**ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR**

**by**


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**DECLARATION**

I, Lindi Ebegail Vivien Sindelo, student number 212182307, confirm that the content of this thesis is the result of my own independent work, and that the thesis has not been submitted for educational examination for any qualification. Moreover, it represents my personal viewpoints and not those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

17 September 2024

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**Signature**                                              **Date**

## ABSTRACT

During the 30 years of democracy, the South African public sector has faced various challenges of poor governance, which include limitation of ethical leadership, limited accountability, limited transparency and increased corruption. Therefore, South Africa is characterised as a country with limited good governance, which impedes the effective delivery of public services. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, South African citizens witnessed numerous incidents of poor accountability from public officials and political office-bearers, including that of the Minister of Health, while also witnessing the undermining of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 by South Africa's former president, Jacob Zuma. A number of other incidents were recorded. These pointed to the need for ethical leadership, accountability and transparency – more urgently needed now than before in South Africa. The core objective of the study was to determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. An explanatory research design, which is a mixed-methods research method, underpinned the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five purposively selected senior executive management public officials and a structured questionnaire was distributed to 15 senior management public officials. The quantitative data generated in the study was analysed by a registered statistician using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), whilst the qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. The study focused on two purposively selected public sector institutions based on the characteristics of clean audits where one institution received 15 consecutive clean audits and the other six successive clean audits, receiving top rankings amongst South Africa's metros in the most recent Good Governance Performance Index (GPI) 2024.

The study's findings indicated that the current legislative frameworks, accountability mechanisms and systems within South Africa's public sector are ineffective in addressing governance challenges such as limited ethical leadership, accountability and transparency. Due to a lack of appropriate processes and mechanisms, South Africa has encountered several challenges, which have overshadowed the country's growth and positive developments over the years. As a result, it is recommended that the Oversight Committees, in charge of promoting good governance and accountability for public resources, review and amend the existing accountability measures. Each Directorate needs to have a Portfolio Committee that holds the Director accountable in order to provide effective and efficient oversight and financial accountability and transparency. Additionally, these committees should improve oversight measures such as reporting, auditing and monitoring systems to guarantee that public funds are spent responsibly and efficiently by senior management public officials.

This is an accountability technique used by the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa. Both selected public sector institutions adhere to the rule of law, excellent financial and performance management and quality service delivery as the cornerstones of good governance.  The study forwarded a detailed framework based on the analysis, interpretation and findings of the study as well as a variety of aspects that were discovered during the different phases of the study. This framework could be adopted by the selected public sector institutions, as well as by public offices that have either a direct or indirect interest in promoting and institutionalising good governance in South Africa.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**DEDICATION**

To Umdali wezulu nomhlaba, uThixo wemphendulo, the GOD of my Forebears, as well as my Ancestors of light, on both my maternal and paternal side. I vividly remember receiving the title of my thesis through a dream and, strangely enough, it was accepted on the first submittance. Manyange asekhaya abahamba ekukhanyeni, Mathambo amhlophe alele ukuthula, Mathonga amahle, iZithunywa ezingcwele, Makhosi amahle, you really showed up and fought for your child in every possible manner. Thank you for bestowing this title on me. It still feels surreal to be the first Doctor of Philosophy graduate on both sides of my lineage. I am your wildest dream, because through your guidance, strength and wisdom, I have broken generational curses. I am the one who shattered glass ceilings and forged new paths. I am extremely grateful and proud to have you as my spiritual guides. CAMAGU Thongo lam Elihle. To GOD, once again, YOU have glorified YOUR name and endlessly carried me. I vividly remember, on the morning when I went to defend my proposal, how the Holy Spirit encouraged me with the biblical verse, Zechariah 4:6: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my SPIRIT". These words actually resonated throughout my journey. The verse fuelled my trust in GOD and I acknowledge His unending presence. Finally, God's message in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans that I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future" remains testimony to His committed love for which I am grateful.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACIMC | Anti-Corruption Inter-Ministerial Committee |
| ACTT | Anti-Corruption Task Team |
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| AG | Auditor-General |
| AGSA | Auditor-General of South Africa |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| APAC | Audit and Performance Audit Committee |
| BAS | Basic Accounting System |
| CPUT | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| DPCI | Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation |
| DPME | Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation |
| DPSA | Department of Public Service and Administration |
| EMT | Executive Management Team |
| ESCOM | Electricity Supply Commission |
| FREC | Faculty Research Ethics Committee |
| GAAP | Generally Accepted Accounting Principles |
| GPI | Governance Performance Index |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HDC | Higher Degrees Committee |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| HOD | Head of Department |
| ID | Investigating Directorate |
| IDASA | Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa |
| IDP | Integrated Development Plan |
| IEC | Independent Electoral Commission |
| IFP | Inkatha Freedom Party |
| IIA SA | Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INTERPOL | the International Criminal Police Organisation |
| IPID | Independent Police Investigative Directorate |
| KPAs | Key Performance Areas |
| KPIs | Key Performance Indicators |
| KZN | KwaZulu-Natal |
| MAYCO | Mayoral Committee |
| MEC | Member of the Executive Council |
| MFMA | Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 |
| MPs | Members of Parliament |
| MPAC | Municipal Public Accounts Committee |
| MPD | Military Police Division |
| NCOP | National Council of Provinces |
| NP | National Party |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NIA | National Intelligence Agency |
| NPA | National Prosecuting Authority |
| NPM | New Public Management |
| NT | National Treasury |
| PAIA | Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 |
| PAJA | Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 |
| PC | Portfolio Committee |
| PCCA | the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004 |

| PFMA | Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 |
|------|----------------------------------------|
| PP | Public Protector |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| PRASA | Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa |
| PSC | Public Service Commission |
| RiskCo | Risk Committee |
| SA | South Africa |
| SAA | South African Airways |
| SABC | South African Broadcasting Corporation |
| SAICA | South African Institute of International Affairs |
| SANDF | South African National Defence Force |
| SAPS | South African Police Service |
| SCM | Supply Chain Management |
| SCOPA | Standing Committee on Public Accounts |
| SDBIP | Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan |
| SIU | Special Investigating Units |
| SMS | Senior Management Services |
| SOEs | State-Owned Entities |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| TRC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |
| WC | Western Cape |

**GLOSSARY**

The terms listed below, along with their definitions, are used throughout this study.

Accountability
: Accountability, according to Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012:46), is the process by which an individual must give fair explanations for any action taken. Hence, accountability requires a person's acceptance of responsibility for their decisions rather than blaming others. Accountability often entails reporting and accepting responsibility for any consequences resulting from one's conduct. It is a person's or an organisation's obligation to account for their actions, take responsibility for them and transparently disclose the results. It also entails the management of money and other entrusted assets (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

Clean audit outcome
: The South African Auditor-General (2017:1) defines a clean audit outcome as "… an affirmation of a well-functioning administration. It means that the financial statements do not contain material errors – in other words, a financially unqualified audit opinion, and there are no material findings on performance information and compliance with legislation".

Corruption
: Coetzee (2012:iii) describes corruption as "…a subsystem of the social system that is embedded in the economy, politics, science and technology, ethics, and aesthetics".

Ethical leadership
: Weinberg (2014) indicates that ethical leadership is likely to enhance subordinates' readiness to report ethical challenges and be likely to decrease absence in the office. Ethical leadership refers to a leader's decision-making and behaviour guided by a clear ethical framework all the time, not just in particular circumstances (Soni, 2019). The process of influencing individuals to act on principles, values and beliefs is known as ethical leadership.

Ethics
: BBC (2014) identifies ethics as "…the branch of philosophy that deals with issues of right and wrong in human affairs. Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity. At its simplest, ethics is a system of moral principles. It affects how people make decisions and lead their lives".

| | |
|---|---|
| Good governance | According to Buthelezi, Taylor and Tefera (2024), good governance is essential for an organisation's success and long-term sustainability. Good governance fosters accountability, transparency and effective management - key elements needed to achieve lasting goals and positive outcomes for stakeholders. Similarly, Anđelković (2023:122) defines good governance as "... the existence of the rule of law, the protection of human rights, fair and efficient government, accountability, transparency, predictability, and openness". This broad range of principles allows for flexibility of implementation across four social levels: public authority, the private sector, the non-governmental sector and the individual or citizen level. |
| Public sector | The Institute of Internal Auditors (2011:3) claims that "… the public sector is the part of the economy comprising both public services and public enterprises". |
| State capture | State capture, according to Crabtree and Durand (2017:1), is a form of systematic political corruption in which personal gains have a significant impact on government decision-making processes in their favour. |
| Transparency | According to Widanti (2022:73), transparency in the context of good governance "… requires that there are opportunities for the people to submit comments and criticisms of the government which they consider to be non-transparent". |

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# CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Since the inception of democracy in 1994, the South African government has worked tirelessly to promote good governance in the country. The South African Constitution of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) provides for good governance through the application of constitutional principles delineated in Chapter 10. Section 195 of Chapter 10 (Public Administration) in particular, stipulates that the fundamental principles and standards must serve as the foundation for public administration. The principles therein state that "A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained" and that "Public administration must be accountable" (South Africa, 1996:99). Yet, the media regularly reports on corruption, state capture and the weakening economy – all of which have become concerning issues for social wealth sustainability. Because of several reported cases of corruption and deviation from legal rules and the Constitution, the question of ethical leadership and accountability in the public sector of South Africa has become a burning public issue (Haupt & Dala, 2016:288).

From the author's perspective, good governance is described as exceptional methods guided by ethics, accountability, transparency, integrity, the rule of law and responsiveness from government departments. Ethics simply means the difference between what is correct and incorrect. Accountability is related to ethics, which postulates an outstanding standard of work and compliance with guidelines and rules relating to certain work to be performed. Gumede, (2021) highlights that accountability is implemented in the public sector to ensure that any institution, manager or leader that uses public funds and make decisions that impact people's lives can be held accountable for their behaviour. Accountability and transparency go hand in hand, proposing that there can be no accountability without transparency. Johnston (2020) describes transparency as the public's ability to obtain appropriate information regarding the actions of organisations. Transparency is broadly viewed as various, essential political objectives, involving corruption control, fair financing of election campaigns and improving democracy in current institutes (Bauhr & Grimes, 2017:432). The data was gathered from two selected public sector institutions in the Western Cape, chosen for their strong track record of consecutive clean audits, which reflect sound governance practices and key indicators used to measure good governance. Due to their extensive experience and deep understanding of governance principles, the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa is widely recognised for consistently ranking among the top-performing municipalities in the country. In the 2024 Good Governance Africa's (GGA) Governance Performance Index (GPI), it ranked first among all metropolitan municipalities, achieving scores of at least four out of five across

all five key indicators of good governance. The selected provincial department in the Western Cape actively promotes good governance by emphasising transparency and accountability, demonstrated through strong financial management, adherence to the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), and the publication of comprehensive annual reports that detail its operations, financial performance and strategic initiatives. The research problem focuses on the limited ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in advancing good governance within South Africa's public sector. The following sections present the background to the research problem, the problem statement, research questions and objectives. A preliminary review of the literature, the research methodology adopted, the significance of the study and ethical considerations are also discussed. Additionally, the study's limitations are outlined, followed by an overview of the study's structure.

## 1.2 Background to the research problem

Mlambo, Mubecua and Mlambo (2023:184) point out that corruption has been a pervading phenomenon in South African politics for at least the past 350 years. An example of corruption, offered by Hagglund and Khan (2023:3), highlights the illicit activities undertaken in 1652, when a worker of the Dutch East India firm, Jan van Riebeeck, was instructed to take possession of the Cape. This directive was given to Jan van Riebeeck after he was suspended for not adhering to the company's prohibition on using his workplace to pursue private financial benefits.

Sayeed (2016:40) notes that corruption became deeply embedded in the functioning of the state and in the interactions between the private sector and the government. Consequently, South Africa's first democratic government inherited a governance system that was impoverished, racially divided and lacking in accountability. This system consisted of fragmented administrations, including homeland administrations, racially segregated administrations and both national and provincial structures. The services offered by the homeland administrations were dictated by the former apartheid regime. Supporting Sayeed's (2016) observation, Friedman (2020) adds that the public sector became increasingly unaccountable and lacking in transparency, creating an environment conducive to the abuse of power.

Vytjie Mentor, a former African National Congress (ANC) Member of Parliament (MP) and Mcebisi Jonas, a former Deputy Finance Minister, came forward with the allegations that the Guptas[1] offered them Cabinet positions (Harper, 2022). On 15 March 2016, Mentor disclosed

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[1] The Guptas are a rich and powerful Indian business family with a close connection to former South African President, Jacob Zuma, and his administration. The brothers Ajay, Atul and Rajesh "Tony" Gupta are the most famous members of the family (von Holdt, Foley, Brunette, Klaaren, Rumney, Thakur, Mpofu-Walsh, Pillay, Marchant, Spiropoulos, Van Vuuren, Heller & Pityana, 2023:5).

to *News24* reporters, Khoza and Tandwa, that the position of Minister of Public Enterprises was presented to her in 2010 by the Guptas in exchange for her to ensure that South African Airways would withdraw its India route, allowing Jet Airways, a Gupta-linked airline, to take over. However, she claimed that she opposed the request, which occurred several days before Zuma's Cabinet reshuffle, in which former Public Enterprises Minister, Barbara Hogan, was relieved of her duties (Khoza & Tandwa, 2016). A range of other incidents of corruption was recorded in a book titled, *State Capture in South Africa,* edited by Buthelezi and Vale in 2023. Due to these manifestations of corruption and allegations, the public sector is labelled unethical, unprofessional and unaccountable.

Further examples, elucidating the foregoing statements, were recorded by MedicalBrief (2020) who reported that a maximum of R2.2bn of emergency COVID-19 funds had been looted in a "corruption feeding frenzy". In Gauteng alone, approximately 90 companies were investigated and accusations of fraud pointed to an official in the Presidency. Anti-corruption investigators investigated allegations regarding corrupt officials and companies profiting from billions intended to combat COVID-19. In a report on COVID-19, further poor accountability was witnessed by Dr Zweli Mkhize, the Health Minister, who procured COVID-19 pandemic vaccines. Accountability was declining. As a result, the president at the time, Cyril Ramaphosa, vowed to fight against those who corruptly used the coronavirus pandemic for their own gain in South Africa. To fight corruption as quickly and forcefully as possible, he signed a declaration permitting the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to probe any unethical purchases of products, and unethical services during, or associated with, the national state of disaster at any government institution (South Africa, 2022).

With reference to the aforementioned, a question that arose was: In what way can a public servant who is incompetent, corrupt, untrustworthy and unaccountable, be trusted with the responsibility of providing a better life for all citizens?

### 1.3 Statement of the problem

South Africa's Auditor-General, Ms Tsakani Maluleke (2023), explained that good governance is the foundation of a successful country. Good governance is the dedication to accountability (the foundation of public administration), transparency and good leadership. Good governance must be evidenced by the authority granted to public officials and institutions and should include increased citizen participation in the process of building South Africa. Mlambo, Simangele and Mpanza (2023:1) postulate that a productive public sector and good governance are crucial for the growth of a country. The important mission of good governance must be enacted effectively through government and how social actors are regulated (Hazenberg, 2018:51). Good governance has been a widely discussed topic at a global level.

From an international perspective, countries like Finland and Denmark are recognised for fostering good governance through their financial systems, which emphasise transparency and accountability. These principles help reduce the likelihood of corruption within their public sectors (Viet Nam News, 2025). From an African standpoint, Seychelles and Mauritius are praised for their robust economies, driven by good governance practices such as eliminating corruption, upholding the rule of law impartially and establishing strong financial systems that ensure accountability and transparency. These practices reflect effective leadership in both nations (Thukwana & Hlakudi, 2024).

South Africa is seen as a country plagued by weak governance, which obstructs the delivery of public services. Despite three decades of democracy, its public sector has struggled with numerous issues, including a lack of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency, as well as state capture, rising corruption, incompetence, underqualified public officials, significant failures in planning, coordination, budgeting and implementation, and poorly managed state-owned enterprises (SOEs), all of which continue to fuel controversy in the country (Kgobe, 2021). Corruption and impunity have increasingly permeated South Africa over the decades. Unfortunately, corruption extends beyond systemic corruption, to include state capture, organised crime syndicates, human trafficking, and money laundering. These issues run parallel to state capture and the practice of cadre deployment. ESKOM, Transnet and South African Airways serve as prime examples of corruption in enterprises involving billions of rands. The Travelgate scandal, which highlighted the abuse of travel and subsistence claims by Members of Parliament (MPs), further exemplifies the misuse of power at the highest levels of government, contributing to a significant erosion of public trust in government institutions. The current processes and mechanisms are inadequate in addressing governance issues such as ethical leadership and resource allocation. As a result, the legitimacy of leadership is undermined and public trust in governance diminishes. Poor leadership and a lack of accountability are key factors contributing to governance failure. Political trust is built on good governance, which relies on the presence of ethical standards and effective checks and balances in all areas of human activity (Thusi & Selepe, 2023).

A doctoral study undertaken by Singo (2018), titled 'Ethical leadership in the Limpopo provincial public service of South Africa: An imperative for good governance', found that restoring leadership for effective service delivery requires ethical leadership. Thus, a study addressing the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the public sector of South Africa is essential and more urgent nowadays than ever before. South Africans will continue to suffer if the tradition of poor service delivery, fraud, corruption and an ineffective public sector persist.

**1.4 Research questions**

The research questions listed below were posed to achieve the study's objectives.

**1.4.1 Primary question**

How do ethical leadership, accountability and transparency contribute to good governance in the South African public sector?

**1.4.2 Secondary questions**

- What is the relationship between public administration, governance and good governance in the public sector?
- What are the obstacles faced by South African public officials in promoting good governance?
- In what way can ethical leadership, accountability and transparency be used to promote good governance in the South African public sector?

**1.5 Research objectives**

This section addresses the primary and secondary research objectives.

**1.5.1 Primary objective**

In response to the research problem, the study's primary objective is to determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector.

**1.5.2 Secondary objectives**

The research study is further guided by secondary objectives, namely:

- to explore the relationship between public administration, governance and good governance in the South African public sector;
- to identify the obstacles that prevent good governance in the public sector of South Africa; and
- to develop a comprehensive framework that promotes good governance in South Africa's public sector, for consideration by the selected public sector institutions as well as public offices with both direct and indirect roles in institutionalising good governance in the country.

**1.6 Preliminary literature review**

The researcher reviewed and identified existing written and published information pertinent to the study. These secondary sources were critically analysed to uncover contradictions, similarities and gaps related to the research. This process was undertaken to achieve the research objectives and gain a deeper understanding of the research topic.

The preliminary literature review focuses on the following areas related to South Africa: governance before 1994, governance in post-apartheid South Africa, an overview of good governance, ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in the public sector and, lastly, the perspectives of African and international countries regarding good governance in the public sector.

### 1.6.1 Theoretical overview of the promotion of good governance in the South African public sector

### 1.6.1.1 Governance in the South African public sector preceding 1994

Preceding 1994, the public sector, which was treated as an add-on to the state, was only accountable to a minor group of people. Because of this, the public sector was segregated in a shell of intellectual and political egotism and contentment at the time (Rakate, 2006:2). Most people characterised the previous administration as mainly aiding the apartheid system. The apartheid civil service was dominated by an Afrikaner culture and ruled by White men. White Afrikaner men ran the executive levels and the selection process was often biased towards other races and women. The apartheid system was demanding, integrated and rule-oriented. Decisions were taken mostly by senior officials, with little to no input from lower-level officials who served on the ground and there was no collaboration with the public in general. The public was subjected to 'Pretoria-conceived' plans and programmes and societies were not consulted about their demands because it was assumed that an institutional structure would be best suited to determine these needs rather than the societies themselves (Venter, 1996:42).

The activities of the apartheid government were never made public. Government departments rigorously guarded information in their possession and court orders were often used to compel them to reveal it. The approach then was that the state's information was the property of the government departments and that the rest of the people had no right to it. Parliament was sometimes given edited information as if government departments were a law unto themselves. As a result, a gap for inadequacy and corruption was created. Because of the limited modern information systems in most areas of the civil service, effective monitoring and revision of policies and programmes could not be ensured. It was almost impossible to obtain accurate information. Budgetary allocations were mostly based on those used the previous year, without regard for the needs of the citizens. The budgets of departments were often a continuation of previous spending patterns rather than an indication of compassion for the needs of deprived communities.  Prioritisation of services was provided to the privileged community only, resulting in a collective sidelining of most of South Africa's people (Venter, 1996:43).

### 1.6.1.2 Governance in post-apartheid South Africa

Based on South Africa's experience, change in the public sector was needed to restructure and redress the previous inequities that occurred. After South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa's public sector has been aiming for a more sustainable, accountable, democratic, representative and development-oriented service delivery mechanism since 1995. The publication of the White Paper on Public Service Transformation (South Africa, 1995) served as a starting point for the transformation of South Africa's public sector. The difficulties of the revolution in South Africa's public sector stemmed mainly from the country's history, though some are based on lessons gained from other countries' experiences. South Africa's people have long been divided, but the country is now undergoing transformation. These historical divisions and the present legacy have had, and continue to have, significant impacts on the civil service's traditions and processes (Rakate, 2006:2–3).

### 1.6.1.3 An overview of good governance

Good governance, according to Hazenberg (2018:45), needs adequate responses to the challenges of legitimacy and accountability. Good governance, according to Wolfowitz (2006:1), is "...basically the combination of transparent and accountable institutions; strong skills and competence, and a fundamental willingness to do the right thing…" because these characteristics "…enable a government to deliver services to its people effectively". Good governance is a major factor in a country's economic development. South Africa's Department of Justice and Constitutional Development committed to good service and governance values by creating the Service Delivery Charter (South Africa, 2009). Although this charter is worthy of consideration and comment, since it upholds democratic ethical values, the people who put them in place show poor understanding or implementation of its concepts. A major factor contributing to unethical behaviour like corruption in developing countries, is the failure of implementers of international democratic values to handle the strain of adapting their philosophy to Western models. At the local sphere, conventional administration may be able to ensure enforcement and the rule of law while at the national level, international standards may be more relevant. These norms, which are not set by the locals at central level, contribute to misunderstandings which, in turn, lead to government corruption. Such governments set too high standards and promise the community unrestricted services which are not connected to available resources (Nkuna & Sebola, 2012:68).

