities of public managers (Van der Waldt and Du Toit, 1997:53) and the Capricorn district is no exception to this. Unprofessionalism in the department is caused by instances when employees entered the employ of the department and are never inducted or orientated after time for them to be introduced to expected moral and standard behaviour in the public service; public officials again don't report acts of corruption and fraud when noticed because of their insecurity even with the availability of toll free numbers and whistle blowing without disclosing one's identity was one prominent factor contributing towards unprofessionalism; and participation in political activities at the expense of the department's time and resources. The necessity of professionalism is to ensure the mobility of personnel between the different levels of government, to improve knowledge and skills and to realise the aims and standards of the profession to the advantage of all clients / communities served. In order to revamp the whole dignity and dented image of the whole department the researcher hereby recommends that reengineering of the whole department and the staff be reintroduced to whatever available mechanism(s) and measure(s) as if they are entering the public service for the very first time.

The research findings confirmed that corrective action or discipline was not meted out for transgressions of the available rules, regulations and any other prescripts of law guiding and

governing conduct and behaviour in their day to day activities towards a sound service delivery. Discipline is defined as a behavioural pattern of a public official which coincides with the prescriptions of the law, regulations or other statutory stipulations. Discipline must not be seen to be an arbitrary action (personified) by supervisors or guiding officials but be contained and prescribed in legislations or regulations. Whenever public officials are guilty of conduct as prohibited by law, regulations or other statutory stipulations, they are guilty of misconduct and thereby liable to charges. Certain disciplinary measures or mechanisms must, therefore, be taken in such cases so as to correct the individual(s) concerned and therefore preventing such occurrences to repeat and recur self in the future. The most vital recommended measure to promote discipline is the continuous, interactive and sound communication support and transformation element to ensure that improvements of conduct in the Department of Education as a unit in a whole of departments or institutions of the government of the day impact positively on the public confidence in the department. The hot stove principle must apply where unacceptable conduct is treated with the urgency it so deserves.

One other discovery of the research findings was that the Department of Education, in particular the Capricorn district (Limpopo Province) was populated with public officials with a lot of experience and appointed during the previous regime. Past, present and future constitutional changes may result in public officials not adapting and acclimatising to the latest expected practices and standards of behaviour to an extent that it is found that even in the present situation some are still caught in the past in particular regarding conduct. In this regard, the researcher recommends the management of innovation and change due to the rapidly changing world working environment which the institutions have to adapt to. The concept change implies moving away from a present known situation to an unknown future where the status quo no longer applies as certain actions are required to bring about change. It is the researcher's belief that a change to the present scenario was not properly done.

Change management is nothing else but a proactive and retroactive process to keep the institution continually in harmony with the changing environment (Van der Waldt and Du Toit, 1997:253). The researcher, therefore, strongly recommends that the department reconsiders the three stages of change namely firstly unfreezing public officials and preparing them for change; secondly change itself which involves the thorough modification or adaptation of people, structures and technology; and thirdly refreezing which is the final stage designed to maintain the momentum of change and ultimately positive results of the transitional phase are frozen, established and maintained.



Even if rules, regulations, policies and other statutory stipulations governing conduct or behaviour have been established, if there are no bodies and/or institutions serving as watch dogs to foster and encourage conformity to the spirit they were created for it is useless, futile, serving no purpose and financial wastage of taxpayers monies. It is hereby recommended that Performance Monitoring Directorate be established. Its function must be to supervise the conduct of employees towards an effective and efficient service. The implementation of the legislative and regulatory measures necessitates establishing monitoring or regulatory bodies and committees for ensuring compliance within the standards of conduct defined in the code of conduct and good practice and where possible punishing inappropriate, unconstitutional, improper and unsatisfactory conduct or behaviour.

The study uncovered that there was total lack of training and development of public officials. According to Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997:22) training is defined as the extension of knowledge for the specific purpose of filling a given position and to effectively perform work given, Its main aim is the practical application of knowledge together with the development of specific behaviour, patterns, attitudes and motives with a view to realization of the predetermined objectives, goals and aims of the institution. Training according to Andrews (1988:132) is the process of learning a sequence of programmed behaviour. It helps a person to solve a repetitive problem. The author further says that training is the application of knowledge and again gives people awareness of the rules and procedures to guide their behaviour. It must be emphasized that a public official works within an open system and can therefore be influenced by community values and perceptions. A positive attitude in terms of a new public service and those appointed to control it can also be improved by training.

Development is defined as the continuation of education and training for the purpose of gaining experience and skills as well as the correct attitude in order to be admitted to higher managerial positions (Andrews, 1988: 134). It is recommended that the department implement training programmes for public service employees serving as faces of the department to display professional ethics and take practical appropriate steps to inform the public, thereby practicing transparency, openness and accountability for every action taken. For training and development to achieve fruitful and desired results, communication is of vital importance. Communication not only reduces fear and uncertainty inherent in the situation, but it also provides additional information (through communication with others) when confronted with an unexpected or unusual situation. Employees as public officials of the department representing the desire and needs of the community must be encouraged not to isolate themselves but be team players developing and using relationships with

others in the division and profession with the sole aim of a sound working environment to achieve the objectives purposefully and smoothly. Those networking effectively at all times have an inside track on resources and information and can more quickly cut through organizational politics to the benefit and advantage of the department. Eventually, effective networking tend to serve on more successful teams and get better performance reviews, receive more promotions and are more highly compensated.