### 1.6.1.4 Ethical leadership in the South African public sector

Recent public and private sector scandals have piqued the curiosity of academics and both national and international organisations (Haq, 2011:2792). Ethical leadership is a significant source of ethical power and, as a result, it motivates people to find ways to manage ethics in the workplace. Ethical leadership is described by Wolmarans (2014:24) as "…the

demonstration of normative appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and encouraging such conduct through two-way communication with followers". A transformative leader's task includes taking responsibility for mistakes and attempting to improve performance and ensuring that an organisation's dealings with everyone are ethical. Soni (2019) elaborates further by saying that transparency and honesty, the willingness to encourage consistent debate of ethical concerns and decisions, the desire to teach others to lead, the ambition to preserve and enhance competence, the capacity to take criticism and the ability to put personal interests and ego aside are among the most crucial attributes of ethical leadership.

Ethical leaders focus on what is right, good and important. Such leaders also empower supporters to become leaders who place the organisation's needs ahead of their own. The personal qualities and characteristics of a leader, for example, honesty, trustworthiness, dignity and the moral essence of that leader's behaviour, can be viewed as the key aspects of ethical leadership. To be an ethical leader, the leadership figures must be honest, trustworthy and steadfast in the refusal to compromise on these values in the face of tempting or challenging circumstances. The question that arises is whether a fundamental relationship between governance and ethical leadership can be established.

### 1.6.1.5 Accountability in the South African public sector

One of the pillars of ethics in government administration is accountability. Particularly in the context of South Africa's transformation, it is vital to discuss the significance of this factor. It is imperative that public officials and political office holders understand the importance of accountability in public management and governance because the behaviour of various public role players directly influences the delivery of public services (Thornhill, 2015:78). According to the Asian Development Bank (2005), accountability entails holding public officials accountable for their actions and making them accountable to the entity from which they obtain authority. Annual reports, according to the PSC Report (2002:30), are not only a tool for departments to demonstrate accountability but are also a highly important public declaration of performance and a quick way to receive information that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. Chapter 9 of the Constitution lays out how to improve accountability, defend democracy and create a responsive government. Pityana (2013) states that South Africa's public sector must work to establish a culture of responsibility and professional ethics, as outlined in the Constitution. In South Africa, the Auditor-General (AG) and the Public Protector (PP) are working tirelessly to hold all state entities accountable.

### 1.6.1.6 Transparency in the South African public sector

Transparency and accountability go hand in hand. Etzioni (2010:390) and Roberts (2012:128) concur that transparency benefits participation by enhancing civil society activity through information disclosures and information about governance processes benefits accountability. Transparency entails ensuring access to information and delivering clear, concise reporting on progress toward goals. Apart from the positive role that transparency plays in achieving good governance, it is unclear what a transparency principle covers, that is, what should be transparent. For example, it is clearly understood that policy-making involves a certain level of secrecy, just as it is also understood that more information does not automatically mean improved accountability. Mafunisa (cited in Kuye, Thornhill, & Fourie, 2002:209), Etzioni, (2010:391) and Roberts (2012:130) are of the opinion that transparency encourages a customer-focused approach by putting citizens in a position to contribute to the development of service delivery by accessing accurate information that allows them to evaluate a government's performance.

### 1.7 Research methodology

Mixed-methods research were employed in the hope of gaining a deeper comprehension of the occurrence than the approaches would provide separately. Mixed-methods research includes exploratory sequential, convergent parallel and explanatory sequential designs. For this study, an explanatory sequential research strategy was employed to address the research problem. An explanatory sequential research design is described as a double-phase approach in which quantitative data is gathered and analysed first, followed by qualitative data based on the quantitative findings. The qualitative data is used to explain the quantitative data. This design allowed the study to determine the relationship between ethical leadership, accountability and transparency and the influence these elements have on good governance. The foregoing was achieved by administering the structured questionnaire first, whereafter the semi-structured interviews were carried out. This form of integration enabled a more comprehensive and synergistic use of data collection and analysis.

### 1.7.1 Data collection tools

The below mentioned data collection tools were utilised in order to collect and record information for the study. It consists of a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to obtain in-depth information and enhance the quality of the findings.

### 1.7.1.1 Structured questionnaire

For this study, the structured questionnaire consisted of Likert scale questions which were used to collect the quantitative data. On the quantitative questionnaire, the respondents were required to rate their level of agreement with the statement being provided on a metric scale,

from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. All the statements, taken collectively, reveal a particular aspect of the attitude toward the topic and are thus inextricably intertwined. The structured questionnaire used by the researcher was intended to identify areas that could be included in the interviews that were conducted with the designated interviewees. In other words, interviewees were prompted on these possible problem areas. The structured questionnaires were used together with semi-structured interviews to produce an extensive understanding of the problem studied and to address the limitations of numerical Likert-scale data. The first set of questions covered biographical categories. The rest focused on the elements identified in the literature review. The structured questionnaire was used because it offered reliable and repeatable information. The information provided was compared, contrasted and integrated with the qualitative data generated in this study.

### 1.7.1.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the topic more openly. Since the study fell within the COVID-19 period, some of the interviewees preferred Microsoft Teams for the semi-structured interviews while others agreed to in-person interview sessions in boardrooms that met COVID-19 protocols. Upon the interviewer's arrival at the interview sessions, the temperatures of both the interviewer and interviewee were assessed, both parties wore masks and maintained social distancing protocols.

The semi-structured questions served to formalise the discussion between the researcher and the participants. Instead of asking closed-ended questions, the researcher asked open-ended questions intended to encourage the interviewees to express their thoughts and ideas in the manner they preferred. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to alter the interview schedule. The questions prepared by the interviewer were not asked in any order. Instead, the list was used as a guide for the conversation to flow in a particular direction.

The semi-structured interviews provided a platform for gathering essential information from three senior executive management public officials responsible for good governance in the selected metropolitan municipality and two senior executive management officials at the selected provincial department in the Western Cape. This data collection tool permitted the interviewer to reach beyond participants' answers and further engage in a dialogue with the participants. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to acquire a thorough comprehension of the strategies used by the two selected public sector institutions to promote good. The interviewer also used semi-structured interviews to clarify unclear responses and seek clarification on partial responses. In summary, the researcher used semi-structured interviews because this qualitative data collection tool is neither too formal nor too

informal, and it is a reliable method for obtaining a large amount of information from the respondents.

### 1.7.2 Sampling method

For this study, purposive sampling, a non-probability sample method, was considered suitable because the researcher relied on the participants' knowledge, expertise and experience. The participants were purposively selected to partake in the study because they are considered to have in-depth knowledge regarding the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the selected public sector institutions in the Western Cape. In summary, the rationale for employing a purposive sampling technique is founded on the concept that, given the study's objectives, the selected individuals may held different and relevant viewpoints about the ideas and issues pertaining the promotion of good governance. at hand and, hence, need to be included in the sample.

### 1.7.2.1 Research participants

According to the American Psychological Association (2020), a research participant differs from those who are unable to provide informed permission, such as infants, children and animals. These individuals are referred to as subjects. For the purpose of this study, the researcher successfully identified the research based on specific characteristics. The participants in the research agreed to take part in the study by providing written permission. These participants are reflected in the tables below.

**Structured questionnaire: participants**

A structured questionnaire was forwarded to the appointed liaison officers in order to distribute it to the 24 purposively selected participants at the two purposively selected public sector institutions. However, only 15 questionnaires were completed and returned. Another department, identified to partake in the study, at the selected metropolitan municipality, declined the invitation to participate. The reason for wanting to include these participants is that they possessed specific information relevant to the study. Table 1.1 displays the participants who completed and returned the questionnaire.

**Table 1.1: Structured questionnaire administered to senior management public officials**

| The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa | | The selected provincial department in the Western Cape | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Chief Director | 6. | Chief Director |
| 2. | Director | 7. | Chief Director |
| 3. | Director | 8. | Director |
| 4. | Director | 9. | Director |
| 5. | Director | 10. | Director |

| | | 11. | Director |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 12. | Director |
| | | 13. | Director |
| | | 14. | Director |
| | | 15. | Acting CFO |

**Semi-structured interview:  participants**

Five participants employed at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape participated in a semi-structured interview. These individuals were purposely selected to partake in the study based on their experience, knowledge and abilities about ethical leadership, accountability, transparency, challenges they faced to promote good governance and how they dealt with good governance practices. Table 1.2 displays the participants interviewed.

**Table 1.2: Semi-structured interviews conducted with senior executive management public officials**

| The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa | | The selected provincial department in the Western Cape | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Manager of the Ethics Department | 4. | Head of Department (HOD) |
| 2. | Chief of Forensic Services | 5. | Member of Executive Council (MEC) |
| 3. | Member of the Mayoral Committee Member (MAYCO) | | |

**1.7.3 Data analysis**

To analyse the data in the mixed-methods research, the researcher employed a quantitative data analysis method and the analysis of qualitative data using qualitative data analysis method. Furthermore, to produce consistency, the integration of the inferences produced from the quantitative and qualitative mixed methodologies was analysed coherently by the researcher.

A structured questionnaire was employed to elicit quantitative data. Thereafter, the data was analysed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program by a registered statistician. Using a program like SPSS allowed the researcher to analyse the quantitative data in different ways. The program explains and analyses relationships between variables wherever possible. Statistical analysis is used to decrease and organise data as well as to uncover relevant links, differences or similarities within and between different data

categories, allowing for accurate description of the qualities of specific individuals, circumstances or organisations.

Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data acquired through a semi-structured interview. Kleinheksel, Rockich-Winston, Tawfik and Wyatt (2020:7113) describe content analysis as a well-known qualitative data analysis method that has progressed in the analysis of textual data. Content analysis can be extremely effective when there is an extensive amount of unanalysed written information. Kamble and Sontakke (2021:100) assert that "… content analysis is a method for analysing the content of a variety of data, such as visual and verbal data. It enables the reduction of phenomena or events into defined categories to better analyse and interpret them". For this study, content analysis proved apt to analyse and reveal themes from the qualitative data generated through the semi-structured interviews conducted.

## 1.8 Significance of the study

The study developed a comprehensive framework to enhance good governance in the South African public sector. It adds to the discourse on Public Administration, particularly in the areas of leadership and public sector governance. An additional contribution to the discipline is that the study emphasises the importance of the theoretical foundations of good governance. In light of the significant challenges that impede the promotion of good governance in South Africa's public sector, the study's practical contribution lies in the development of a framework that can be specifically adopted by underperforming municipalities and government departments. This framework was created based on lessons learned from the two selected public sector institutions on how to effectively promote good governance. The comprehensive framework offers a deep understanding of the critical role that ethical leadership, accountability and transparency play in the public sector. These elements contribute to improving the performance of government institutions, service delivery and public participation, all of which are essential for achieving good governance. One key principle linked to accountability and the rule of law is liability. If individuals, particularly government and public officials, fail to take responsibility for the decisions, then good governance becomes nothing more than an unrealistic and theoretical ideal.

## 1.9 Ethical considerations

Polonsky and Waller (2019:85) explain that ethical considerations are the most imperative parts of the research and, therefore, it is critical for a researcher to grasp the fundamentals of ethical research and the manner in which it might influence the research project. Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola and Rony (2021:1) agree that it is challenging to achieve accurate answers and solve genuine problems without applying ethics in research. The role of ethics in a study is extremely important. From start to finish, researchers must preserve ethics in their research

projects. In research, ethics refers to the principles for conducting professional research. It also guides and governs researchers to ensure that they adhere to a strict code of ethics when conducting research.

### 1.9.1 Permission

Polonsky (2019:17) emphasises that it is of paramount importance for the researcher to attain written permission from the organisations where the data are being collected before conducting research. When asking for written permission, the researcher must ensure the person with whom she or he is liaising has the authority to grant permission and that the activities are planned well ahead of time. The researcher acquired written permission from both the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape. In the same way, ethical clearance was acquired from the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

### 1.9.2 Voluntary participation

Lavrakas (2008) defines voluntary participation as the exercise of free will by a human research subject in determining whether or not to partake in a research study. Volunteering for a study requires a dynamic engagement with the researchers, which may include deciding not to continue after initially agreeing to participate in a project (Marshall, Adebamowo, Adeyemo, Ogundiran, Strenski, Zhou & Rotimi, 2014). The researcher presented this option from the beginning and the participants had the right to withdraw before data collection had commenced. The participants were also provided with the option of withdrawing from the study at any time without feeling obligated to continue and they were not required to provide a reason for quitting.

### 1.9.3 Informed consent

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011:22), informed consent is regarded as the foundation of ethical research. Two crucial words, 'informed' and 'consent', both necessitate thorough consideration. Participants must be well-informed about what is required of them and how the information will be used. Welman et al. (2005:201) share similar views with the aforementioned authors that after the participants have been fully and honestly informed regarding the aim of the questionnaire and the interview, the researcher must request the appropriate permission from them. In this study, the participants offered their explicit consent, signed the consent form and were presented with the opportunity to examine their data. The benefit of the form is that it allows participants to be well-informed about the research and the implications of their involvement right from the start. The objectives of the study were communicated, what the involvement of the participants would entail and how long it would take. In addition, if any concerns were expressed by participants or others, the researcher could offer a documented

record of consent. Qualitative studies and methodologies, like interviews, for example, allow for greater clarity than a survey (Bryman, 2016:529).

### 1.9.4 Anonymity

According to Ketefian (2015:167), the term 'anonymity' refers to the fact that data cannot be connected to a specific individual. The gender, age, educational level, position at the organisation and any other relevant characteristics in the study were all of interest to the researcher. These markers, however, do not reveal the personal identity of any of the participants (Allen, 2017:227). Although the participant is known to the researcher, their information must be kept hidden from everyone else. The researcher must anonymise information that is personally identifiable so that it cannot be connected to other information by someone else (Bhandari, 2021). Goddard and Melville (2001:49) concur with the aforementioned statements, that is, that the researcher is required to keep the information obtained private because people have a right to privacy. This implies that the identities of the participants should not be known to those reading the research study. Therefore, the researcher ensured that the participants' identities were kept anonymous.

### 1.9.5 Confidentiality

Ketefian (2015:167) explains that promising confidentiality means that the researcher can relate data to a specific person but takes steps to keep vital identifying information locked up and out of the hands of others. Confidentiality means that the researcher is aware of the participants' identities but has chosen to keep all identifying information out of the study because the participants have a right to privacy. Hence, the researcher should protect the participants' personal information for as long as it will be used. Even when the researchers are unable to gather data anonymously, it is necessary to secure confidentiality whenever the researcher can. Bhandari (2021) and Lubbe (2003:41) refer to confidentiality as the private manner in which information about the participants is handled. The participants were informed that their personal information as well as the organisations' names, would be kept completely confidential (Welman et al., 2005:201).

### 1.9.6 Protection from harm

Polonsky (2019:14) explains that when conducting research, it is the researcher's responsibility to assess the possibility of harm and guarantee that precautions are in place to prevent it. The researcher carefully assessed the risk of harm and behaved in an ethical manner. The researcher took precautions against both physical and psychological harm to avoid causing harm to the participants (Goddard & Melville, 2001:49).The researcher also considered how the research may negatively affect participants and took steps to protect the researcher, the supervisor of the researcher and the institution from being placed in situations

where individuals may make claims of inappropriate behaviour which could lead to public criticism or even legal action.

### 1.9.7 Plagiarism

Bahadori, Izadi and Hoseinpourfar (2012:168) indicate that one of the major concerns facing universities in recent years is plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered unethical in scientific literature. According to Welman et al. (2005:182), it is unethical to use another person's information without their consent and without acknowledging them. It is essential for the researcher to be very careful to not present someone else's work as their own. Plagiarism is also a violation of the student code of conduct at most universities and it can lead to failure or even expulsion. As a result, the researcher was very careful when using other authors' material and ensured that it was properly referenced (Polonsky, 2019:19).

### 1.10 Limitations of the study

To promote good governance in South Africa's public sector, the study concentrated on three key elements: ethical leadership, accountability and transparency. The selected public sector institutions prioritise these essential indicators of good governance, which is why they are recognised and praised for their efforts. The sample size is smaller than originally expected due to certain directorates declining the request to participate in the study. The research at the metropolitan municipality focused on the Department of Probity, the Office of the Mayor and the Office of the City Manager. The researcher intended to include Deputy Directors and Assistant Deputy Directors from the selected provincial department in the Western Cape, but access to these individuals was restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Management Support nominated senior management officials from the selected provincial department in the Western Cape to participate in the study. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the promotion of good governance in South Africa's public sector, the researcher also sought to obtain insights from The Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa (IIA SA). However, despite submitting all the requested documents and following up over a period of nine months, the researcher's efforts were unsuccessful. It is also important to note that the study was limited to just two selected public sector institutions at the local and provincial government levels. Despite the above, the findings may be relevant to other metropolitan municipalities and provincial administrations due to similarities in their operational contexts. Therefore, other public sector institutions at the local and provincial government levels in South Africa can adopt elements from the proposed framework in this study and tailor it to their specific context to promote good governance.

**1.11 Outline of the study**

**CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Background**

Chapter 1 covers the introduction, background information on the research problem as well as the problem statement. The research questions and research objectives are articulated and clarified. Additionally, the research methodology employed is discussed and the study's significance is examined. The ethical considerations and the limitations of the study are also delineated in this chapter.

**CHAPTER 2: Conceptual framework for promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework of good governance in South Africa's public sector. This chapter serves as the mind map for the study, giving readers an idea of what to expect in the chapters that follow.

**CHAPTER 3: Legislative frameworks and independent institutions promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

Chapter 3 examines the existing legislative frameworks and independent institutions in place to promote good governance in the South African public sector.

**CHAPTER 4: Overview of governance practices**

Chapter 4 highlights the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. The relationship between public administration, governance and good governance is explored. Different historical events in the evolution of the discipline and practice of public administration are addressed. Finally, the challenges that prevent good governance in South Africa's public sector are discussed.

**CHAPTER 5: Research methodology**

This chapter provides a thorough explanation of the research methodology employed in the study. The process is described in depth and the reasons why a mixed-methods methodology was employed to gather data is put forward.

**CHAPTER 6: Data analysis and presentation of findings**

This chapter presents an analysis of the research data. SPSS was used to analyse the quantitative data, while content analysis was used for the qualitative data. The findings are compared to data from other sources.

**CHAPTER 7: The proposed framework to promote good governance in the South African public sector**

Based on the data analysis and findings of the study, the researcher proposed a comprehensive good governance framework. This chapter demonstrates and emphasises that

ethical leadership, accountability and transparency are critical elements when promoting good governance in the South African public sector.

**CHAPTER 8: Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter wraps up the research and provides recommendations and conclusions. The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape will receive the recommendations. Underperforming municipalities may also draw on aspects of this study related to good governance to enhance their practices.

**1.12 Summary**

The study's introduction, background information on the research problem and problem statement were covered in this chapter. The research questions were recorded and the objectives of the study explained. The present literature on promoting good governance in the South African public sector as well as the significance of the study were also discussed. The study employed a mixed-methods research methodology, collecting data through a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. In conclusion, the study's composition, structure and organisation were outlined in this chapter. The next chapter focuses on the conceptual framework of good governance in the South African public sector.

# CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

## 2.1 Introduction

The research problem, discussed in Chapter 1, was defined as a very limited ethical leadership, accountability and transparency, resulting in poor governance in the South African public sector. This chapter serves as the mind map for the study, giving the reader an idea of what to expect in the chapters that follow.

As stated by Swaen (2022), a conceptual framework illustrates the variables or concepts studied and the relationships one expects to find between them. This framework outlines the key variables relevant to the research and illustrates the potential relationships between them. Ravitch and Riggan (2016) emphasise that a conceptual framework forms the foundation of an empirical study. A conceptual framework serves as a roadmap for research, functioning as a structure that connects all elements of the study by explaining their relationships, overlaps and the context surrounding the phenomenon under investigation. Likewise, the researcher views the conceptual framework as the blueprint of the study, as it provides coherence and direction throughout the research process. The conceptual framework defines the key concepts, showing how theories can offer valuable insight and a deeper understanding of the issues being studied.

Louw (2012:96) indicates that the King Reports I, II and III focused on governance because it is a topic of significant interest in South Africa. King Reports serve as guidelines on ethical leadership for South African organisations. According to South Africa's official government policy, public sector institutions across the spheres of government must draft comprehensive sectoral policy on performance and achievement for monitoring service delivery effectiveness. Governance is primarily concerned with how goals are set and then carried out. To achieve these goals, a code of conduct must be followed to ensure that credibility is established properly (University Herald Reporter, 2020). Good governance is used in administrative reform to address current concerns such as institutional growth, development of capacity, decentralisation of authority and power, relationships amongst political leaders and public officials, co-ordination as well as the roles that heads of government serve in promoting good governance. Vu (2012:2) points out that promoting good governance is dependent not just on sound reform conceptions and government capacities but also on the domestic actors who carry out these reforms. Good governance principles have become a top priority and an inter-departmental responsibility in the public sector. Governing bodies and employees are obligated to act in the interests of their constituents while adhering to legislation and regulations issued by the government to promote good governance in the public sector.

Thusi and Selepe (2023:688, 690) highlight that poor governance undermines service delivery and tends to benefit only a small segment of the population. The quality of services offered by public sector institutions in South Africa has led to widespread dissatisfaction. Numerous individuals have voiced concerns about the government's customer service, staff conduct, infrastructure, procedures and policies. The public sector often fails to deliver services that align with the needs of its citizens. Good governance seeks to address this by establishing standards that enhance service delivery. In the public sector, good governance advances improved decision-making, more efficient resource management and increased accountability (Ali, 2017).

## 2.2 Governance

In the South African context, governance refers to the state's relationship with civil society along with the internal systems that turn resource inputs into government outputs and outcomes. The South African government has implemented a detailed performance-oriented public service delivery framework (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2002:10).

### 2.2.1 Definition of governance

According to Keping (2018:2), the English term 'governance' initially meant manipulation, control and guidance in Latin and ancient Greek. The meaning of the term was often confused with that of the word 'government' and it was mostly used when referring to administrative and political operations concerning national public matters. Prinsloo (2013:1) describes governance as the process of taking decisions and executing or not executing those decisions. Governance is described by Huberts (2012:188) as "...an authoritative policy-making process on a diverse set of challenges, as well as the implementation of these policies". Based on the discussion and provided definitions, governance is closely associated with public administration processes and key principles such as the rule of law, democracy, accountability, ethics and transparency. Governance involves the way public sector institutions and their departments coordinate activities and implement public policies in alignment with governmental norms and standards. Such a process should aim to foster good governance within the public sector and cultivate a culture focused on delivering the most effective and efficient services to the public.

### 2.2.2 Theories of governance

According to Ansell and Torfing (2017:1), governance theories have emerged semi-independently in multiple disciplines over the last two decades. Analytical frameworks that are created with a great deal of imagination and creativity, as well as empirical observations and logical reasoning, are known as theories of governance. Theories of governance are techniques of reasoning that seek to define, comprehend and explain how modern societies

are governed. Theories of governance will often include the following elements, either directly or indirectly:

- fundamentally supported assumptions regarding the world;
- empirically provable assumptions that help to define the theory's scope and validity;
- concepts and categories striving to capture various aspects of the object of analysis;
- theoretical principles and arguments which allow comprehension and clarification of trends, phenomena and combined occurrences; and
- normative judgements founded on particular standards; and empirical generalisation and predictions founded on inductive and deductive methods (Ansell & Torfing, 2022:10).

Theories play a crucial role in producing strong empirical research on governance. Social and political events, when viewed through a specific analytical lens, assist with observing, understanding and interpreting those events. Different governance theories will highlight various forms of governance, provide descriptive typologies and offer interpretive strategies and causal models that helped shape and direct the researcher's focus. These theories enable a structured analysis of governance processes, addressing the conditions and factors influencing social and political actions and the nature and features of political institutions and socio-economic systems. Ansell and Torfing (2022) assert that few things are more valuable than a well-developed theory.

### 2.2.3 Fundamental principles of governance

The International Federation of Accountants (2001:12) outlines the following fundamental principles of governance:

- **Integrity**

  Integrity is built on the principles of fairness and honesty and high standards in the management of public resources and funds. This is evident in an organisation's decision-making process, together with the standard of its performance and financial reporting.

- **Transparency**

  Openness, achieved through meaningful communication and collaboration with stakeholders as well as the supply of complete, clear and accurate information, results in successful and timely activities and the ability to withstand appropriate examination.

- **Accountability**

  Accountability is the process of making known the bodies and people who are responsible for (their) actions and decisions, including financial management and other aspects of performance and then submitting them to appropriate external scrutiny.

The aforementioned principles are important because they enhance financial management, encourage fiscal responsibility, guarantee accurate accounting of public funds and ensure

public resources are utilised responsibly, effectively and cost-effectively. The principles discussed above are also important in the public sector since they enable both external and internal audits to carry out fiscal examination. Because of this, accountability, responsibility and transparency become rooted across an institution and in governance in general.

### 2.2.4 Elements of governance

- **Method of application**

  The method of application refers to how a task is executed. It involves examining the methods, structures, techniques, mechanisms and systems that support administrative functions (what they entail and how they are applied). In public administration, governance focuses on both implementation and how administration is conducted, and whether these are carried out in accordance with established standards, legal requirements and ethical guidelines. When examining governance systems and structures, the key question to consider is how these systems have been established. For instance, what control mechanisms are in place to ensure the system functions effectively (Ijeoma, Nzewi & Sibanda, 2013)?

- **Scale of application**

  In public administration, governance includes all activities that occur prior to and following the administration of public goods and services. Governance is the process that takes place from the moment someone goes to vote in an election until the water tap is turned on. In a nutshell, governance is a continuum that includes how politicians obtain legislative and executive powers, how policies are developed and applied and how public policies and institutions function in order to provide services (Ijeoma et al., 2013:25–26).

### 2.3 Governance and leadership

According to Siswana (2007:xii), governance is about leadership. For the past few decades, governance and leadership have been examined and discussed in the public and private sectors as well as in Public Administration discussion in general. Rollinson and Broadfield (2002) concur that leadership is a process in which a leader and subordinates cooperate in a manner that allows the leader to influence the actions of the subordinates, in a non-coercive manner, towards the accomplishment of particular objectives. Great leadership is an important aspect for a successful group or an effective organisation, even for a prosperous nation. Leaders normally have an authoritative impact on the performances and behaviours of members of organisations.

Governance and leadership are classified as crucial in public life and their effectiveness must be a matter of extensive public interest. The core principles of governance and leadership have always been the goal-oriented alignment of individuals, organisations, processes and

resources. These alignments, which are normally even more different than the governance and leadership around which they are constructed, certainly include forms of organisation as devices of public action. These two concepts are mutually dependent (Masuku, 2019:119). Good governance is built on ethical and effective leadership. As such, it can be described as moral leadership (in practice). This highlights the interconnectedness of leadership and governance. Those responsible for governance also hold the duty of providing strategic direction for the nation and ensuring that the public sector fulfils its purpose.

## 2.4 Good governance

What 'good governance' means can be contextualised in different aspects of public administration. The phrase is used in a number of contexts, but most researchers concur that the concept was first introduced into contemporary discussions by the World Bank, in 1989, focusing on the promotion of economic growth as an example (Subban & Jarbandhan, 2019:137).

Diarra and Plane (2014:474) describe good governance as "…equilibrium and an efficient liberal society with equitable economic allocation among citizens". Keping (2018:6) elaborates that good governance is linked with democracy because, seemingly, democracy is the one feasible instrument available to preserve society's fully free and unbiased political power. Good governance is likely to be attained in a democratic and free political system, as it cannot occur in the absence of freedom and democracy. Mamokhere (2019:7) views good governance as a process of making decisions at both the administrative and political levels of government to adopt policies that would enhance the standard of living for every community member and enhance the provision of service delivery. Fairness, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity and public participation are all important aspects of good governance. Mamokhere (2020:128) points out that good governance is the efficient management of public businesses through the emergence of a government that establishes rules that are acknowledged as legitimate for promoting values required by individuals to enhance society. Sebola (2021:40) concludes that the general public defines good governance by results that are deemed satisfactory to them.

## 2.5 Dimensions of good governance

Ibeanu (2017:2–3) explains that good governance had double dimensions when it was first promoted in the 1980s.

- Good governance referred to the presence of specific desirable regimes. A system of rules and regulations was classified as a regime, defining the institutional framework within which politics was carried out. If these principles and regimes were followed, governance was considered good. Amongst the most popular of these was the promotion of market

forces, mainly through the liberalisation of trade, implementation of macroeconomic policies that corresponded to market strengthening, monetary policies that permitted local currencies to float and the general contraction of the public sector and the influence of government. These were requirements for continuing credit to these countries as these conditions were seen as favourable to them.

- So far, good governance had not included a concept of government as a united political process including all the government's arms and scrutiny by a bureaucracy. As an alternative, government evolved into a series of regulated spaces. Political governance was merely one of the governed areas and each space was subject to particular ideal regimes. As a result, there is now economic governance, natural resource governance and other forms of governance. In addition, when seen in this light, it is evident that good governance principles may be attained under both democratic and authoritarian governments (Ibeanu, 2017:2–3).

## 2.6 Elements of good governance

The idea of good governance is closely connected to the philosophy of governance. In contrast, poor governance is characterised by misconduct and a lack of clear standards. It is widely believed that poor governance promotes corruption, which can severely impact public finances. Good governance and an efficient public sector are critical for a country's growth and development. In the post-apartheid era, South Africa must ensure the effective and efficient delivery of public services to address the needs of its citizens (Mlambo et al., 2023:1). According to the South African Government (2024), the governance framework in South Africa is grounded in the Constitution, especially Chapter 10, which outlines the core values and principles governing public administration. These principles are designed to promote a democratic, accountable and progressive public sector. As specified in Section 195(1) of the Constitution, public administration must adhere to the principles outlined below.

### 2.6.1 Rule of law

Munzhedzi (2021) highlights that the rule of law is a fundamental aspect of governance as it ensures the unbiased protection of individual and group rights. It supports the creation and maintenance of an independent judiciary, which upholds equity, fairness and justice within society. The United Nations (n.d.) agrees that the rule of law is crucial for maintaining international peace, security and political stability, as well as for fostering social and economic growth and safeguarding basic rights and freedoms. It is essential for ensuring access to public services, combating corruption, curbing the abuse of power and strengthening the social contract between the government and its citizens. Additionally, it supports the creation of an independent judicial system that guarantees fairness, equity and justice. Good governance

relies fundamentally on the rule of law, which cannot exist without a strong legal system, proper adherence to the law and a legally grounded social structure. Section 217 of the Constitution promotes equity, ensuring that historically disadvantaged individuals receive preferential treatment, particularly in areas like procurement. This principle aims to address the inequalities of the past (pre-democratic South Africa), when only a minority of white people were eligible to engage in business with the government. In essence, the rule of law emphasises that no one is above the law, making the South African Constitution the supreme law of the land. Any other law in South Africa must align with, and not contradict, the Constitution.

### 2.6.2 Public Participation

Public participation stems from the concept of democracy, which encourages citizen involvement in governance. It is a central aspect of good governance. Section 152 of Chapter 7 of the Constitution mandates that authorities make decisions in consultation with the public. Citizens initially engage through national, provincial and local government elections. Yet, participation goes beyond voting; it also involves contributing to the policy-making process, paying for government services, particularly at the local level, and engaging in economic activities such as creating job opportunities for the less privileged. Employment generation empowers individuals to contribute by paying rates and taxes, which, in turn, enables the government to provide goods and services (Munzhedzi, 2019). Public participation is essential to ensuring that government actions are legitimate and that the needs of the public are addressed. People should be allowed to voice their opinions through credible local organisations or representatives. Fundamental human rights, such as freedom of expression and association, are central to inclusive participation. Achieving this requires a range of measures, including the practice of indirect democracy, the protection of voting and electoral rights, and involving the public and other stakeholders in the development of laws and policies. From an administrative standpoint, everyone has the right to be heard before any action is taken that may negatively affect them. Government and stakeholder discussions should also be conducted with transparency. Meaningful citizen engagement, in both policy development and implementation, is essential (South Africa, 1996:74).

According to Van der Waldt (2018:29), communities provide significant support and participation during the policy-making process and this support is likely to increase during the execution of policy. This is not just restricted to the local sphere of government. The national and provincial spheres of government still have the duty to hold extensive public consultations as part of their own activities and programmes, namely cooperative governance. The fundamental idea of public participation stems from the democratic phenomenon that encourages citizen involvement in political processes (Helao, 2015:169). National, provincial and local elections are the first opportunity for participation by the public. Participation also

includes making suggestions for policy, paying for government services, particularly at the local level, and participating economically by giving others who are less fortunate access to jobs. The creation of jobs allows individuals who work to contribute by paying taxes and rates which allows the state to provide services (Munzhedzi, 2019:92).

### 2.6.3 Transparency

Munzhedzi (2021) identifies transparency as a core principle of good governance. It requires that the public be informed about all significant processes and decisions that lead to specific outcomes. Transparency ensures that citizens are kept aware of key actions and the reasoning behind them. Sections 195, 215 and 217 of the Constitution reinforce this principle by mandating that public decisions and processes be transparent, especially for those directly or indirectly affected. These sections also highlight the importance of easy access to public information. One of the most effective ways to promote transparency in public institutions is through the use of technology, particularly social media platforms (Heloa, 2015). Openness, fostered through effective communication, collaboration with stakeholders, and the provision of complete, clear and accurate information, leads to timely, successful actions and the capacity to endure appropriate scrutiny. Transparency, therefore, means that political information should be clearly communicated to the public through various media platforms, enabling their participation in both public administration and decision-making processes. It is crucial that citizens have access to, and understand, sufficient relevant information to assess both the government's achievements and its shortcomings.

### 2.6.4 Accountability

Munzhedzi (2019:2) argues that public accountability extends beyond citizen involvement in government activities and programmes and that leaders must be answerable for their actions to the appropriate structures. Accountability involves identifying the individuals and institutions responsible for decisions and actions, including financial management and overall performance, and subjecting them to appropriate external oversight. The Constitution has established mechanisms that require public officials and institutions to be accountable for their conduct. Examples of such mechanisms include Parliament, the Public Protector, the Auditor-General and the judiciary. Members of the executive, including the President and ministers at the national level, as well as the premier and MECs at the provincial level, are accountable to the national parliament and provincial legislatures, respectively. Additionally, the Auditor-General is responsible for auditing the financial records of all state institutions to detect irregularities and recommend corrective actions.

### 2.6.5 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is closely linked to accountability and is often seen as an extension of it. According to the Constitution, responsiveness is a fundamental principle of good administration in South Africa. It refers to the government's capacity to address the needs of citizens promptly and effectively, ensuring that public services are delivered efficiently and that public concerns are acknowledged and resolved. Essentially, this means that administrative bodies and public officials are duty-bound to respond to the needs of the public promptly and effectively. They must avoid unnecessary delays and ensure that no issue is left unresolved. When appropriate, officials should seek input from residents, clearly explain policies and consistently respond to public inquiries (Desai & Zondo, 2023).

### 2.6.6 Effectiveness and efficiency

Munzhedzi (2021) emphasises that the sustainable use of limited government resources requires both effectiveness and efficiency. Section 195 of the Constitution explicitly states that these principles must guide the use of public resources. Given the finite nature of state resources, they must be managed with caution and precision. This challenges the common misconception that government resources are unlimited and that the state can meet every demand made by the public (Thornhill, 2012:112). This perspective also promotes the idea that the state can hire as much personnel as it chooses and fund numerous projects and programmes. However, for the sustainable use of the state's limited resources, effectiveness and efficiency are crucial. Section 195 of the Constitution explicitly requires that these principles be applied whenever public resources are used. Contrary to this constitutional mandate, the Auditor-General of South Africa (2018) reported significant over-expenditure beyond the approved budget, often without adhering to proper procedures. As a result, the budget approved through the legislative process is no longer consistently used as a framework for financial spending.

All the governance elements discussed above are essential for the successful and efficient execution of government programmes and policies. Governance theory also suggests that the government alone cannot address the socio-economic challenges it faces. The implementation of government policies, including lockdown regulations, must be carried out effectively and efficiently.

### 2.7 Summary

Good governance must be examined and understood so as to have a comprehensive image of the complete notion of governance. Hence, a thorough comprehension of the concept has been presented in this chapter. Governance as a concept, theories of governance, fundamental principles of governance and elements of governance from a South African

perspective were also addressed. The chapter also provided an understanding of governance and leadership in the public sector. This chapter further explained good governance in South Africa's public sector by looking at what the concept means, the dimensions of good governance and the elements of good governance. Chapter three discusses the legislative frameworks and independent institutions in place that promote good governance in the South African public sector.

# CHAPTER 3: LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND INDEPENDENT CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

## 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 presents a conceptual framework for good governance in the public sector. This chapter is divided into two sections: the first section discusses the constitutional and legislative frameworks designed to promote good governance in the South African public sector, while the second section outlines the independent constitutional institutions responsible for monitoring good governance in South Africa's public sector.

Prinsloo (2013:3) states that "… good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. Good governance also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force". Legal frameworks, specifically those pertaining to human rights, must be fair and unbiased. As a result, new frameworks enabled managers to participate in decentralised decision-making within broader policy frameworks. These legislative changes were completed by 2004 and the focus has since shifted towards enhancing the implementation process.

## 3.2 Legislative frameworks to promote good governance in the South African public sector

South Africa is a democratic republic with a three-tiered government structure and a judiciary that is independent. Within their designated spheres, each of the three spheres of government has legislative and executive power. The framework for good governance includes the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Batho Pele Principles, the Public Service Act, the Code of Conduct for Public officials and the Ethical Framework. Several laws have been approved to implement the Constitution's principles and promote good governance in the public sector (South African Government, 2022).

### 3.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution is approved as the supreme law of South Africa. This implies that the Constitution takes supremacy above any other government decision made by its leader. It provides the foundations for establishing a democratic and comprehensive government and is globally regarded as one of the most advanced constitutions (South Africa, 1996:3). Fox and Meyer (1996:26) explain that a constitution is a foundational law that outlines the structure for government as well as the scope and nature of the power of the government. It is made up of the laws, rules and agreements that control how government functions. Almost all forms of government possess some form of constitution, but it is of particular importance in a

democracy. In most of the democratic governments, constitutions have supremacy over other laws. South Africa's current Constitution was negotiated from May 1994 to October 1996, in the Constitutional Assembly, the country's first democratically elected convention. Yet, the necessity for a democratic constitutional era was not new and was, in fact, as old as South Africa itself. The Constitution was not only the result of discussion in the Constitutional Assembly. Skills learnt from different parts of the world contributed to its establishment and several of its elements are the result of years of struggle, filled with historical significance (South Africa History Online, 2019).

In 1996, the South African Constitution was approved and pays much attention to matters concerning good governance. The Constitution also addresses the function of fair administrative action in supporting constitutional, rational and objective procedural conduct that fosters effective administration. Section 33 highlights the importance of professional ethics, Section 195(1) (g) specifies that transparency must be preserved and Section 195 (1)(i) highlights the main responsibility of public administrators to represent the entire public. Section 197 focuses on matters regarding the public sector (South Africa, 1996). Furthermore, there are several references to accountability and transparency in the South Africa Constitution. The foundation for transparency in government is established by the Constitution. It outlines, among other things, fundamental principles of governance and intergovernmental relations for accessibility of information, fair administrative processes and the behaviour of different political entities at the spheres of government. According to the Constitution, the government is required to deliver socio-economic services to its people and the public is presumed to demand these services in accordance with the Constitution. In this sense, for government to operate properly, the governed and its rulers must also obey the Constitution. In conclusion, the Constitution serves as the cornerstone of any government system (Van Niekerk in Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt & Jonker, 2002:59).

### 3.2.2 White Paper on Service Delivery (Batho Pele Principles)

Following the approval of the Constitution in 1996, various legal and regulatory frameworks were established to lay the foundation for an ethical, transparent and accountable government. The Batho Pele Principles serve as the foundation of these frameworks. The intention of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery is to address the requirement for a particular policy and set of guidelines for transforming public sector performance. Batho Pele means 'People First' and, as a result, in 1997, these principles were introduced to establish a people-centred public sector that is professional, unbiased and dedicated to improving society as a whole (South Africa, 1997). The Batho Pele Principles stipulate that the public sector will be evaluated on one principle, namely its efficiency in providing services to meet the basic needs of every citizen in South Africa. These principles are implemented to promote public

participation and the ability of citizens to understand and defend their rights. As a result, the Batho Pele Principles define the provision of services through the lens of the local community (Crous, 2004:574). The following principles regarding the provision of public services are outlined in the White Paper:

- **Consultation**

Consultation means finding out what the public wants and how the government can best address those demands. Citizens may be surveyed or interviewed for this purpose. Citizens should also be consulted and the information obtained should be used to enhance customer service. Providing both customers and public institutions with feedback is extremely important in order to inform the citizens of what to expect from the government.

- **Service standards**

While government should continually strive to enhance the services offered, it is equally crucial to assess how well government promises to supply the services when requested. When the government is aware of the customer's priorities, service standards can be established but must be reasonable given the available resources. Government's measurement of these standards should also be possible so that the public may determine whether these criteria are being met, thereby increasing access to government departments or services.

- **Access**

Access is especially important for those who were previously underprivileged in the society as well as for individuals with particular requirements. These requirements could include providing access to the government departments for disabled people or providing services that are too distant for individuals to travel to. Access is made easier by friendly employees who speak to clients in their own language.

- **Courtesy**

As highlighted in the Constitution, in Section 195(1)(a), there is a connection between courtesy and ethical conduct. When performing their official duties, public employees' conduct ought to be impeccable. Integrity is one of the most important traits a public employee should have since it ensures that the public interest comes before personal interests, which is a value without which South Africa's democracy cannot advance. In addition to being respectful to clients, being compassionate, helpful and serving everyone with dignity and respect are all examples of being courteous. Managers should monitor interactions among front-line employees and customers and support staff to ensure that everyone receives welcoming and professional services (Crous, 2004:581).

- **Information**

Singo (2018:58) is of the opinion that information is a potent instrument that should empower society. Therefore, it is required from public officials to inform the community accurately and avoid deceiving them. Information is about reaching all the customers with information to confirm that they are mindful of the services that public institutions offer. This can be accomplished in several ways, such as through newspapers, flyers, posters and radio. It is imperative not to forget that diverse clients have different requirements and that not all of them are monolingual. To let the clients know what services public entities provide, the Service Commitment Charter should be distributed. The media serves as an important instrument in distributing information about government policies and programmes and it should make sure that the information is updated and accurate (Vyas-Doorgapersand & Ababio, 2010:119).

- **Openness and transparency**

The Batho Pele Principles encourage government departments to be open and transparent regarding all aspects of their activities. Government departments should release an annual report detailing how public funds were used and how much everything costs, including salaries, delivery of equipment, services and so on. Departments' performance, considering whether they fulfilled their promises and delivered on time, should also be mentioned. If government departments do not meet expectations, they ought to provide an explanation and seek methods that will improve their performance. The public should be invited to 'open days' that government departments host to demonstrate how they conduct business.