Of notable importance is the recommendation that the public, organized groups and the media take their rightful place and participative active role as stakeholders in condemning unacceptable conduct of public officials. As is contained in the Constitution of the republic of South Africa (the Bill of Rights), the public is entitled to just administrative justice and access to information. The public is not able to guard against the infringements of their rights and privileges unless they know and understand their contents and application and what they entail. By being acquainted with the code of ethics will exert more pressure on public officials to always act within the framework of the applicable provisions of the regulations, rules, policies and acts governing conduct, thereby serving as checks and balances on the authorities and responsibilities vested on public officials and ultimately curtailing and confining them to acceptable moral standards of behaviour and conduct. Thus, unlike in the past, today the public has an interest in the activities undertaken by the government.

Organised groups (such as the interests and pressure groups) do not only put pressure on the government of the day to serve their interests without questions, but also put pressure on the government to account for its actions. The organized groups also rely on the media to bring certain malpractices in public institutions to their attention. A body such as the South African Council of Churches (SACC) can be used to organize and present through prayer services, counseling sessions, training workshops and staff retreats ensure that they (public officials) change their attitude and mindset of the public service regarding conduct and behaviour.

The media does and can play a powerful role in exercising control over the activities of public institutions. Being afraid of being exposed involved in unethical practices and the public questioning their integrity, honesty, uprightness, and soundness, will enable the officials to always be within and display acceptable conduct and behaviour. The media is described as the public watch dog and mouthpiece over the public institutions' actions and activities. Over the years it has brought many corrupt practices in public institutions to the attention of the public.

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## Annexure A

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Cell : 082 357 8755

Box 358  
Chuenespoort  
0745  
25/06/2010

The Respondent

To whom it may concern

I, Malose Johannes Tsebe, a student at the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership (TGSL) doing Masters Degree in Public Administration (MPA), hereby plead for your assistance in filling in this questionnaire. The questionnaire has been designed to collect data on: The role of ethical principles in promoting efficient service delivery at the Department of Education in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province

Please note that:

- \* Your participation is voluntary
- \* Any information given will be treated with the strictest confidentiality
- \* You do not have to provide your name or any other identifying information
- \* For the research purposes, please answer questions honestly
- \* The results may be used by our provincial Department of Education to improve efficient and effective service delivery
- \* Your cooperation is valued and will ensure the success of the research
- \* There are no correct or incorrect answers

Instructions for completing the questionnaire:

For each of the statements below, you are expected to place a tick in the appropriate box of the alternative answer which best apply to you.

Thanking you in advance for your valuable time and support.

Researcher

---

(Tsebe MJ)



1. As an employee of the Department of Education, are you faithful to the Republic of South Africa and honouring the Constitution and abides in the execution of daily tasks?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

2. Do you put public interests first in the execution of your duties?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

3. Do you loyally execute the policies of the government of the day in the performance of official duties as contained in all statutory and other prescripts?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

4. Do you cooperate with public institutions established under legislation and the Constitution in promoting the public interest?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

5. Do you promote unity and well being of the South African nation, in particular those in the department you are serving, when performing your official duties?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

6. Do you serve the public in an unbiased and impatient manner in order to create confidence in the public service?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

7. Are you committed, through timely service, to the development and upliftment of your department?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

8. Did you ever abuse your position in the public service to promote or prejudice the interest of any political party or interest groups?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

9. Do you cooperate fully with other employees to advance the public interest of your department?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

10. Do you execute all reasonable instructions by persons officially assigned to give them provided these are not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution and/or any other law?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

11. Do you participate in party political activities in the work place?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

12. Do you strive to achieve the objectives of your institution cost effectively and in the public interest?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

13. Have you ever been involved in any transaction or action which is in conflict with or infringes on the execution of official duties?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

14 As a declaration from yourself, have you ever recused yourself from any official action or decision making process which may result in improper personal gain?

|     |  |    |  |            |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|
| Yes |  | No |  | Don't know |  |
|-----|--|----|--|------------|--|

Your general comment with regard to the questionnaire  
:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is my pleasure to thank you for your cooperation and valuable support given to make the research a success. Thank you a million times.

Annexure B

Self administered questionnaire (Interview)

1. How long have you been in the employ of the department to which you are attached?

.....

2. When first employed in the public service, were you properly (according to your own view) inducted or orientated into what is expected of you in particular your conduct towards the public, colleagues and the law governing your sphere of work?

Elaborate: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. How effective are you in the execution of duties?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you unfairly discriminate against any member of the public on account of race, gender, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, political persuasion, conscience, belief, culture and/or language?

Elaborate: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. During official hours, how do you dress and behave in promoting the image of the public service?

Elaborate: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. Can you report any fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and other act which constitutes an offence or which is prejudicial to the public interests to the appropriate authorities?

Elaborate: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. Can you accept the responsibility to avail yourself to an ongoing self development training throughout your career?

Elaborate: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. Are you striving to be familiar with and abide by all statutory and other instructions applicable to conduct and duties?

Elaborate: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

NB. Once more, thank you for your cooperation in making this research a success. May His Grace and Light shine upon you.