- **Redress**

Redress facilitates the process for clients to voice their displeasure with the services that government departments deliver. Government should educate public officials on how to respond to grievances in a courteous and helpful manner. The respective departments should apologise and fix the problem as soon as possible. Clients should be enlightened of where and how to file grievances and the respective departments should keep a record of all such grievances and their answers. It is significant to acknowledge that client grievances can really help departments improve their services because clients have the right to state what their needs are.

- **Value for money**

This principle includes providing clients with quality service by using all the available resources. It also entails eliminating corruption, fraud and waste while developing creative ways to improve services at little or no cost. This may include collaborating with the community as well as other service providers. To supply clients with the best value for their money, government departments must work effectively, efficiently and to the fullest extent of their

abilities. Because so many of the departments that participated came up with unique and different ways to do things better, this Batho Pele principle – value for money – was added to the original list. Innovation might include new ways of rendering better services, reducing expenditure, improving conditions and simplifying and enacting improvements that align with the spirit of Batho Pele. Additionally, it is about rewarding employees who 'go the extra mile' to make sure outcomes are met.

- **Customer impact**

In 2002, this new principle was included. The principle of 'impact' refers to an examination of the benefits government departments have brought to their clients, both internal and external; it is the way the nine principles connect to illustrate how government departments have improved their overall service delivery. It was found that some departments focused more on particular principles while neglecting others. Consequently, the public sector of South Africa encounters several obstacles in its attempts to transform into an instrument that is competent, democratic and truly representative in the process of development, rebuilding and reconciliation. Customer impact focuses just on adjustments and effects that come about as a result of government departments' incorporation of the Batho Pele principles into their work. To effectively carry out its purpose, the public sector is being reformed to execute policies set forth by government in accordance with the policy framework outlined in the White Paper on Public Sector Transformation (South Africa, 2022).

### 3.2.3 King III Report

Due to the new Companies Act 71 of 2008 (the Companies Act) and changes in international governance practices, the third report on corporate governance in South Africa became needed. The King Committee, with the assistance of the King subcommittees, compiled the King III report. The ideology of the report is founded on three concepts: corporate citizenship, leadership and sustainability. King III indicates that good governance and adherence to the law are inextricably linked. In addition to adherence to the law, good governance standards, governance codes and guidelines will be important in determining what is considered an appropriate level of conduct for directors. Some of the good governance principles have been legislated in addition to a voluntary code of practice. Effective leadership is the cornerstone of good governance. Leaders must respond to current governance challenges. This type of leadership is defined by the ethical standards of transparency, fairness, accountability as well as moral obligations enshrined in Ubuntu philosophy (Institute of Directors Southern Africa, 2009:10). Furthermore, the Institute of Directors Southern Africa (2009:21) points out that the ethics of governance necessitates that all board and executive management decisions and actions be founded on the four essential ethical values that underpin strong corporate governance, namely responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency. It is imperative

to address institutional problems that could hinder adherence to the fundamental principles of public sector ethics, commitment to good governance and political and management responses.

### 3.2.4 King IV Report

According to Masuku (2019:126), the King Report IV (2016) stresses that ethical leadership and effective leadership ought to support and strengthen one another. This indicates that ethical leaders who are committed to upholding moral principles are needed for good governance. Examples of ethical leadership are fairness, integrity, transparency, competence and accountability. The importance of good governance and the function of directors have recently come under renewed scrutiny due to scandals involving businesses. Some people hold the opinion that in both the private and public sectors, King IV should be referred to for these governance failures. A law establishes the boundaries that individuals must not violate and outlines the penalties they will experience if they do. In contrast, a voluntary code like King IV aims to outline the best practices and principles that organisations should adhere to attain good governance. Laws and rules can both be easily broken by those who intentionally disobey the law and those who do not care about being caught. Because of this, King IV places a strong emphasis on establishing an ethical culture. When an ethical approach prevails, individuals and organisations will try to act morally even when no one is watching because they know that doing so decreases risk and will be prudent from a business perspective. King IV is a voluntary code since it does not attempt to be a law and acknowledges that choosing to act ethically is ultimately up to the individual. This mindset is reflected in King IV's 'apply and explain' strategy, which encourages the governing body to use its reasoning skills to implement the principles rather than just mindlessly complying to a set of rules. According to the King Committee, the code was intended to be flexible enough to benefit all types of organisations. King IV, therefore, focuses on the principles that guide what should be accomplished rather than prescribing particular courses of action. Understanding that King IV and other voluntary codes serve as guidelines to assist organisations in implementing governance procedures in a manner that does not unnecessarily restrict them and is suitable to their specific circumstances, is important (Institute of Directors South Africa, 2018).

The guiding principles of laws that promote effective and efficient use of public resources, for example, the Public Finance Management Act (PMFA), are connected to those in the King IV report on corporate governance in South Africa. The King IV report includes practices and principles emphasised in the PMFA and these practices and principles are applicable to all areas of government regardless of the structure and operation of the entities or departments (Masuku, 2019:128). King IV is built on the principles of accountability and transparency. These two principles are two of the six characteristics of ethical and effective leadership. King

IV clearly demonstrates that accountability and transparency go hand in hand. The requirement to be transparent about not only what was carried out, but also the logic behind it, promotes both accountability and flexibility needed by organisations to modify the code to their own conditions. As a result, it is the responsibility of shareholders and other interested parties, such as regulators, to hold the boards accountable for how they carry out good governance. King IV highlights disclosure as a key strategy for promoting accountability and more transparency (Institute of Directors South Africa, 2018).

The primary distinction between King III and King IV lies in their approach to corporate governance. King III adopted a "compliance-based" strategy, while King IV adopted a more comprehensive "apply and explain" approach. King IV (2016) builds on King III (2009) but introduces significant changes aimed at enhancing governance standards across all sectors in South Africa, including public, private, NPOs and SOEs. King IV marks a shift towards a principles-based, flexible governance model that emphasises achieving specific goals rather than strictly following regulations. King IV extends its focus beyond just listed companies, advocating for sustainability, ethical leadership and integrated thinking across all sectors. King IV emphasises key governance outcomes, including performance, ethical culture, legitimacy and effective control.

### 3.2.5 The Public Service Act 103 of 1994

The Public Service Act 103 of 1994 is intended to outline, for the organisation and administration of the South African public service, terms of office, the regulation of the conditions of employment, discipline, retirement, discharge of officials of the public service and issues related therewith (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2014:4). According to paragraph 3(1) of the Public Service Act 103 of 1994, the Minister of Public Service and Administration is liable for setting norms and standards in the public sector, such as integrity, ethics, behaviour and corruption prevention. Section 30 of the Public Service Act states that no public official shall partake in compensated activities apart from his or her service unless written permission is given by the department's Executive Authority. The Executive Authority shall consider whether the outside work could hinder or delay the efficiency and effectiveness of the worker's function or could breach a provision of the Code of Conduct. As delineated in Section 7(3)(b) of this act, Heads of Departments take responsibility for management and efficient administration of their departments, the development of sound labour relations, the maintenance of discipline and the appropriate use of public resources (Van der Walt & Du Toit, 1999:384). Section 31(a)(I) specifies that if a member of staff receives an allowance or a reward other than compensation, the money or value thereof is required to be deposited into the revenue account. The Head of a Department may authorise the retention of the allowance, compensation or reward (South Africa, 1994:28).

### 3.2.6 The Public Administration Management Act 11 of 2014

The Public Administration Management Act 11 of 2014 (PAMA) is an amendment of the Public Service Act 103 of 1994 (PSA) and the Act was signed into law by the President in 2014. Given that it promotes the administration of constitutional principles to combat corrupt practices, it is connected to the PSA. Its primary objective is to present an overview of the public administration frameworks to support the public sector institutions. The Act restricts public officials from doing business with government or serving as a director of a private or public corporation that does business with government as a means of encouraging professional ethics and honesty among employees. Failure to follow this rule indicates serious violation, which could result in the employer terminating employment of the employee who committed the offence. Additionally, the Act mandates that employees disclose their financial interests. Misconduct occurs when the need to declare financial interests is not met as necessary (Singo, 2018:122).

For the purpose of promoting a high standard of professional ethics in public administration, Chapter 6 outlines the establishment of the Public Administration Ethics Integrity and Disciplinary Technical Assistance Unit (PA-EID-TAU). The PA-EID-TAU seeks to improve the effectiveness of sanctions in relation to corruption and increase its power to start or instigate disciplinary actions against wrongdoing. The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004 will support the new unit. According to Chapter 7, the Office of Standards and Compliance will be established by the government to guarantee that the anti-corruption plan is followed to the letter. The purpose is to assess whether public administration norms and standards, including evaluation, are appropriate. Reports on the state of compliance should be sent to the Minister by senior public management officials (South African Government News Agency, 2021).

### 3.2.7 Code of Conduct for Public officials

The Code of Conduct for Public officials was drafted to provide concrete meaning to relevant constitutional provisions relating to the public sector. It mainly addresses three relationships involving public officials, namely the relationship amongst public officials and the Legislature and the Executive, between public officials and the public and between public officials themselves. The Code of Conduct also serves as a guide for public officials regarding ethical expectations which, in turn, promotes professionalism in the public sector. This is done with the intention that public officials will strive to perform their tasks in a manner that is effective and efficient to avoid violating the Code of Conduct and facing repercussions (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2002). In addition to establishing good governance, the Code of Conduct is essential in the struggle against unethical behaviour and corruption. It also raises concerns about human rights, the rule of law, private interests, personal behaviour,

accountability and transparency in government. Furthermore, the Code of Conduct provides clear instructions on how public officials should fulfil their tasks and how their personal conduct should be without criticism, particularly in terms of wrongdoing linked to the misuse of their position for the benefit of personal interests (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 1997).

Mahomed and Uregu (2014) agree that codes of conduct play a crucial role in managing individuals and ensuring a framework for establishing behavioural standards and norms for public officials worldwide. These codes serve as enforceable guidelines that promote the highest ethical standards, clarify acceptable professional conduct, define prohibited behaviour, offer rules for resolving conflicts of interest and outline the conditions under which financial interests must be disclosed. The goal of these guidelines is to prevent corruption, forming the foundation of an integrity framework. According to Mafunisa (2008:81), South Africa's public sector is marred by signs and accusations of unethical behaviour. As a result, codes of conduct are implemented to ensure that public officials carry out their duties ethically

Public officials are regulated by codes of conduct and constitutional guidelines, which are crucial mechanisms against unethical conduct. Unethical conduct consists of concealing incompetence, corruption, bribery, fraud, nepotism, victimisation, sexual harassment, biased and uninformed decisions, leaking of private information, tax evasion, speed money (unofficial payments to speed up a process) and inefficiency. Mbatha (2005:25) explains that among the most common ethical problems confronting public officials are elements concerning administrative confidentiality, public accountability, nepotism, corruption, leaked information, values, truthfulness, professional ethics, equality, policy ambiguity, the affiliation among public officials and elected political appointees, the impact of pressure groups on the ethical conduct of public officials, the political activities of appointed public officials and public interest in the behaviour of public officials.

Mafunisa (2008:87) is of the view that an effective code of conduct is one that influences the behaviour of an employee. It accomplishes this by highlighting the importance of ethical behaviour as an institutional priority. An alternative strategy to turn a code of conduct into an active document is by encouraging the public to notify the specific public service unit about the unacceptable behaviour of a public official. To enable the public to serve as effective whistle-blowers, they should also be conscious of the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Public officials. Mle (2012:32) further explains that the Code of Conduct empowers public officials to reflect and act in a way that is ethical. It outlines requirements for behaviour that is appropriate as well as standards for ethical practices. The Code of Conduct is designed to encourage a culture of commitment, recommend a devotion to high professional standards, contribute to

service delivery that is more effective and efficient and eradicate corruption in the public sector. The guidelines for the code's provisions are addressed in the following sections:

- Relationship with the Legislature and the Executive;
- Relationship with the community;
- Relationships amongst personnel;
- Performance of responsibilities; and
- Personal conduct and private interest.

The Code of Conduct is available to all. However, one might ask: Do public employees actually follow it? Is it truly effective? The same question can be raised about the Batho Pele Principles, which were established to encourage ethical behaviour and professionalism in the public sector with the aim of improving service delivery. What, then, are the consequences of a public sector with limited ethics and professionalism?

The section that follows, focuses on public service regulations.

### 3.2.8 Public Service Regulations, 2001

This Act was integrated with the Code of Conduct for Public Officials to enhance service delivery and employee systems. By granting it legal status, the code outlines provisions regarding the acceptance of gifts by officials. It states that an official "…shall not use their official position to acquire private gifts or benefits for themselves during the performance of their duties, nor shall they accept any gifts or benefits offered, as these may be interpreted as bribes" (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 2001:44).

Public officials are encouraged to follow the Code of Conduct as a guide for acceptable behaviour. They are required to adhere to the Constitution, prioritise the public's interests and remain committed to policy implementation. Public employees must act with courtesy, helpfulness and impartiality. Officials must also avoid the promotion or discrimination of any political party while serving in a neutral and fair manner. In their interactions with colleagues, officials should not favour family or friends and must refrain from abusing their authority or influence. Public employees are expected to report any unethical behaviour, respect confidentiality, provide unbiased advice and promote accountable, transparent governance to prevent conflicts of interest.

Public employees must never disclose information for personal gain, nor use their positions to request or accept gifts, as these actions could be seen as bribery. Public officials are prohibited from accepting remunerated work without prior approval or from using government resources for such work. They are required to disclose financial interests, shares, partnerships,

directorships, gifts, hospitality, sponsorships and compensated activities outside the public sector (excluding those from family members). The disclosure of ownership and other interests in land and property is also mandatory. These disclosures must be submitted to the Executing Authority, with a copy forwarded to the Public Service Commission (PSC). Section 11 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, stipulates requests for access to information or records must comply with the Act's procedural requirements. The Code specifies that failing to disclose information or providing false information deliberately constitutes misconduct (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 2001:41-43).

### 3.2.9 Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999

With the progress of public administration in South Africa, a financial transformation process was launched, giving birth to the Public Financial Management Act 1 (PFMA) of 1999. Its objective is to control how public funds are managed, with a focus on transparency and accountability (Sebake & Tsheole, 2020:173). The PFMA is a guide for successful financial control and it has been praised by financial professionals, with a great deal of its sections cited as practical and beneficial for better public finance management (Bekker, 2009). The PFMA cleared the way for the modernisation of the South African public sector's financial management system. The approved PFMA was a crucial and constructive improvement in strengthening budgetary discipline in South Africa. This transitioned the public sector from a cash-based accounting system to an accrual-based accounting system, as required by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), which is in line with international standards. The PFMA, when read in conjunction with Treasury Regulations, provides a dynamic framework for successful financial control with penalties for non-compliance (Bekker, 2009).

Moreover, to guarantee sound management of public expenditure in revenues, assets and liabilities, Section 2 of the PFMA necessitates transparency, honesty and accountability. The government of South Africa implemented the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 to enhance accountability and efficiency in the provision of services. This legislative framework encourages public officials, who oversee public funds, to behave in an ethically responsible manner. Section 81 specifies that it is considered an offence of financial misconduct when a department's accounting officer fails to take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action when someone conducts or authorises an unauthorised expenditure, an irregular expenditure or a fruitless and wasteful expenditure. This also imposes additional reporting responsibilities on the accounting officer in the interests of good governance (in terms of Sections 39, 40 and 41). This Act modernises financial management in the public sector to support the roles of public administration and introduces an established system of public sector financial management across all the spheres of the South African government (South Africa, 1999).

### 3.2.10 Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003

The Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (MFMA) is a key item of Local Government legislation aiming to guarantee good governance. It addresses financial governance matters, preparation of budget processes, managing and controlling of municipal bank accounts, publication of annual budgets and auditing requirements. The Act intends to safeguard sound management of municipal financial matters to set treasury standards and norms and to deliver on concerns linked therewith.

The MFMA is in place to guarantee accountability, transparency and appropriate lines of responsibility in the fiscal and financial affairs of municipalities and municipal structures. In the pursuit of public accountability, transparency, and openness, a consultative preparatory process for budgets is undertaken and this needs to align with Section (21) of the MFMA. This allows for intergovernmental planning among the three spheres of government (Dlalisa, 2009:47). The Act further outlines very strict guidelines on addressing fruitless, irregular and wasteful expenditure by municipal employees, regardless of their position within the municipal structure. The Act mandates that such expenditure must be disclosed to the Mayor, Auditor-General or must even be reimbursed if it is allowed. In conclusion, the Act has the imperative (in terms of Section 103 and 117) to report inappropriate interference by councillors and exclude them from partaking in tender committees. These two clauses are especially important for good governance in Local Government. According to Dlalisa (2009:48), in Local Government, management of tenders was viewed as corrupt action due to councillors assigning tenders to companies owned by their friends, wives or even children. Section 117 is crucial in preventing this type of corruption by councillors in Local Government.

### 3.2.11 Public Sector Integrity Management Framework

The Public Sector Integrity Management Framework was launched in 2014. The framework was developed to strengthen policies and standards for promoting ethical conduct and managing integrity, to work toward creating a more efficient and accountable public sector guarantee that, in the event of noncompliance, the proper measures were implemented. This framework includes processes for addressing unethical behaviour that could emerge from hospitality, gifts, financial interests and other affordances from employment after leaving the public sector and from remunerative work performed outside of the public sector. The government acknowledged that some provisions of the regulatory framework promoting good governance and governing integrity in the public sector are outdated. This resulted in the adoption of the Public Sector Integrity Management Framework, which emanated from a variety of preceding regulatory frameworks intended for promoting ethics in South Africa's public sector (South Africa. Public Sector Integrity Management Framework, 2014:7). Building a more accountable public sector was among the objectives of the framework, along with

promoting integrity and good governance. The framework would foster the trust of the public in government institutions and safeguard the integrity of government (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2011).

### 3.2.12 Corruption Act 94 of 1992

The Corruption Act 94 of 1992 was enacted to criminalise corrupt practices involving public officials and others, including bribery and the abuse of power. Its primary goal is to prevent corruption and uphold integrity within the public sector. The Act aims to enhance security measures to combat and prevent corrupt activities. It applies to anyone in a position of authority, with specific responsibilities outlined in their employment contract or arising from their role or relationship. This includes municipal councillors and officials engaged in maladministration who may face penalties under this Act (South Africa, 2004:2).

### 3.2.13 Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004

This Act establishes a framework for improving and establishing investigative tactics against corruption, imposes particular limitations on individuals and departments found guilty of corrupt activities concerning contracts and tenders and establishes extraterritorial jurisdiction over the offence of corruption and transgressions associated with illegal practices. Departments must conduct continuous procurement audits of specific projects to point out errors and wrongdoing in the process of purchasing goods and services (South Africa, 2004:2).

Mantzaris and Munnik (2013:105) suggest that South Africa's corruption prevention legislation should form the foundation of good governance, provided it is effectively implemented. Strategies to combat corrupt practices should apply to all levels of government. Despite the existence of policies and regulations, good governance has often remained an elusive goal. Mantzaris and Pillay (2014:17-18) note that the government has made continuous efforts to address various challenges affecting all levels of government, and promote strategic and practical planning for good governance. However, corruption continues to persist in the South African public sector, indicating that the implementation of the Act has not been successful.

### 3.2.14 Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000 (Whistle-Blowers Act)

Callard and Dehn (2004:149) point out that the South African government acknowledged the significance of whistle-blowers and, to prove its devotion towards protecting whistle-blowers, it established the Protected Disclosure Act, also known as the Whistle-Blowers Act. The aim of the Act is to encourage public officials to report information regarding illegal and inappropriate workplace behaviour. The Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000, attempt to shield those who reveal details about illegal and corrupt behaviour from retaliation at work.

However, regardless of attempts to fight and prevent corruption in the public sector, several inadequacies are evident. Diale and Holtzhausen (2005:17) indicate that the Act "…falls short of the practicality of its provisions and (lacks protection for) existing and potential whistle-blowers" in its current form. More attention should be directed towards preventing corruption as well as recognising and closing structural regulatory and organisational deficiencies that contribute to a corrupt public sector. Preventive measures should concentrate on updating regulatory mechanisms to limit public officials' discretionary powers and improve the transparency of decision-making processes. More specifically, citizens must be better informed about these actions and their guidelines, including all other anti-corruption laws. Despite these efforts, corruption persists.

### 3.2.15 Public Audit Act 25 of 2004

Shava and Mazenda (2021:311) claim that the Public Audit Act 25 of 2004 is another framework that guides the practice of ethics in public administration. This law requires the Auditor-General's Office to function independently of government directives. It should be highlighted that Article 46 of the Act restricts any employee from partaking in party politics, which could jeopardise the independence of the Auditor-General's Office. However, attending a public event in a private or personal capacity does not fall under this category. Furthermore, all employees working for the Office of the Auditor-General are required by Article 41 to decline illegal payments because accepting them would mean that the payments would be debited from their salaries. Such funds can be recovered from the institution where they were accumulated. In summary, this framework outlines the required ethical conduct of officials in the Auditor-General's Office.

The following section focuses on the independent institutions that promote good governance in South Africa's public sector. Even though there are numerous institutional mechanisms against unethical conduct in the South African public sector, only a few will be explored.

### 3.3    Public institutions monitoring good governance in the South African public sector

To meet the demands of the country, particularly the public sector, several ethics and governance measures based on international and national frameworks were adopted (Malunga, 2014:152). Such measures (policies, legislative and regulatory frameworks) include the key institutions, sectors, laws, practices and specific mechanisms that operate collectively to promote good governance (Enaifoghe, Jili & Mthethwa, 2023). Public institutions promoting democracy and ethical conduct in public administration and monitoring good governance in the South African public sector include, among others, the offices of:

- the Public Protector;
- the Auditor-General;

- the Public Service Commission;
- the National Prosecuting Authority; and
- the Special Investigation Unit.

### 3.3.1 The Public Protector

The Public Protector's Office is governed by the Public Protector Act 23 of 1994. The efficiency of the Office is measured by whether or not recommendations in a given case are implemented. Findings show that while the government acts in most cases, it sometimes fails to comply with recommendations, particularly when it involves politicians. Among political parties in Parliament, there have been huge disputes about how to interpret the findings of the PP and what should be done about them. It goes without saying that 'small cases' are normally implemented with ease (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2001:20).

Pillay (2004:593) is of the opinion that in terms of corruption in the narrow criminal context, the PP has no role to perform. Instead, the PP detects these cases and refers them to the appropriate authorities such as the NPA. The Office of the Public Protector investigates noncriminal incidents consisting of ethical offences such as code of conduct violations or conflicts of interest and has the authority to make recommendations. Furthermore, Munzhedzi (2016:2) explains that the Public Protector has the authority to investigate any activity in government-related matters where officials are either accused of or suspected of inappropriate actions that could lead to bias. The PP is also responsible for investigating cases where a public official makes improper promises or receives undue benefits in connection with actions that result in illegal conduct or unfair treatment of any individual.  Chapter 10 of the Constitution concludes that the PP shall investigate any alleged corruption, dishonest or improper act, unjustified exercise of power, maladministration or unlawful enrichment upon receipt of a complaint.

### 3.3.2 The Auditor-General

Chapter 9 in the Constitution outlines the role of the Auditor-General to oversee the management of public finances. The Office of the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) contributes to good governance through its role of "… enabling oversight, accountability and governance in public institutions through auditing" (Tshauambea, 2023). Pillay (2004:593–595) states that in monitoring good governance in public financial terms and in the battle against corruption, the AG has a unique role, namely proactive prevention. This institution can follow up on 'red flag' issues that are discovered during routine auditing through its forensic auditing division. It will then be able to assist and collaborate. In the public sector, the Office is not in charge of preventing and detecting economic crime. Rather, management (as

accounting officers) is thought to be in charge of this. The AG's duties include obtaining, investigating and auditing all accounts and financial statements of:

- the national, provincial and local spheres of the government; and
- any statutory body or institution financed wholly or partly by public funds, including public corporations and parastatals.

Nsingo (2014:50) explains further that, in addition to conducting performance audits, the AG compiles and publishes a report for each public institution after it has been audited for public expenditure. After that, the report is submitted to Parliament for debate. Munzhedzi (2016) notes that the role of the AG stops when he or she submits a report to Parliament with recommendations. The AG's report is used to summon selected accounting officers or political heads of ministries. Poor audit outcomes are normally caused by limited accountability and a lack of consequences for poor performance and violations by the executive and administration (South Africa. Auditor-General, 2013:47). This is in line with Munzhedzi's (2013:282) perspective that insufficient financial skills, a limited commitment and poor procurement methods are all contributing factors to a poor state of financial affairs. Although these institutions have recommendation powers only, their roles in promoting ethics in public administration should not be underestimated. Recently, the roles of these two institutions in identifying unethical conduct and exposing corruption (Public Protector) and financial mismanagement (Auditor-General) in the Public Service have been most prominent. These incidents point to public administration beset by ethical infractions. Provision for civil society to promote ethical conduct exists through whistle-blowing, the constitutional requirement of transparency and the provision of timely and accurate information when required. The latter statement implies that civil society must be aware of priorities and objectives in public administration so that informed decisions can be made. The role of the media in conscientising people in this regard must not be underestimated. Ethical values among public officials are necessary for ethical governance because they influence levels of accountability and the degree to which the principles and regulations that guide people's moral values affect their capacity to carry out their jobs and responsibilities as public officials (South Africa, 1996:192–193;195).

Despite ongoing education and training on values and ethics for public servants, ethical breaches remain widespread in South Africa's public administration. This highlights the gap between learning about ethics and actually applying those principles. Ethical public administration can only be achieved through the consistent ethical behaviour of practitioners. The idea of 'internal goods' is key to understanding the ethical foundation of public administration, as it reminds practitioners of the moral standards embedded in their work. Since public administration involves the authoritative distribution of limited resources, often in

politically charged and contentious environments, practitioners are frequently exposed to ethical dilemmas and the risk of unethical conduct.

### 3.3.3 Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission was established under Chapter 10 of the Constitution. The Constitution specifies that there is a single PSC for the Republic of South Africa, made up of 14 members, with no more than five members appointed by the President on the recommendation of the National Assembly (NA). From each of the 9 provinces, one member is appointed by the President after nomination by the Premier of the province on the recommendation of the Provincial Legislature. The PSC is accountable to the NA and must report on a yearly basis to the NA on its operations and performance as well as to provincial legislatures on its activities in each province. Among other functions, the PSC is mandated and empowered to investigate, monitor and assess the organisation and administration of the public sector (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2018:1).

In South Africa, the PSC is playing a leading role in building an ethical public service committed to good governance principles (Mudzamba & Sibanda, 2012). The PSC is also committed to playing a key role in the establishment of the Code of Conduct for the public sector, which serves as the foundation for the public sector's integrity framework by establishing high standards of professional ethics in the public sector. Furthermore, the PSC must promote the development of ethics, accountability and good governance in that it must ensure that public service departments follow sound principles of public administration for the effective, economic and efficient use of resources and ensure that the needs of its citizens are responded to. This mandate also includes assessing the achievements or failures of government programmes. Shabangu and Mazdzivhandila (2017:543) agree that the PSC oversees public administration and has custodial responsibility for good governance in the country. The aforementioned authors state further that the PSC releases a report every year to show how the state was able to implement policies through transformation and the enforcement of good governance standards as well as how each ministry in charge of public services is managing its resources. Sebola (2018:62) observes that the Commission's effectiveness in ethical submission by public officials has been restricted because it performs a recommendatory function rather than an enforcing function.

In terms of Section 196 of the Constitution, the Commission is capacitated to make recommendations, give directions and conduct enquiries regarding:
- the organisation and administration of departments and the public sector;
- the condition of service of members of the public sector and matters related thereto;

- personnel practices in the public service, appointments, promotions, transfers, discharge and other career incidents of members of the public service and matters in connection with the employment of personnel;
- the promotion of efficiency and effectiveness in departments of the public sector; and
- a code of conduct applicable to members of the public sector.

In terms of prevention, oversight, monitoring and investigation, the PSC plays a crucial role in reducing public service corruption. A small investigative squad has been established to deal with anti-corruption investigations within the public sector (Pillay, 2004:592). Balkaran (2013:129) states that the PSC has implemented financial disclosures by members of Senior Management Services (SMS), often known as senior managers, because corruption is one of the most difficult challenges that all spheres of government are dealing with. This is done expressly to avoid conflict of interest that frequently occurs when senior managers (or any other public officials) wish to do business with the government. The concern is that these executives, who are responsible for overseeing most government decisions, including the awarding of government contracts, may compromise the principle of natural justice, which holds that no one should act as a judge in their own case. However, Kuye and Mafunisa (2003:434) argue that the degree of compliance with these statements has not been effective in reducing corruption and increasing accountability as many public officials continue to transact without having made a declaration. In addition, the PSC admits that several of the methods it used to promote accountability, professionalism and impartiality were ineffective (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2013:4).

### 3.3.4 National Prosecuting Authority

Sebola (2021:47) explains that the National Prosecuting Authority Office is made up of the National Director, who is appointed by the President as Head of the National Executive and the Directors of Public Prosecutions and Prosecutors, who are nominated by an Act of Parliament. In accordance with the appropriate legislation, the NPA has the authority to initiate criminal proceedings on behalf of the state as well as to perform any necessary functions related to the initiation of criminal proceedings granted by legislation. The independence of this office means it can carry out national legislation without fear, favour or bias. In South Africa, however, when it comes to its expected independence, the political aspect of this position tarnishes its reputation. When the office investigates powerful politicians who are not personally linked to the ruling president, supporters of the investigated politician are likely to lobby for support and accuse the office of pursuing political conspiracies against the member, whereas when the investigation involves presidential loyalists, the Director of Public Prosecution risks being mistrusted by the ruling president. Only those individuals in the country

who are not politically powerful and who have a minor financial impact on the country's finances, are likely to be investigated and prosecuted successfully by this office. As a result, this office, like all other state institutions in South Africa tasked with monitoring good governance, faces functional restrictions. Van Vuuren (2014) indicates that all these institutions must operate in an enabling and impartial environment. When investigating or dealing with cases involving people who are not politically important, their functions are said to be effective and efficient. As a result, they are operating inside a set of restrictions that limit their ability to execute tasks effectively. In the past, most of these institutions have been accused of being agents of 'dirty' political and power disputes.

With reference to the state capture allegations, the NPA indicates that the State Capture Inquiry did not conduct criminal investigations and this would need to happen after the report is made public. According to the NPA spokesperson, Mthunzi Mhanga, who spoke to *News24*, the NPA's Investigating Directorate (ID) and its task force, will study the recently released report and coordinate cases that result from it (Chabalala, 2022). On Tuesday, 10 May 2022, Shamila Batohi, the National Director of Public Prosecutions, announced that the ID of the NPA intends to prosecute nine 'seminal cases' involving state capture within the next six months while presenting the NPA's annual performance plan to the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services. The ID reported 82 investigations and enrolled 20 cases with 65 accused. In addition, nine corruption-related cases have been given priority for enrolment in the next six months. The nine cases that were given priority, according to Botohi, were "…seminal cases that will talk to the heart of state capture". This is also the NPA's primary objective for the upcoming year. Furthermore, the National Director of Public Prosecutions states that the recent publication of the Zondo Commission brought to light the extent of the harm state capture has caused the nation of South Africa. Consequently, the NPA must operate with a sense of urgency while maintaining razor-sharp concentration on specific cases, rather than acting under pressure, which is when mistakes tend to occur. The NPA is committed to seeing that individuals accused of state capture are held accountable. This will restore public confidence, which is crucial for investor confidence and economic growth, both of which will benefit the country's poorest and most vulnerable citizens as well as address the widening inequality gap in South Africa. The response of the NPA to the recommendations and conclusions of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Capture will be what will truly define the Office of the NPA and South Africa going forward (Gerber, 2022).

On Monday, 29 August 2022, Mahlangu (2022) reported in the *Sowetan Live* newspaper, that two former Transnet Group executives who were arrested made court appearances on Monday. The arrests were carried out by the Investigating Directorate of the NPA with assistance from the members of the Special Police Investigative Unit known as the Hawks.

The accusers are accused of violating the Public Finance Management Act as well as of fraud, corruption and money laundering. The State Capture Inquiry discovered that the locomotives deal grew from R38 billion to R54.5 billion and the controversial Gupta brothers allegedly received about R6 billion in kickbacks. In conclusion, the next round of arrests, according to the NPA's Investigative Directorate, might astound the country and does not exclude the possibility that politicians could be implicated.

### 3.3.5 Special Investigating Unit

In accordance with the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act 74 of 1996, the SIU was created as a separate legislative body. The SIU's principal mandate is to investigate "…serious malpractices or maladministration in connection with the administration of state institutions, state assets and public money as well as any conduct, which may seriously harm the interests of the public". Alongside other state departments and institutions, the SIU is committed to upholding the Constitution and being of service to the people. The SIU accepts allegations either through its allegations via its whistle-blowing hotline managed by an independent service provider, directly from state institutions or, directly from whistle-blowers whether they do so in person, over the phone or via email. The SIU has the authority to conduct searches, confiscate evidence, summon witnesses to testify under oath, compel the production of bank statements, interrogate telephone information and other documents as well as enact legal actions on the state's behalf. In accordance with the SIU Act, the SIU alerts the NPA to evidence pointing to criminal conduct discovered during its investigations for prosecution. As required by the SIU Act, the SIU alerts the NPA to evidence of criminal activity discovered during its investigations for possible prosecution (South Africa. Special Investigation Unit, 2022).

Furthermore, Malunga (2015:18) indicates that executives use the SIU as a tool to recoup public funds from organised crime, money laundering and other syndicates like drug lords. An overview of the investigation and its findings, a list of all the suggestions made and the results are included in the final report that is delivered to the President when the investigation is finished. The report ought to be presented to Parliament at least twice a year. Consequently, the SIU is crucial in the fight against corruption committed by public officials within the public service departments. In addition, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), often known as the Hawks, is a SIU that was established by Parliament inside the South African Police Service (SAPS). The DPCI oversees looking into high-priority crimes in the country, such as corruption, significant organised crime, commercial crime and crimes against the state (South Africa. National Prosecuting Authority, 2022).

In contrast, the public institutions established to monitor good governance in South Africa's public sector lack true independence, as they report to public office-bearers. These office-bearers are political appointees who are directly involved in or have influence over the financial disclosure framework. To strengthen oversight and reduce political interference, these institutions should ideally report to independent public accountability mechanisms that are free from political ties. One possible solution is to establish an oversight board comprising members with no political affiliations.

## 3.4 Summary

Several of these entities play oversight roles, while others, such as the NPA and the SIU, are tasked with prosecution. However, when politically connected individuals are implicated, these bodies often lose their effectiveness and operate with less efficiency compared to cases with fewer political ties. This inconsistency undermines public trust in these institutions and weakens the credibility of efforts to combat corruption and abuse of power, particularly in a public service sector already seen as bloated when measured against international per capita standards.

This chapter was divided into two sections: the first focused on legislative frameworks aimed at promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector, while the second examined independent institutions responsible for addressing unethical conduct and overseeing good governance. The next chapter highlights the critical role of ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency in fostering good governance.

# CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE PRACTICES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

## 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the constitutional and legislative frameworks, as well as the independent institutions, that are designed to promote good governance in South Africa's public sector. This chapter underscores the critical role of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in fostering effective governance. Additionally, it delved into the field of public administration, examining the interplay between public administration, governance, and good governance. The chapter also identified and discussed the challenges hindering good governance in South Africa's public sector.

The literature reviewed in this chapter included both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included the Constitution, relevant legislation and responses from study participants. Secondary sources comprised academic books, journal articles, dissertations, departmental annual reports, theses and newspaper articles. The review involved a comprehensive analysis of these sources to provide context and demonstrate how the research aligns with the broader field of study.

Chapter four focuses on the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency as foundational elements in promoting good governance within South Africa's public sector. Next, the literature revised in this chapter is based on the relationship between public administration, governance and good governance. To conclude, since the South African public sector is perceived as a breeding ground for fraud and corruption, this chapter identifies and discusses the challenges to good governance in the public sector.

## 4.2 The importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in the South African public sector

### 4.2.1 History of South Africa

#### 4.2.1.1 Apartheid era

As reported by South African History Online (2022), understanding apartheid and how it affected people are crucial elements in the examination of the apartheid era. Apartheid – translated from Afrikaans as 'apartness' or 'separateness' – was the philosophy supported by the National Party (NP) government and was put into effect in 1948. Apartheid dictated separate growth for different racial groups in South Africa. In theory, it claimed to advocate for equality in growth and the freedom of cultural expression, but the manner in which it was implemented prohibited this. The majority of the general public was severely disadvantaged by the social system of apartheid just because they did not resemble the rulers' skin colour.

For being 'Non-white', many people remained close to the poverty line. Colonial policies that were in place, before the Afrikaner Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, held similar ideologies to those of apartheid. The fundamental difference is that segregation was legalised under apartheid.  Apartheid was viewed as being far worse than segregation because it was put into effect when other countries were abandoning racist policies. Apartheid's objective was to keep Black people alive, although under conditions of permanent captivity and obedience, in order to maintain the systems of White supremacy. Black lives, though, were the single greatest threat to White supremacy as they formed an ineradicable majority in the country (Posel in Ross, Mager & Nasson, 2011:322).

Boddy-Evans (2020) points out that for decades in South Africa, Black people were subjected to oppressive laws that supported White supremacy. This was done to support the idea that White people are superior and to set up the minority White dictatorship. Legislative laws were passed to accomplish this, which included the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949. The Population Registration Act of 1950 required that individuals be registered according to race. As a result, the Department of Home Affairs under the apartheid government, would keep records of people being categorised as Black, Coloured, White, Indian or Asian. This Act served as the basis for apartheid since individuals would thereafter be treated differently based on their population group. In cases where it could not decide what racial group an individual belonged to, the government made use of the 'pencil test' as a method to determine racial identity. A pencil would be placed in one's hair and if it fell out, one was declared White. If one shook one's hair and it fell out, one was declared Coloured and if it did not, one was declared Black. In some cases, this test resulted in family members, who belonged to the same family, being divided into different racial groups and were then forcefully separated. In conclusion, the Department of Home Affairs under the apartheid government ended up developing an unpleasant reputation for obstructionist behaviour and xenophobia and this only worsened under the ministerial authority of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (Thompsell, 2018).

The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 required different racial groups to reside in separate areas. This Act forced Black people away from urban areas and located them in townships outside of the town. People were forcefully removed from their homes, forced off land they had owned for a long time and were placed in disadvantaged locations far from their workplaces. This led to a lot of suffering and bitterness. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 banned all unions amongst Whites and other racial groups as well as social interaction or integration between racial groups in South Africa. Even becoming friends with

an individual of a different race during apartheid usually led to suspicion or adverse consequences (South African History Online, 2022).

Thornhill (2008:492) explains that since the NP came into power in 1948, legislative and administrative measures supporting discriminatory provision of services became part of the public administration mandate. The public sector of South Africa was inaccessible and was developed independently from the international transformation of public administration. According to Tshandu and Kariuki (2010:189), prior to 1994, the public sector was described as unaccountable, non-transparent and non-participatory because it was outdated and complex with racially segregated provision of services. The Report on the Transformation of the Public Service in South Africa (1998:2) points out several shortcomings in the public sector prior to 1994, which prevented efficient provision of service delivery. The report identified visible errors such as inefficient systems, methods, procedural difficulties and the lack of clearly defined duties and responsibilities, which contributed to immense confusion. In addition, there was ineffective coordination and poor communication channels. McKeever (2017:120) specifies that, prior to 1994 in South Africa, the Black majority had no political rights. Blacks were deprived of the right to vote, political parties opposing apartheid were excluded and people were imprisoned without trial, mostly for their political opinions and views. The apartheid government denied citizenship to most South Africans and restricted their movement through oppressive pass laws and other means. Access to education was ethnically determined and the skilled jobs were set aside for the White minority. In 1976, on June 16, thousands of Black pupils in Soweto demonstrated their dissatisfaction by protesting against a new law that forced them to be taught in Afrikaans in the classroom. A peaceful protest ended up with police opening fire with tear gas and bullets on the pupils, which caused the death of many on that fatal day.

Clark and Worger (2016:17) explain further that the execution of apartheid attracted the attention and created the anger, of the newly independent republics in Asia and Africa. During the 1960s and 1970s, international criticism gained wider currency as the government of South Africa pursued the execution of apartheid in ruthless ways. The resistance grew even more fierce in the 1980s. By the end of the 1980s, dissatisfaction among White South Africans was mounting with what was perceived as South Africa's deteriorating international standing. International attention was finally evident and prominent through both peaceful and violent protests. South Africa faced economic sanctions and repercussions due to pressure from international businesses, celebrities and other governments to stop discrimination. The United Nations General Assembly declared the South African government's apartheid policy an offence against humanity. These apartheid policies forced the different racial groups to exist and progress separately as well as extremely unequally. To abolish apartheid, the world joined

hands with the victims of apartheid to make apartheid ineffective and South Africa ungovernable. In February 1990, the prohibition on the ANC and other opposition parties was withdrawn by the former apartheid president. In 1994, the NP was finally defeated in the first democratic election and Nelson Mandela took the oath of office as the new president of South Africa (Blakemore, 2021).

### 4.2.1.2 Post-apartheid era

Since the shift from apartheid to democracy in 1994, the government's development plans have been focused on addressing racial gaps in socio-economic outcomes (Lekalake, 2016:1). The ANC won the 1994 election, ushering in a new government. However, the newly elected democratic government, controlled by the ANC, was largely made up of people who had spent time in exile during the apartheid period and had no experience with administration. The new role players were incompetent as they very limited understanding of public finance and accountability and, therefore, were unable to correct the former government's mistakes and mismanagement. In particular, housing, social development and education departments in the provincial sphere of government were mismanaged. On a national level, it meant mismanagement of agricultural and land affairs. An example of gross mismanagement is the Arms Deal scandal, which shook South Africa and had enormous implications for the ruling party. Although the management of public funds has significantly improved and the National Minister of Finance has made a deliberate effort to improve control mechanisms, there are still issues with appropriately implementing legislation and treasury regulations (Bekker, 2009:2–3).

Since 1994, the governance landscape of South Africa has changed tremendously. The new South African government spent the first two-and-a-half years of its five-year mandate primarily drafting policies and simplifying and improving frameworks, structures and systems. Prior to 1994, the frameworks that managed the public sector were constructed on highly centralised decision-making and comprehensive regulation, resulting in a complicated public sector. South Africa has made immense progress in transitioning the apartheid government into a democratic one founded on the values of the rule of law, non-racialism, human dignity, non-sexism and equal rights for all adults as stipulated in the Constitution (South Africa. Department of Government Communication and Information Systems, 2019).

Nattrass and Seekings (2015:211) indicate that the problems faced by the new government were the result of deep-rooted patterns of economic activity. The main problem was the ineffectiveness of many South African businesses. Business was expanding under protected import competition limitations, helping it to continue operating with a high-cost labour structure imposed for political reasons. South Africans faced a difficult task in reforming their nation to

counter deep-seated poverty afflicting millions of citizens, a racially divided society with disparate distribution of income and opportunities, very high crime rates, social division and moral decay. The commitments included promoting employment, tackling poverty, supporting social inclusion, establishing an enabling climate for social growth and mobilising capital for social development. Sebola (2021:39) concludes that the post-apartheid government has implemented strict measures to guarantee good governance. This goal will be accomplished through a fair and transparent system to guarantee residents of South Africa could reap the rewards of the long struggle for a share in resources. The development of transparent systems that ensure the resources of the country are used in an accountable and transparent manner to residents will guarantee that such objectives are attained. These procedures are in place to ensure the government administration is compliant, efficient and aligned with existing state institutions. The post-Mbeki administration launched the construction of a new unit in the Presidency, namely the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), to promote transparency and accountability and to establish good governance through the performance of government departments. The Auditor-General continues to issue qualified audit reports and unfavourable audit opinions to state departments and municipalities across the country, even though the government has measures such as ethical practices, accountability, transparency and institutions in place to ensure good governance.

### 4.2.2 The public sector of South Africa

The public sector is made up of the national government, provincial government, local government and state-owned businesses such as Eskom and Transnet (Developing Policy Research Unit, 2017:1). The public sector's primary objective is to improve the quality of life of the people by providing goods and services to citizens and to private and other public institutions, playing a crucial role in both the domestic economy and the international economy (Linna, Pekkola, Ukko & Melkas, 2010:480). There are many different parties involved in the public sector and since each of them has different interests, the public sector is subject to a broad range of expectations. If the public sector is to meet the requirements and expectations of all these stakeholders, then it is required to be effective and efficient in performing its duties. In the public sector, efficiency and effectiveness are related to maximising resources in relation to outcomes produced. This indicates that the public sector, within the limits of its budget, must deliver public goods and services in a manner that adequately addresses the requirements of its stakeholders. In a constantly changing environment, the public sector needs to undergo transformation in order to be more functional and productive in managing its stakeholders' interests and assets (Bjork, Szücs & Härenstam, 2014:27).

According to Miller (2005:162), after 1994, the public sector inherited an ineffective and inefficient structure for meeting the requirements and desires of South African society in terms of service delivery. The newly elected government also inherited an economy beset with problems. As a result, South Africa's post-apartheid public sector is under pressure to address service delivery inequalities and injustices, particularly in communities that were formerly disadvantaged. The legacy of apartheid resulted in a public sector that lacks representation, professionalism, legitimacy, a democratic culture, developmental focus and the capacity to deliver quality services to the citizens of South Africa. The duty of the democratic government was to transform the culture of the public sector in a way that embraced the democratic values outlined in the Constitution and instil in public officials a culture of professionalism and prudence in their responsibilities to serve South African citizens. Integrity, accountability, transparency and availability are examples of these values. The South African public sector is obligated to produce a culture of service excellence by doing what is right or ethical. Improving the public sector's performance, preserving the rule of law, fighting corruption and promoting good governance in all of its forms are all required elements of a framework in which economies can succeed (Armstrong, 2005). It became clear in 1990 that unemployed economic growth alone was insufficient to improve citizens' quality of living and that the state's contribution to economic growth needed to be reviewed. It also became evident that the state cannot ever achieve the objectives linked to inclusive growth on its own, which is why recent structural adjustment programmes support an approach that involves a collaboration between the public and private sectors (Tetani & Sifuba, 2016:2).

According to Fourie and Poggenpoel (2017:172–173), the South African government has frequently been charged with failing to meet the requirements of its citizens. Protests against delivery of services have been reported by the media, which is a sign that issues in the public sector are not being addressed effectively. The alleged poor performance of municipalities cannot only be blamed for these protests. Service delivery is hindered by many factors, including poor human resources management, a limited ethical leadership, incompetent public officials, ineffective procurement procedures and a limited accountability. High unemployment levels, corruption, poor financial management and nepotism are just a few of the major problems that have emerged. Despite all of these factors that assumingly contribute to poor service delivery in South Africa, Francis (2013:29) believes that a leader who is unethical and incompetent is, ultimately, the main issue which has presented itself for a considerable amount of time in the public sector. The author adds that the main reasons for this predicament are the appointment of incompetent senior officials and very limited accountability from leaders in the public sector. The ruling party's practice of politically deploying individuals to senior government positions has led to a public sector often managed by officials who lack the

necessary knowledge and expertise to implement effective systems and mechanisms that support good governance (Masuku & Jili, 2019).

There is an extensive body of legislation designed to address governance in South Africa, as discussed in the previous Chapter. Nevertheless, the main challenge is the enactment of these laws across the three spheres of government. Thus, the South African public sector finds it problematic to evolve into a fully capable, democratic and representative instrument in the process of reconciliation, rebuilding and growth. The legal systems in place clearly set a framework for oversight and accountability. The relationship of the different sub-systems in the bigger system must be considered for the public sector to be ethical because South Africa has experienced a significant shift and its public sector has also changed, becoming more representative of the different backgrounds and needs of the residents (McKinsey & Company, 2022).

### 4.2.2.1 The three spheres of government in South Africa

The South African government is made up of three spheres: national, provincial and local. The Constitution establishes three "…distinctive, interdependent and interrelated" 'spheres' as opposed to the more traditional 'levels' where the lower level is perceived as subordinate to the higher level (Van Wyk, 2012:288). The duties of each sphere are outlined in the Constitution. The Constitution also splits power among different levels of government. Each sphere of government consists of a political and administrative branch. The political branch of government drafts laws and policies, while the administrative branch implements them and provides services (Western Cape Government, 2022). These spheres must adhere to the Constitution's principles, which state that policy-making and the development of national standards, rules and regulations are the responsibilities of the national government. The functional categories delineated in Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution are used to determine the legislative and executive power of the three spheres of government (Van Wyk, 2012:289). Each sphere of government is self-governing but is connected with the other spheres and must function in unity with them to provide services to the people (Besdziek, 2001:17). Among other things, the three spheres of government are required to provide coherent, accountable, effective and transparent governance, ensure the well-being of the people of the Republic and not accept any power or role outside those of the Constitution. Powers and functions must be carried out in a way that does not interfere with the geographical, institutional or functional integrity of the government in another sphere. This can, inter alia, be accomplished by working together in the spirit of good faith and trust (Zybrand, 1995:202).

### 4.2.2.1.1 National sphere of government

National government consists of three branches, namely the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. National legislative authority is entrusted in Parliament and grants the NA the jurisdiction to adapt the Constitution, allocate legislative authority to other spheres of government and approve legislation on any issue, including subject matter falling under one of the functional areas specified in Schedule 4 titled, 'Functional areas of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence' but excluding subject matter falling under one of the functional areas outlined in Schedule 5 titled, 'Functional areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence'. The National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) approve policies and laws and hold government accountable. The preparation, initiation and application of national legislation, the establishment and execution of policy, the coordination of the roles of government departments and administrations and the preparation and initiation of legislation are all examples of how the national executive authority is used.

According to Van Wyk (2012:289–290), the President is granted executive authority over the national sphere of government. Together with the other cabinet members, the President exercises executive power. Every five years, MPs are appointed to the NA. Parliament selects a president, who appoints a Cabinet of Ministers. The NCOP consists of representatives from provincial legislatures and local governments. They function as the executive committee of government with each minister serving as the political head of a government department. The government departments are required to execute the laws and policies approved by Parliament or the Cabinet. Director-Generals oversee government departments, which employ directors and public officials to perform their tasks. Each department prepares a budget for their work. The budgets are combined by the Treasury (Department of Finance) into one national budget, which must be authorised by Parliament. The revenue and expenditure of the government must be adjusted in the budget by the Treasury and departments are rarely given everything they request. The provincial government and local government are not permitted to participate in any activity that opposes the laws or policies of the national government. Municipalities are also eligible for grants and loans from the Treasury. The Department of Provincial and Local Government oversees provinces and municipalities at the national level. South African laws are upheld by the Judiciary (the courts), namely the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeal, the High Courts, the Magistrate Courts and courts attending to specific matters, for example, Child Courts, Small Claims Courts and Labour Courts (South Africa, 1996).

### 4.2.2.1.2 Provincial sphere of government

Besdziek (2001:167) states that any understanding of provincial government in South Africa must begin with the correct conceptualisation of the function of these entities. Moreover, a distinction should be drawn between the concepts of the 'functions' and the 'powers' of provinces. The 'powers' of provinces refer specifically to the legislative, political and policy responsibilities assigned to provincial governments through the Constitution. The notion of 'functions' of provinces addresses a much broader notion – it applies to the very reason for the existence of provincial government and its utility in the institutional mechanics of the country. Since the early 1990s, it was clear from the outset that vast regional disparities and underdevelopment confront South Africa. Some of these disparities manifest differently across regions as differences in wealth, resources infrastructure, administrative capacities and human demographics such as population sizes and densities, age profiles, mortality rates, education levels, poverty rates and gender divisions. These issues soon filtered into the constitutional negotiations in regional governments where the core goal of the framework focused on the reconstruction and development of the nation. To this end, provinces were intended to function as regional entities in a vertical arrangement of government institutions that each have a specific role to play in carrying out development projects. These initiatives originate from the centre while the provincial and local governments are tasked with carrying them out. For the fulfilment of this vision, the Constitution applies a vertical hierarchy of authority (Besdziek, 2001:167).

Almost every aspect of South Africa's current nine-province dispensation stems from the constitutional negotiations that preceded the first post-apartheid election in April 1994. South Africa is divided into nine provinces according to section 103 of the Constitution, as opposed to the four under the previous regime. The Constitution stipulates that each province must have a separate legislature with 30 to 80 members. According to a formula outlined in national law, the number of members is set and they are elected using a proportional representation system (Western Cape Government, 2022).

Each province consists of its own Premier and executive councils. Every five years, legislatures are elected in provincial elections held in conjunction with national elections. The legislature selects a Premier, who appoints MECs to take charge of the government departments in each province. The Premier and MECs are members of the provincial executive council (Cabinet). Section 128(1) in the Constitution stipulates that a provincial Premier should be elected by the Legislature from amongst its members at its first sitting. The system of appointing Premiers has two key consequences. The system produces accountability upwards which is counterproductive to democracy at provincial and local government levels, and conducive to abuse of power, conflict of interest and corruption.

Provincial Premiers now perceive their political fortunes as being dependent on the favour of the national President and, accordingly, are inclined to account for their mandate to the national President and not to their provincial party structures or their respective legislatures. According to section 125(2) of the Constitution, the Premier uses his or her power in collaboration with the MECs. The MECs themselves are appointed by a Premier from amongst the Legislature's members. The Constitution does not prescribe who a provincial Premier might select as MECs from those who serve in a provincial legislature and a Premier is free to select a member of an opposition party where such a person would be an appropriate candidate to deal with a certain portfolio. According to Section 133(2) of the Constitution, it is a requisite of the parliamentary executive system that the Premier and the MECs must account to the Legislature for the execution of their authority and responsibilities in these portfolios, both collectively and individually. Furthermore, Section 133 (3)(b) of the Constitution states they must report fully and regularly to a provincial legislature (City of Cape Town, 2018:4).

Section 104(1)(a) of the Constitution grants provinces the power to draft their own constitutions. The drafting and enactment of provincial constitutions are subject to the approval of two-thirds of the members of a provincial legislature who must vote in favour of a Bill in this regard (Section 142). A provincial constitution, according to Section 143(1)(a) and (b), cannot be in contradiction to the national Constitution, but it is allowed to provide for executive and legislative structures or procedures different from those outlined in the national Constitution and it can address the status and authority of a traditional monarch. A provincial constitution must adhere to the principles specified in Chapter 3 of the Constitution (Cooperative Government). Moreover, a provincial constitution is subject to certification by the Constitutional Court. Each province's legislative authority also has the authority to establish laws for the province regarding all the concerns, falling within specific functional areas. These laws are only applicable inside the borders of the province. Provincial laws may not, however, be inconsistent with an Act of Parliament. The Premier of the province must accept a Bill that has been approved by a provincial legislative assembly. A provincial law must be registered as a matter of record with the Supreme Court of Appeal's office, previously known as the Registrar of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. Public attendance and media coverage is permitted at provincial legislative assembly sittings (Western Cape Government, 2022).

Provincial departments appoint staff to carry out government operations in accordance with the Public Service Act 103 of 1994 and the Education Act 12 of 1997. Most public officials in South Africa, including educators and healthcare providers, are appointed by the provincial government. Ambulance services, provincial roadways and provincial planning are all among the select functions of provincial governments. The municipalities in each province are coordinated, monitored and supported by the Department of Local Government and the

provincial MEC (City of Cape Town, 2018:4). Section 155(6) and (7) states that provinces are also broadly responsible for guaranteeing the support of municipalities and must develop their capacity to perform their functions. The key function of provincial legislatures is to act as a direct channel between voters and the government in order to guarantee the government's awareness of specific requirements and concerns. They are also responsible for implementing national regulations to ensure effective service delivery as well as managing the functioning of municipal government within the province (Stander, n.d).

### 4.2.2.1.3 Local sphere of government

Local government, according to Bala (2017:596), is closer to the citizens and is required to deliver an extensive number of services that have a significant influence on the lives of those who reside under the scope of its authority. A local government has the authority to manage its own affairs and is relatively self-governing. Law determines local government's power, structures and functions. South Africa consists of 280 municipalities, which make up the local government system. There are eight metropolitan municipalities, 44 districts and 228 local municipalities (South African Local Government Association, 2017). Municipalities are obligated to supply every resident living within their area of authority with services such as access to water, sanitation, collection of waste, access to transport, electricity, primary health care, housing, education, security in a healthy and safe environment and community development (Western Cape Government, 2022).

Sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution provide local government with power and authority to provide services that are acceptable to the communities and that promote local economic development. The Constitution only addresses the legislative authority of local governments in Section 156(2), which stipulates that a municipality has the authority to establish and enforce by-laws for the efficient management of matters over which it has jurisdiction. Such by-laws may not, however, exist in contradiction with national or provincial legislation. Local government formulates and specifies the legal and regulatory framework using the authority granted by the Local Government Code of 1991. This code is the foundation for the many organisations and groups involved in community governance. The local government also preserves political order and offers resources that are necessary, such as technical skills and infrastructure, to different groups, particularly those who are marginalised. The local government, as an enabler, also creates the conditions for citizens to reach their full potential, guided by the "…overarching goals of respecting, protecting, and fulfilling basic human rights for all, and of empowering everyone to shape their own destiny under a regime that guarantees the realisation of basic rights" (Freeman, 2014).

Reddy (2016:337) points out that municipalities are regarded as the guardians of public funds and, as such, they are responsible for allocating these funds to take care of the essential requirements of local communities. The Constitution lays the framework for this mandate through Section 152(1), which specifies the following objectives for local government:

- "to provide a democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- to provide social and economic development;
- to promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government".

Rulashe and Ijeoma (2022:535) argue that although local government, commonly known as a municipality, can be viewed as an enabler organ in government rather than just a provider of services, the line between local government as an instrument for guaranteeing effective delivery of services and local government as a system of democratic governance is not always evident. This is because local government, as an enabler, must still define the variety and quality of services required by communities. In conclusion, Section 139 of the Constitution asserts that, when a municipality is unable to carry out an executive responsibility, the relevant provincial executive may intercede through carrying out the necessary actions to enforce compliance.

### 4.2.3 The importance of ethical leadership in promoting good governance

Oyetade (2021:7) believes that good governance is heavily influenced by its ethical foundation of governance and it must be measured against established objectives and standards. Van Aswegen and Engelbrecht (2009:228) assert that "… ethical leadership demonstrates the will and ability to strategically position, design, and sustain an organisation successfully, to develop employee competence and to direct human and organisational energy in pursuit of performance and achievement that stand the ethical test of effectiveness and efficiency". Ethical leadership is a concept iterated by Walumba, Morrison and Christenson (2012:953) who discussed leadership as normative ideology, that is, how leaders should behave. In their respective spheres of influence, managers and supervisors appear to become the instruments of ethical behaviour. An ethical leader requires being both a moral individual as well as a moral manager. Ethical leaders educate others regarding what is acceptable, beneficial and essential. Furthermore, ethical leaders empower followers to become leaders who prioritise the needs of the organisation before their own personal needs. Van den Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen and Six (2009:104) concur that the virtuous aspect of ethical leadership can be

defined as the characteristics and qualities of a leader, like integrity, credibility and truthfulness as well as the ethical character of that leader's behaviour.

Naidoo (2011:46) is of the view that the purpose of ethical leadership in the public sector is to reduce corruption and promote good governance. Leadership is, and continues to be essential in government and the many institutions in society. Leadership ought to be accountable, responsive, transparent, participatory, efficient, equitable, effective and must adhere to the rule of law. This could guarantee that the opinions of society's less fortunate members will be included in decision-making, community perspectives will be considered and corruption will be reduced. This perspective is supported by Kroukamp (2011:29), who asserts that departmental leadership ought to include promoting ethics in the public sector. Good leadership is often perceived as effective leadership, for example, when leaders accomplish the objectives of the organisation. Good leadership should, however, also mean moral leadership – leadership which preserves sound ethics. Sound ethics implies that the leader commits to fundamental ethical values, such as responsibility, equality, truthfulness, respect, accountability and integrity. The significance of leadership originates from a leader's ability to significantly impact colleagues due to higher power, authority and access to resources. This influence is demonstrated in leaders serving as role models for other individuals, whether or not they consciously chose to be one or not. In this regard, leaders successfully demonstrate to others what is acceptable and desirable through their actions and words (Schoeman, 2012:13).

Naidoo (2012:31) points out that scandals concerning corruption have highlighted critical questions concerning the importance of leadership in influencing ethical behaviour in South Africa's public sector. Poor leadership, ranging from fraud to corruption, is often exposed in the media. Schoeman (2012:13) agrees with the aforementioned statement that unethical leadership is not a foreign term to South Africans; it can be traced throughout history and, unfortunately, it will perhaps never be fully eliminated. Several occurrences in South Africa have demonstrated unethical leadership in government. A typical example is state capture, which was made public in the Zondo Commission and it made the public realise that some of the leaders are driven by greed rather than their moral compass. When leaders are not considered to be accountable for their actions, it does not only weaken a principle that is necessary for sound political and organisational health; it opens a loophole towards autocracy and inconsistent action. To address this problem of unethical leadership, it is vital to explore the factors contributing to it. One factor is the common tendency to defend unethical behaviour. A much-used justification in South Africa is the injustice of the past, which often manifests itself as a sense of entitlement. While the wrong of the past is undisputed, the justification of addressing one wrong with another, stands in direct contrast to ethical leadership and

undermines the objectives of democracy. Rather, it sends a message that placing one's own interests and gain above others' needs is acceptable (Schoeman, 2012:14).

According to Walumbwa, Mayer, Wang, Wang, Workman and Christensen (2011:204), ethical leadership promotes results such as contentment with a leader, dedication to disclose concerns to management and willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. Kapur (2018) explains that when carrying out various job activities, ethical leaders should model and communicate norms, principles, values, standards and ethics to other members. Ethical leaders teach the other members how to apply ethics in their work, thus they must be professional in their conduct as well. By demonstrating the organisation's behavioural boundaries, leaders function as role models for their followers. They are seen as honest, truthful, trustworthy, responsible, reliable, brave, fair and authentic.

Mazibuko (2018:214) states that in national departments, the principles of an ethical leader should be prioritised. National departments can be supported by these regarding the subject of value towards the understanding of good governance as they relate to effective control, outstanding performance, ethical culture and legitimacy. The leadership body ought to function as the centre of gravity and guardian of corporate governance. To achieve this objective, the leadership body ought to regulate according to applicable legislation, codes and conducts that will uphold the organisation.

According to Northhouse (2013:430–438), the following are the principles for ethical leadership:

- Ethical leaders respect others.

  Respectful leaders grant independence and refrain from enforcing severe restrictions. Giving others' ideas credibility and putting them to use in a practical manner, are examples of respect. Respect also means that a leader pays close attention to opposing viewpoints.

- Ethical leaders serve others.

  Leaders who serve are altruistic, prioritising the well-being of their followers. Activities such as mentoring, team building, empowering, and advising can be used in the workplace to identify altruistic behaviour. Ethical leaders have a major responsibility to look after people, to be of service to them and to make decisions that benefit them rather than harm them.

- Ethical leaders are just.

  Fairness, justice and equality are qualities that ethical leaders are concerned about. Ethical leaders consider fair treatment of subordinates as very important. Justice necessitates prioritisation of fairness by ethical leaders in their decision-making. In general, no one should be given special attention unless his or her position necessitates

it. However, differential treatment must be founded on ethical values and must have clear and fair justifications.

- Ethical leaders are honest.

    Ethical leaders observe honesty as a desirable characteristic. Righteousness, truthfulness and honesty are perceived as important to being successful in performance and in attaining objectives.

The South African College of Applied Psychology (2019) is of the opinion that ethical leadership entails more than just ticking boxes and adhering to rules. An ethical leader cares as much about obtaining results as he or she does about how the results were attained. Van Aswegen and Engelbrecht (2009:228) state that the answer to issues of ethics such as corruption in the public sector of South Africa resides mainly in the development of competent and ethical leadership. Each department in the public sector requires an ethical programme to establish and preserve a culture that supports ethical behaviour and to successfully regulate its ethical environment. To reinforce the public sector culture, management could implement organisational and practical changes as an indication of institutionalising ethics. These adjustments consist of an ethical code decree, management ethical training, corporate ethical education, public sector ethical performance evaluation, value statement formulations, disciplinary measures in place for codes violations, processes for acquiring guidance or reporting offences (for example support of whistle-blowers), ethics committees, conducting of ethical audits and ethics newsletters and ethical hotlines. Therefore, it takes more than just ethical leaders to establish an ethical culture in the South African public sector. The hostile management of ethics is necessary. To accomplish the desired outcome of an ethical public sector, such leaders must be determined and dedicated. Ethical leadership is necessary to stop the misuse of authority assigned for personal interest and to guarantee the functional independence of anti-corruption bodies, allowing for good governance (Naidoo, 2012:26).

Due to an inadequate to very limited ethical leadership in the public sector, transparency, honesty and accountability are discouraged, which has led to a culture of fraud and corruption. The number of senior public officials found to be in contravention of their oath of office confirms the aforementioned statement. Also, an indication that the organisational culture of the public sector fails to promote transparency and accountability, is evident in the fact that whistle-blowers (exposing unethical officers) have been victimised or dismissed. Several scholars, including Thebe (2017:134), Hlongwane (2018:7) and Budhram (2018:126), have agreed that this is a sign that ethical leadership is unfortunately non-existent in South Africa's public sector. Pityana (2013) agrees with the aforementioned authors and conclude that South Africa has an ethical leadership crisis. In consideration of the problems that South Africa is currently dealing with, leadership needs to be re-envisioned. Much of what democracy promises, will be in vain

unless the government addresses this. In conclusion, it is evident that ethical leadership is the cornerstone of promoting good governance and successfully eliminating corruption.

### 4.2.4 The importance of accountability in promoting good governance

Moeti (2014) describes accountability as "…an obligation to account for the fulfilment of given and accepted obligations within the context of authority and resources allocated". Accountability, in the bureaucratic monitoring system, requires reporting to a higher authority. Mfene (2013:7) agrees that a public institution or a public official must answer to someone or something other than themselves. This means that the actions taken and applied ought to be grounded in the country's existing laws as well as in ethical concerns delineated in Chapter 10 of the Constitution. Lowe (2019) agrees with the opinion of Mfene (2013:7) that accountability is about holding others to account and being accountable to others; it is more than just reaching regulatory requirements or explaining how things went wrong. Khotami (2017:30) states that "…accountability is a form of liability that states to who and for what and what is accountable, which is understood as the obligation of the holder of the trust to provide accountability, presenting and reporting all activities that are his responsibility to the party who provides the trust and has the authority to hold such accountability". The role of accountability in promoting good governance as a means of enhancing public trust in government performance is extremely important. The doctrine of accountability entails that public officials are accountable not just to higher authorities within the institutional hierarchy but also to the public, mass media, non-governmental organisations and numerous other stakeholders. Bala (2017:600) supports Khotami (2017:30) by demonstrating that actual accountability focuses not just on reporting or addressing actions already finalised but also on liaising with stakeholders to understand and reply to their viewpoints as the organisation plans and executes its activities.

Said, Alam and Aziz (2015:227) emphasise that accountability is inseparable from good governance. Accountability entails setting guidelines to assess oversight measures as well as the performance of public officials to make sure requirements are accomplished. The credibility of the government as an economic partner decreases due to limited accountability. The limited accountability measures destabilises the ability of government to maintain the long-term trust in business required for growth and the assurance of private sector investment. The assessment of financial and economic performance of public sector institutions improves accountability (Asian Development Bank, 1995:8). In South Africa, accountability is established by the Constitution. Cabinet members such as the President, Deputy President and Ministers are individually and collectively accountable to Parliament for exercising their powers and performing their duties (South Africa, 1996). However, in practice, this has proven to be a tough situation as some Ministers display poor attendance at their respective Portfolio

Committees of Parliament (or they neglect to appear at all). In other cases, Ministers send their delegates to the NA or Portfolio Committees to "account on their behalf" (Minnaar, 2010:17).

Ingstrup and Crookall (1998:73) are of the view that accountability in the public sector is required from public services to both clients who use their services and non-clients who do not essentially make use of their services. From the perspectives of both public institutions and private actors, accountability principles are crucial for good governance. From both viewpoints' accountability is perceived as an instrument to explain the governance roles of actors (Bovens, 2010:947). In public administration and corporate good governance, the principle establishes who is responsible for what, while in international relations, the external perspective dominates who is responsible to whom (Addink, 2013:254). Yet, accountability is not restricted to public expenditure; it also involves updating on development, performance, failures, accomplishments, actual as opposed to targeted performance and the overall exercise of power granted by a senior authority (Munzhedzi, 2014:703).

Improved public administration requires stronger enforcement of accountability through the process of making public services more democratic and responsive. This approach must be applied carefully to enhance internal accountability in the daily operations of the public service and ensure that interactions with citizens are participatory, consultative and transparent. The government has already taken steps to ensure that every government institution has built-in processes for managing internal accountability. In this regard, there is a clear shift toward greater use of the Portfolio Committees of Parliament. Specifically, the Public Service Portfolio Committees will play a crucial role. To effectively improve accountability in the future, these committees will have the authority to enable, investigate and conduct in-depth research on policy matters, which were previously the sole responsibility of the public service. In essence, these committees will continue to play a vital role in policy-making and in holding the public sector accountable, as they have done in the past (van der Westhuizen, 1998:15-20).

Accountability concerns have been the focus of various PSC research projects in public service practices and institution-specific evaluations. The PSC investigated the standard of fraud prevention and risk assessment strategies of several government departments and government institutions as one of its particular areas of research. The conclusions of the PSC have revealed that, although there is a different direction towards implementing these critical accountability techniques, in most cases propositions are not adapted to correspond with the particular risk profiles of different institutions and are not correctly combined and applied. A managerial challenge that will require focused attention is putting the safety measures and systems outlined in these plans into practice. Legislation such as the Treasury regulations and

PFMA, on concerns such as yearly reports, have made additional contributions to the framework. Attempts at fighting corruption also improve accountability, yet this area continues to be a serious obstacle for the state. From a managerial perspective, a more transparent link between individual work plans and institution objectives will raise awareness of the necessity to function in an accountable measure. If accountability is to be improved, general changes in the public sector management standards are also necessary. Improved reporting mechanisms and standards should be prioritised (South Africa, 2002:29).

As an instrument of accountability, the PSC conducted a study of annual reports from government departments in 2002. The study found that while performance has improved in this area, a more calculated approach might be advantageous for annual reports that would place more emphasis on results and implications, rather than on summaries of activities and expenditure. The 2001 report of the South African Police Service is one of the examples of the PSC findings; this was regarded to be of an extremely poor standard, presenting minimum information whereas that of the National Treasury was of outstanding quality. It was found in 2002 that the National Department of Social Development's annual reports were of an exceptionally high standard. The Public Service Commission further state that annual reports are more than just a tool for departments to illustrate accountability; they additionally serve as an important public declaration of performance and a simple approach to gather information that may have been difficult to get hold of (South Africa, 2002:30).

The Press Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media stipulates that the media exists to serve society in the sense that it empowers the people to make educated decisions on current issues – a role acknowledged by the South African Constitution (Press Council, 2022).  However, Wasserman and De Beer (2005) reason that since the birth of democracy in South Africa, a number of concerns have arisen in the media environment. The South African media house was sometimes captured through government control and lacked neutrality. The watchdog of the media describes the media's role as that of informing the citizens regarding the ongoing activities of public institutions, which entails alerting society anytime something irregular occurs in public institutions. Some issues of accountability are not shared with the public by the media, particularly when they involve well-connected political leaders (Kgobe, 2021:2). Mamokhere, Musitha and Netshidzivhani (2021:3) recommend that accountability should be applied within the boundaries of the law, such as politicians being accountable to legislatures and administrators being accountable to the public because they serve the people and are compensated from the pockets of taxpayers. Kgobe (2021:5) further argues that the latter clearly demonstrates that citizens also have a responsibility to contribute to maintaining public accountability and good governance because the government is funded from public funds and that, initially, citizens are the ones funding the government through

taxation. Public officials and other stakeholders should be held accountable to the people in a voluntary and open manner while still adhering to constitutional requirements.

Furthermore, Mamokhere (2021:130) agrees with Kgobe (2021:2) that the media should aim to expose abuses of power, corruption and state capture to hold the culprits accountable for their actions as well as ensure that the public makes informed decisions. In a democratic system, by performing this function, the media contributes to ensuring good governance. For example, Davis (2022) published an article in *Daily Maverick,* which states that the former South African spy boss, Arthur Fraser, claims that in 2020 a very large sum of money was stolen from President Ramaphosa's game farm in Limpopo, but the theft was not reported. In response to Fraser's affidavit, this allegation has attracted a lot of attention and caused a debate among citizens on various social media platforms, which basically pressured the President to come forward with a statement to account for his actions. Lui (2017:12), Mamokhere (2021:130) and Kgobe (2021:2) concur that the media can promote accountability and effectiveness of government in meeting citizens' social demands. In conclusion, accountability in the public sector of South Africa requires administrators to be held accountable for their decisions and reports should be submitted to a recognised authority (Sayeed, Pillay & Reddy, 2014).

One of the most crucial issues is whether the media can or should play a central role in exposing abuse of power, conflicts of interest, or other forms of corruption to enhance transparency and accountability. Rather, it is that any government should create an environment that supports media freedom. The media will naturally uphold its own standards and improve its reporting practices voluntarily, guided by international best practices and standards. The true measure of democracy lies in the freedom of speech, even if it challenges the government or individuals in power. The government should refrain from controlling the media or threatening journalists, particularly investigative reporters. Additionally, the government should not own state-run media that competes with privately owned outlets, as it has failed to maintain objective reporting. Instead, the public should be free to choose which media to support, whether through private newspapers or independent podcasters, while state media should be closed down.

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### 4.2.5 The importance of transparency in promoting good governance

Zhao, Kim and Du (2003:46) explain that transparency refers to the ability of a government to explain its policies and regulations to citizens in a clear and comprehensible manner. Normally, in a country with low transparency, the decisions and activities of the local government are not open to the public. Information in the public interest is thus withheld by local officials and politicians. The less transparent the system, the more opportunity is available for local officials and politicians to take advantage of their positions and act in their own interests. Transparency is normally determined through the level of corruption in a country. Transparency depends on the free flow of information that is reliable, relevant, understandable, accurate and complete. The prerequisites to attaining governmental transparency are information and the distribution of that information. The transmission of information between local government and a third party can be done directly or through the media. Asian Development Bank (2005) refers to transparency as clear regulations, government rules and decisions as well as the availability of information to the people. The challenge with guaranteeing transparency is that only the source of the information may be aware of it and may restrict access to it. Henceforth, it might be beneficial to reinforce the right of citizens to information with a level of legal enforcement, for similar reasons. Broad, restricting policies that grant public officials the authority to withhold information from the public must allow for independent review of arguments that the withholding is necessary to safeguard the interests of the public at large. Government decision-making and implementation of public policy that is transparent decreases doubt and can assist prevent corruption amongst public officials. Therefore, it is better to have clear, uncomplicated and simple rules and processes than those that grant discretionary authority to public officials or that are vulnerable to diverse explanations. Weiss and Steiner (2006:1553) define transparency as decisions taken and enforced in line with rules and regulations. Additionally, it implies that enough information be supplied in media formats that are easy to understand and that information is accessible at no charge to individuals who may be affected by decisions and their execution.

According to Melouney (2017), transparency is a fundamental part of almost all definitions of good governance and is often used in practice. Good governance and transparency are closely related matters. Transparency is an important prerequisite for the integrity and dependability

of public sector institutions to promote public support and public trust. In public administration, legal assurance and improving the level of legitimacy in the decision-making process are guaranteed through transparency. The principle of transparency directly affects the administration's accountability to society since citizens can access all information about the operations of public administration and are allowed to be part of the decision-making process. In public administration, transparency has a significant influence on the public administration transformation process and enhances the level of responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, which are key elements of good governance (Jashari & Pepaj, 2018:60).

Furthermore, Jashari and Pepaj (2018:61) demonstrate that in a democratic and modern public administration, transparency is an instrument for promoting good governance and public trust as well as serving as a policing tool against poor governance and corruption. Transparency also promotes accountability and good governance in the attempts to protect the rights of people and public interest. In this context, transparency can be perceived as a supporter of accountability that creates mutual trust between the government and the people and ensures free access to information. The value of democracy and the rule of law is reduced in public administration, among other reasons, by very limited enforcement of accountability and transparency. The performance of public administration is improved by a standard of transparency and accountability because voters expect public officials to provide quality services that are in the public interest and are based on fairness. Such quality services are possible when public service institutions release their reports on decisions made and responds to citizens' inquiries regarding their administrative decision-making processes on a regular basis. In essence, the principle of transparency refers to public institutions that are accessible to the public with the aim of informing individuals about their operations. Public institutions should act in a transparent manner to safeguard the right of parties or citizens to be informed about the status of the proceedings, to have access to files and to receive notifications of the relevant remedies to be applied (Jashari & Pepaj, 2018:62).

South Africa has strengthened the public management system's requirements in an attempt to promote transparency. Legislation such as the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000, the Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 as well as the Protected Disclosures Act (which protects whistle-blowers) are crucial achievements. Transparency requires the effectiveness of public management systems; they ought to present acceptable levels of access to information to all parties. The main problem is to create such systems to guarantee that the necessary magnitude and expertise for compliance are implemented and aligned with increasing customer expectations once implemented (PSC Report, 2002:30). The following requirements are imposed on the legislator by the principle of transparency: clear and comprehensive legislation, clear legal mandate of national administrative authorities, access

to documents regarding the legislative process and clear division of duties. For the administrations, it includes the right of each individual to have access to his or her file while preserving the legitimate interests of privacy as well as professional and business confidentiality. It furthermore requires that decisions be well-reasoned and clear and that the decisions be made public. The openness of documents also applies to annual reports, policy documents, work programmes and so forth (De La Harpe, Rijken & Roos, 2008:7–8).

The high level of transparency around public sector institutions decreases their capacity to participate in certain activities. Transparency applies to the public's ability to closely observe how public sector institutions function. It necessitates measures to make sure that all programmes and processes are accessible to citizens. Citizens are entitled to information about how public sector institutions use their authority and resources. Democratic and transparent processes should be open for public scrutiny, should grant access to public information and should be supervised by the Legislature. Mechanisms such as reporting systems and acknowledgment of the importance of an independent and active media should be used to further promote transparency. Transparency primarily means that information is accessible and that clear, uncomplicated reports on progress attained in achieving objectives are presented. In conclusion, transparency is connected to accountability and should be deemed as a cornerstone of good governance (Nzimakwe, 2005:76).

Governance involves the decision-making process and the implementation of those decisions. Based on the literature review, the researcher believes that good governance in the South African public sector can be promoted by encouraging senior management officials to stay committed to their core values. Public sector officials should foster a strong constitutional culture, uphold the rule of law, embrace innovation and ensure that public administration is built on ethics, accountability and transparency. Ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency are fundamental to democratic institutions and processes, and these principles are essential for good governance. These elements are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, as they can enhance a government's ability to meet the needs and expectations of its citizens. Good governance can also be fostered by ensuring a transparent and corrupt-free government, where policies are implemented to hold senior public officials accountable. When public officials are held accountable for their actions, it should be done transparently, as public sector institutions in a democratic country like South Africa are required to operate with openness and transparency. Furthermore, the South African public sector should serve the interests of all citizens, rather than favouring a select few.

The following section forwards the relationship between public administration, governance and good governance.

## 4. 3 The relationship between public administration, governance and good governance in the public sector

The provision of services in South Africa is guided by the fundamental principles and values of public administration. However, despite the dedication of the government to improve basic service delivery to the people in this era, municipalities in South Africa continue to face serious problems of poor governance. Public administration prioritises the development and execution of public policy. Therefore, according to the law, public officials must carry out public policy while upholding the principles and values that administer public administration. This indicates that public officials must account for their decisions on service delivery or the allocation of resources. According to implementation theory, public officials who implement programmes must be transparent and fair. They should also adhere to professional ethics, among other things (Mamokhere, Musitha & Netshidzivhani, 2021:3).

According to Renz (2010:127), good governance in the public sector serves as the foundation for effective and efficient institutional performance and is strengthened by a few accountability prerequisites. It is required from public sector entities to have an applied strategy to produce results and outcomes for good governance. Mutahaba (2012:22) highlights that the purpose of good governance in the public sector is to promote better decision-making, effective resource allocation and increased accountability for resource management. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and International Federation of Accountants (2013:7) supports the aforementioned statement and further elaborates that the intention of good governance in the public sector is to influence the delivery of quality services and promote accountability by creating a standard for good governance.

### 4.3.1 Public administration in the South African context

Mathebula (2019) explains that public administration is about public resources that are managed through prevailing policies that society has developed through its self-government systems. Thus, without being grounded in the philosophical principles that society uses to envision its long-term sustainability, public administration is meaningless. Theunissen (2001:119) describes public administration as the process of organising, managing, administering and regulating the entire state apparatus. Public administration, in its most basic form, is concerned with the nature and practice of government and the public sector (the organisation and the operation of the state apparatus). This entails, among other components, the administration and management of, and interaction amongst, public sector institutions and stakeholders and other role-players as well as the additional dynamic processes. Additional

elements of public administration contain aspects relating to the structuring, financing, personnel and controlling of the public sector as well as the formulation, execution and reviewing of policy. All actions, taken by the government in the country that have an impact on the individual and societal quality of life, can be linked to the actions of public administrative apparatus of the state under the political guidance and leadership of the government of the day (Theunissen, 2001:119).

Dunn (2012) points out that public administration is all about the coordination of all organised activities with the aim of implementing public policy. Both administrative endeavours, private and public, have in common the coordination of organised action and the execution of public policy as important factors in the understanding of public administration. Most significantly, the execution of public policy for the purposes of providing services ought to be a collaborative interaction between the public and the government. One of the crucial aspects that characterises public administration is the fact that based on international trends and best practices, the government is no longer considered merely an advocate of the present state of affairs, as it is in its current form. Policies and programmes of the government as well as the way in which public officials conduct themselves, are being scrutinised. The political, social and economic conditions all influence public administration. In this context, the socio-political and financial setting in public administration becomes complicated. Such a narrow emphasis will harm the internal process, roles of management, leadership, processes, organisational architecture, delivery of services and governance in general in present-day public administration, just as it did in ancient public administration (Pillay, 2016:23).

Public administration in South Africa is built on democratic principles and values, ensuring that all deserving members of the public benefit from a fair administrative process. As delineated in Section 195 of the Constitution, public officials must make sure that the ethos and values of public administration (ethics, economic and productive use of public resources and developmental public administration) as well as effective and efficient processes for housing, property, education and health are maintained. This highlights how crucial it is for public officials to serve people with dignity and respect (Hassen, 2015:35).

Section 195 of the Constitution stipulates that public administration should be guided by the democratic principles and values listed below:
- "A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.
- Public administration must be development oriented.
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.

- People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.
- Public administration must be accountable.
- Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible, and accurate information.
- Good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated.
- Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation" (South Africa, 1996:99).

By implication, such principles and values provide a framework upon which public administration must carry out its functions. Any course of action that deviates from these functions must be considered a contradiction of democratic values. These principles and values, preserved in the Constitution, incorporate the elements of good governance such as impartiality, transparency, responsiveness and accountability workshops (Sebola, 2021:43). Good governance is the clear separation between management and political or governance authority. These core principles and values (impartiality, transparency, responsiveness and accountability) of public administration are also applicable to municipal government. The municipal managers and political leadership have the responsibility to make sure these values and principles are imparted to municipal personnel through training and workshops.

### 4.3.1.1 The importance of public administration

Public administration is founded with the purpose of creating an effective governing system and is required to achieve specific goals. Public institutions in public administration are required by law to provide the services that are expected of them (Marx in Cayer & Weschler, 1988:12). As a result of the preceding statement, the value of public administration depends on its ability to represent the people within the legislative framework. According to the legislative and organisational framework, when public officials provide services, they must respect citizens' rights in accordance with the South African Constitution by treating them fairly and equally. Officials must also act in accordance with the law. Hence, the ultimate objective and importance of public administration of providing citizens with services will be respected.

The significance of public administration is explained by Sharan (1967:19) in the following way:
- individuals' as well as communities' daily lives are safeguarded by public administration;
- the army protects the state from outside threats whereas the police preserves internal peace and order;

- public administration offers current services like judicial, education, health, enhanced transportation and communications, expanded work opportunities as well as an improved quality of life for the public in general; and

- the courts administer justice and numerous government departments offer a collection of services to the people.

Public administration plays a crucial role in both internal and external environments. Internally, it ensures that regulations and policies are strictly followed and that government institutions adhere to these standards. Externally, public administration must respond to social, economic and political factors, as well as be accountable to the citizens it serves. The significance of public administration can be assessed by its productivity, effectiveness and how well it manages resources. Governance and managerial leadership are essential to ensuring that the public sector's vision and mission are achieved in compliance with legislative and political requirements.

### 4.3.1.2 Theories of public administration

Siswana (2007:57) indicates that human behaviour, management and leadership theories and organisational theories are among the theories recognised by public administration. Because of their theoretical basis, public administration researchers have had to examine and comprehend fundamental problems in the field, such as leadership, policy analysis, empirical management, organisational motivation and decision-making. Knowledge of these theories is essential for comprehending organisations and their employees, which will include public administration. Theletsane (2019:578) believes that it is essential to remember that public administration is a complicated environment because of its wide range of stakeholders and high level of diversity. With the use of systems theory, the complexity will be controlled because these stakeholders are interconnected and are part of a larger system. Theletsane (2019:578) concludes that public administration can be perceived as a transparent system that is affected by the setting in which it functions.

### 4.3.1.3 Ethics and values in public administration

According to Cheminais, Bayat, Van der Waldt and Fox (1998:65), good behaviour and values ought to be demonstrated through ethical decision-making in life, generally, as well as in organisational practice and growth. Growth for the people, by the people, should be cemented in participation by citizens who have comprehensive knowledge of values and a thorough understanding of right and wrong. Section 195(1)(d) of the Constitution specifies that in order for government to be neutral, equitable, impartial and without prejudice, particular characteristics are required from those engaged in governing. Individuals in positions of authority need to acquire the necessary experience, knowledge and skills to evaluate and

determine the most applicable courses of action. These courses of action should be established on how participants understand the common values within the community, thus requiring extensive knowledge regarding social values. Adhering to ethics, in such instances, includes ensuring consistency in decision-making, honesty, accountability, dealing effectively with conflicting values and making insightful decisions. Conflicting values, in a diverse society like South Africa, may lead to limited trust in the practice of public administration. Trust is the bond that keeps individuals together and the substance that permits the operation of public administration to continue without unnecessary tension, resulting in limited violations of ethics (Ingstrup & Crookall, 1998:128). The public should be under the impression that they are receiving standard, reliable, credible and safe services provided by good management in government institutions that respect the environment, the people and officials (Dellaportas, Gibson, Alagiah, Hutchinson, Leung & Van Homrigh, 2005:331).

Schminke, Ambrose & Neubaum (2005:139) concur that values are related to ethics because values are beliefs about what is right or wrong while ethics is a set of rules that governs a person's behaviour. Values are fundamental to an individual's conduct in the field of public administration. Values can determine whether an individual will behave ethically or unethically. Values, according to Sindane (2011:753), are a collection of enduring principles that impact attitudes and behaviour of people. Since the behaviour, attitudes and relationships of public officials are conditioned by several prescriptive standards, values have an imperative impact on governance in public service. Effectiveness, accountability, integrity, efficiency, innovation and service represent a few of the most notable values that are applicable to public service. Vocino and Rabin (1981:397) place strong emphasis on ethical leadership and accountability in the public sector stating that "… an administration lacking ethics is an administration without a soul". Thirty years later, public administration is facing a crisis – an administration with limited ethics and values – due to very limited public leadership. Ethical behaviour in public administration is crucial for appropriate business practices in a municipality or country. Ethical standards are necessary for sound transparent public administration and, when considered in collaboration with values, serve as the foundation of transparent public administration. Ethics promotes accountability between the government and its citizens. Following a code of ethics ensures that the public is treated fairly and that their needs are addressed. It also provides the administration with standards for operating with integrity. In turn, that integrity promotes trust in the community. Furthermore, a code of ethics sets out professional standards that employees in the public sector should anticipate from one another as well as their leaders. A robust code of ethics for public administration equips leaders with the standards needed to carry out their duties and, furthermore, motivates staff and committees to implement laws in a fair and professional manner (Buye, 2021:1–3).

**4.3.1.4 Increasing openness and transparency in public administration**

Section 195(1)(g) of the Constitution specifies that transparency is one of the fundamental principles that guides public administration. Thus, the actions of public officials should be transparent and open to their political superiors as well as to citizens. Section 32(1) of the Constitution stipulates that every citizen has the right to access:

- "any information held by the state; and
- any information that is held by another person that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights" (South Africa, 1996:99).

According to Sekoto and Van Straaten (1999:111), transparency and openness support a customer-focused approach by placing the public in positions where they can add to the development of the delivery of services by acquiring accurate information to allow them to evaluate the effectiveness of government. Furthermore, Hunt (1995:12) explains that openness focuses on:

- "helping the public to gain knowledge of how decisions are made;
- the principles that guide this process of decision-making; and
- the degree of information that is available to the public to enable them to participate fully in the decision-making process".

Kerauden (1995:41) points out that openness of administrative action is an effort to impact external management by implementing an internal change within transformation. Citizens' active participation in decision-making channels should be accommodated. Sekoto and Van Straaten (1999:112) agree that openness and transparency are the foundations of a democratic government and are important to the process of public service transformation. To establish trust and confidence between the public sector and its people, service delivery is required to be open and transparent. Key aspects of informing citizens about service delivery include:

- the operations of national and provincial departments;
- the effectiveness of their operations;
- the extent of resources used; and
- who is in control (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997:20).

### 4.3.2 Development of public administration and governance within the South African context

The South African Government (2024) indicates that the South African Public Administration was originally demonstrated on the entire scope of government legislation and functions. The core functions of public administration are set within an institutional framework made up of rules on process and control. The South African anti-corruption legislation is identified as the most advanced in Africa. Therefore, when put into practice as planning, design and processes against poor governance, it should establish the framework and ensure good governance for the three spheres of government. Diamond and Plattner (1999:xiv) agree that South Africa has been viewed as being "…the most powerful and influential liberal democracy on the continent and its constitution is in some respects one of the most liberal in the world".

According to Du Toit and Van der Waldt (1999:93), for any government to govern, most of the citizens' needs must be fulfilled wherever possible and, by doing so, effective public administration will take place. Cameron (2009:944) mentions that in South Africa, the 1990s witnessed the start of a major shift in public administration. This change demanded amendment from an outdated bureaucratic model to a public administration that is more responsive and democratic. Administrative transformation has become part of the landscape of South Africa's government and its public sector. Public administration focuses on the improvement of civil society and the interest of the public good by guaranteeing that the public sector is productive and impartial and that the services are efficient in achieving the objectives set by the government.

Maphunye (2009:25–27) agrees that progress has been made in addressing the previously unsatisfactory parts of the formerly racially categorised public sector and administration entities of South Africa. This has happened regardless of the countless difficulties that the country has experienced in the process. The country will require improved public administrative services, for government to deliver quality services as efficiently as possible. An enhanced public administration presents several challenges, particularly in the formulation and execution of policies. The administrative processes approach was criticised by Schwella (1990:83) for three reasons. Foremost, it was suspected of being reductionist, that is, decreasing public administration to a generic administrative process. Furthermore, it was lambasted for reification (uplifting the generic administrative approach to the status of reality). Finally, there was absence of significance in that the severe difficulties of governance and administration in South Africa were not reflected.

According to Kroukamp (2002:465), effectiveness and efficiency have joined the narrative for effective government. The author further states that the necessity for a new type of government, "…aims not only to improve administrative output technically but also to develop public relations techniques…safeguarding the public's interest, developing partnership practices, transparency, fighting corruption, promotion of a code of ethics…[and] consultation". Kroukamp (2002:466) indicated that the objective is to transform public administration into an instrument for social revolution and development. According to Tshandu and Kariuki (2010:191), a revolution's main concerns involve rationalisation and rebuilding to guarantee a cohesive and diverse public sector. These viewpoints became part of the international shift to New Public Management (NPM) as the ideal instrument for public administration. At this point, the goal for increased accountability, efficiency, transparency and effectiveness became part of the demands for good governance, with unwavering dedication to rearrangement deriving from recommendations for legislative adjustments in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service and, afterwards, reiterated in constitutional amendments.

Jordaan (2013:23) claims that the requirement for an effective public administration in society means partnership in which the national government works together with lower levels of public administration, civil society organisations, the private sector and international organisations through participative, democratic and transparent processes. The residence values and preferences are voiced through the usage of public administration. Public administration has grown with an ever-increasing prerequisite for a value-orientated public service method created on public administrative practice. Furthermore, since 1994, the post-apartheid system progressively expanded and converted the public sector into one that would put into effect non-racial policies and focus on progressive results. South Africa went through profound transformation, which has brought all the previous unequal public administration divisions together. The scope, scale and intensity have all changed drastically since 1994. The South African Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (2011:20) reports that there is a massive difference between the current South African government and the racially divided governance systems of the apartheid era. Although the foundations for an effective, capable and developmental government have been established, there is still an urgent requirement to resolve limitations in how some public institutions operate.

Dunn (2012) illustrates that one of the most crucial parts of the drastic shifts in the discipline of public administration practice is the rising relevance and supremacy of technology connected with the computerisation of every aspect of public sector functioning. The development of information systems and data communication storage has proven essential to both the establishment and maintenance of efficient and effective functions at all levels of public administration and are also necessary for the proper functioning of upcoming processes

related to social and economic development. Pillay (2016:22) supports the previous statement and this implies that throughout the developing and developed countries, including South Africa, honest, transparent and effective implementations of technology have become extremely important not just for a public administration that is transparent and corrupt-free but also for a growth-oriented one constructed on cautiously considered and scientifically proven changes. As a result, the planning, design and well-monitored deployment of such systems become critical in good governance, sound decision-making and the use of resources across the administrative practice spectrum.

### 4.3.3 The relationship between governance and public administration

Sebola and Tsheola (2020:2–3) are of the view that it may appear self-evident that the notion of governance is inextricably linked to the practice of public administration but in the framework of long-standing and unsolved relations among nature and society, it is pivotal to acknowledge that this relationship is complex. In the context of a range of maxims, including sustainability, environmentalism, democracy and justice, this entanglement of governance principles and public administration practice requires in-depth analysis, comprehension and explanation. This governance theory assumption challenges the notion that the precept of governance manifests through the practice of public administration because even the most autocratic states that rely heavily on government instruments use public administration to manage public affairs. This complexity has contributed to the shifting sands that have prompted the concept of public management to emerge as a modern-day offshoot of public administration.

Ijeoma, Nzewi and Sibanda (2013:27) state that governance in the context of public administration refers to the process of investigation or determination of how these functions are executed. Governance encompasses continuous search and application of the best way to carry out public administration. This means that decisions and activities associated with policy-making and implementation must be carried out in a proper manner with public engagement, using the best techniques and skills to ensure the right policy is adopted and that the policy is properly implemented and accounted for. In public administration, governance will also require that policy be evaluated and that the impact of policies is communicated to the people. Governance encompasses the process of doing things towards the desired outcome; the authors have also determined that it involves the entire range of activities from political processes to activities of public service in which the people come first. Consequently, a close relationship exists between public administration and governance.

### 4.3.4 The relationship between good governance and public administration

Abdelatif (2003) claims that the concept 'good governance' was established several years ago and was originally deeply established in the historic circumstances set by international donor agencies, institutions and countries. According to UNESCAP (2009), in international development, good governance is a method of determining how public sector institutions should handle public affairs and manage public resources. Good governance is the delivery of public services in an efficient manner, with higher participation given to particular groups in society like the disadvantaged and minority groups (Grindle, 2004:533).

Agere (2000:1) argues that good governance is a term that has only recently become widely applied in public administration. The term 'good governance' is a broad term that is made up of practices and values such as management of human resources, responsible budgeting, efficiency, risk management, justice and trust of laws and institutions. Melouney (2017) reveals that good governance is the cornerstone of any successful business and, thus, it is significant for an organisation to attain its objectives and sustain legal and ethical standing in the sight of the investors, regulators and society. This will also result in an organisation's ability to function effectively, efficiently and ethically. Good governance requires clarity around the functioning of government and their own functions and responsibilities, those of others and the ways in which those roles are carried out (Bala, 2017:599). Good governance implies taking decisions that are informed, transparent as well as holding those accountable who have authority and responsibility.

Mantzaris and Munnik (2013:101) agree that good governance encompasses the process of public administration that takes full advantage of promoting public interest. One of the fundamental characteristics of good governance is that it is a form of collective management of public life completed by both government and the public and a new connection among the political state and civil society as well as the optimum state of the two. Prinsloo (2013:14) argues that good governance begins with every government official where honesty and hard work are at the forefront of government services. Since the government executes objectives such as the delivery of public services to its people, there is no better way to determine good governance, other than through deliverables required by citizens, such as health care, access to water, education, the enforcement of contracts, security, protection to property, protection to the environment, their ability to vote and to get compensated with reasonable wages. Kjaer (2004:138) explains that, regardless of the extensive range of descriptions concerning good governance, there is a communal view that the individual overseers of efficiency, accountability and integrity are the public officials who must be ethical, accountable, transparent and honest to the people.

Heloa (2015:96) believes that public administration and good governance are linked and are, therefore, inseparable. Agere (2000:1) further describes that the New Paradigm in Public Administration highlights the function of public managers in delivering standard services that citizens value. Public administration transformation, directed at good governance and modernisation of government, is not an original goal and its execution varies from country to country. According to Bala (2017:593–594), public administration that is responsive, accountable, efficient and transparent is not just of utmost importance for the appropriate functioning of a country but is also a key element of democratic governance as well as the basic means through which government strategises to attain the goals of integration. Public administration is an activity that manages those organisations that contain selected officers that govern public processes and policy. Requirements for effective public administration are adherence to the rule of law and a steadfast public sector that demonstrated high standards of fairness and integrity.

Furthermore, Bala (2017:597–598) highlights that public administration transformation and good governance remain pivotal priorities under political criteria. The dominant principles in public administration are effectiveness, accountability and transparency. Appropriate horisontal administrative procedures regarding public financial management and human resource management are significant for the execution of the transformations. The risk of corruption can be reduced by delivering fundamental public services through transparency and accountability in the administration. Bala (2017:600) concludes that the idea of good governance underpins aspirations to improve public administration by collaborating with citizens. This indicates that public administration must grow and adjust over time to become more accessible, fair, transparent, cost-effective, accountable and sensitive. Through good governance, public administration must provide services in the areas of institutional strengthening, capacity building, stakeholder engagement and decentralisation. However, the transformation of public administration is still an arduous task.

According to Vilakazi and Adetiba (2020:54), the difference between political and administrative duties at local government level has proven to be a critical challenge when looking into the operational system at municipal levels. The political power is controlled by elected politicians and entails the drafting and approval of by-laws, formulation of policies, approval of budgets and the performance of oversight tasks. Administrative power falls under the jurisdiction of employees in the municipality and is controlled by a municipal manager and senior administrative officials. The separation of powers requires the safeguarding of each sphere's functionality in municipalities. As a result, the functions of public administration must be implemented and set in a manner to meet the demands of people by providing cost-effective, effective and efficient goods and services that meet societal demands. To attain the

aforementioned goal, a clear distinction between political responsibilities and administrative responsibilities must be in place across the spheres of government. The next section identifies and discusses the challenges to good governance in South Africa's public sector.

## 4.4 Challenges to good governance in the South African public sector

Since, the South African public sector is perceived as a breeding ground for fraud and corruption, this chapter identifies and discusses the challenges to good governance in the public sector of South Africa. According to Sindane (2011:753), the scandals in the public sector include a limited accountability, corruption and maladministration – whether it is national, continental or global – and is a sign of the ineffectiveness of the control systems presently employed. A local government, free from corruption, may not always exist in South Africa, despite the fact that numerous legislative mandates are implemented to encourage ethical behaviour and delivery of quality services by municipal employees and councillors (Vu-Thi, 2012:88). In support of the aforementioned statements, Croucamp (2019:292) indicates that systematic exhaustion of public resources through patronage systems, orchestrated by political leaders, is a technique that is completely entrenched inside state organs at the administrative level. It should be highlighted that this system has reduced South Africa's public sector to a neo-patrimonial government ruled by a conspired corrupt system. In this case, the narrative of corruption undermines the government's ability to perform its constitutional duty and responsibilities.

Sebake (2020:168) highlights that the South African public sector has a tendency in which political leaders and senior officials are suspected of impropriety and corruption, which weaken democratic institutions as well as the leadership of government. Thus, certain public officials' ethical obligations have collapsed. Moreover, the author affirms that corruption is a societal problem that continues to be a crime against humanity, as proven by the collapse of service delivery in the public sector. Similarly, Mlambo (2019:207) concurs that corruption is a global phenomenon that may be found in both the developing and developed countries. Corruption has always been a thorn in the side of any administration around the world and this will continue. The author focused on South Africa as a starting point, since the post-1994 government was anticipated to be a driving force in rebuilding the economy of the country after the former apartheid government's destabilising strategies. Notably, after 30 years of democracy, corruption has emerged as a major obstacle to the country's development framework.

In line with the foregoing statement, a discussion on the characteristics and practices of poor governance, causes of unethical conduct, a conceptual overview of corruption in the context of South Africa and the challenges in addressing the entrenched and endemic culture of corruption in South Africa's public sector, proves useful.

### 4.4.1 Characteristics and practices of poor governance

According to Agere (2000:5), the following characteristics and practices of poor governance are limitations of good governance:

- "failure to make a clear distinction between what is public and private, hence a tendency to divert public resources for private gain;
- failure to establish a predictable framework of law, government behaviour and the rule of law;
- unnecessary rules and regulations which hinder the functioning of markets;
- priorities inconsistent with development, resulting in a misallocation of resources;
- decision-making processes that are extremely narrow-based or not transparent;
- lack of code of conduct in managing the affairs of the state; and
- lack of clearly defined policy assumptions".

Agere (2000:5) further states that the absenteeism of good governance has proved to be particularly destructive to the remedial intervention role of the state. Programmes of environmental protection and poverty reduction, for instance, can be weakened by the capture of public services by leaders, limited public accountability and corruption. Money projected for the underprivileged may be allocated to the advantage of special interest groups and the underprivileged may have insufficient access to legal remedies.

As illustrated in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, there is uneven capacity that contributes to poor performance in the public sector. Uneven capacity is caused by several factors, such as instability of administrative leadership, conflict in the political administrative interface, inadequate attention to the function of government in replicating the skills it requires, limitations in organisational structure and decline in staff productivity. Additional contributing factors include the absence of a culture of constant growth, inadequate attention to operational management and an absence of management accountability. Unethical practice in the public sector includes poor financial management, inefficiency, fraud, dishonesty, bribery, negligence, corruption and laziness, which are counterproductive to good governance (South Africa. National Planning Commission, 2021:408). Mantzaris and Munnik (2013:101) highlight the problem by underlining the damaging repercussions of corruption which, through its variety of appearances, has become a significant organisational and operational phenomenon that threatens national economies globally. In South Africa, it is more than a phenomenon, it has

become a pathology, a social disease, embedded in the roots of entitlement as described earlier, that feeds on suppressing transparency and unaccountable governance systems that prevent public services to impact optimally on the majority of deprived customers.

## 4.4.2 Causes of unethical conduct

Van der Waldt and Du Toit (2011:48) note that there are various opinions on the causes for unethical behaviour among officials in the public sector. However, there are a few common factors that might contribute to unethical behaviour. Patel (2013) indicates that former PP, Advocate Madonsela, told Parliament that unethical behaviour, primarily in the form of corruption through bribery, has reached a point of crisis and, as such, on a regular basis, citizens in South Africa are confronted with media reports of corruption, fraudulent activities and bribery, among other things. Thus, in an environment filled with unethical behaviour, it is becoming very difficult to make ethical decisions or to objectively assess the consequences of a decision. Below are a few factors that contribute to unethical behaviour.

- **Inadequate control and accountability**

Doyle (2013:89) explains that effective control measures are needed to combat inadequate control and accountability because dishonest officials exploit the situation if appropriate control measures are not executed or applied correctly. To ensure that policy formulation and implementation objectives are achieved, internal and external control measures should be applied. De Baros (2015:9) argues that while every employee in the public sector should be held accountable, public officials are more likely to misuse resources if they believe it belong to someone else, a rule they would never apply to their own possessions. De Vos (2012:110) supports the implementation of institutional systems to hold public officials accountable for their actions.

- **Complicated legislation**

Motswane (2018:55) highlights that when legislation, which stems from policy-making, is unclear or overly complex, it creates opportunities for unethical behaviour by those responsible for enforcing the policy. If regulations are difficult to understand, they may be misinterpreted and implemented incorrectly, leading to the failure of intended outcomes. As a result, public officials cannot be expected to have full knowledge of everything. This should be communicated to management and appropriate control measures should be implemented.

- **Inadequate procedures and manuals**

Procedures, particularly procedural manuals that public officials should incorporate into their everyday duties, should be prepared from a practical viewpoint, keeping in mind the unique circumstances in which public officials function. Unless manuals are practical and drafted in a manner that is applicable to particular situations, public officials may be left feeling unsure

about how to conduct themselves appropriately. Public officials are also expected to make value judgments without violating communities' rights (Andrews, 2015:39-40). As previously stated, public officials are regularly required to make decisions, which are not discussed in any manual. Such decisions may be in contradiction with the objectives of the institution (Ntamu, 2011:24).

- **Ineffectual management and organisations**

Ineffectual management can result in an institution providing ineffective products or services or none of these at all. Officials may take advantage of the situation if the provision of goods or services is not assessed and evaluated (Motswane, 2018:56). The public manager ensures that all resources are managed efficiently and effectively (human, financial and physical). If this does not happen, unethical behaviour (such as corruption), inequitable behaviour and a limited service delivery may result (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 2011:149).

- **Psychological factors**

All individuals, to some extent or other, have weaknesses such as jealously, greed or power (Cascio, 2014:15). It is to be expected that people will give in to temptation if the right conditions are present. Personal interests may take superiority over public interest in such a situation. Management must recognise these types of situations and do everything possible to eliminate or decrease them (Wixley & Everingham, 2014:25). Very limited education, training and personal development may also lead to unethical behaviour.

### 4.4.3 Conceptual overview of corruption: The South African context

Akinlade, Gberevbie and Adesuyi (2021:245) concur that, in developing countries, factors hindering the promotion of good governance in public sectors have been a major concern. Pillay (2004:586; 590) asserts that "…corruption is likely to appear on every observer's list of factors that threaten to obstruct South Africa's path towards sustainable development". Corruption is currently identified as an extremely serious concern in South Africa's public sector. This resulted in a negative impact on the provision of services to the public. The country's development objectives are jeopardised by corruption, which also negatively affects the poor by diverting resources meant for their benefit to a small number of corrupt leaders. Structured imbalances, which have come to outline and set apart society in post-apartheid South Africa, are worsened under these circumstances. This is demonstrated by the fact that the wealthiest people continue to get richer while the poor continue to get poorer. Above all, the promotion of good governance is the cornerstone of successfully eliminating corruption.

According to the South African National Planning Commission (2011:401), in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 and the Anti-Corruption Inter-Ministerial Committee (ACIMC), the South African government acknowledged the country's high levels of corruption. Health

(2007:373) emphasises that corruption is the result of a few people taking advantage of the system for their own personal gain. Corruption and the gains acquired are perceived as advantageous and lucrative since the rewards significantly exceed the negative effects. In South Africa, the role players accountable for the investigation and prosecution of corruption are SAPS, including the NPA, Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID), the SIU, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), the Military Police Division (MPD) of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the Anti-Corruption Task Team (ACTT).

### 4.4.3.1 Definition of corruption

Coetzee (2012) explains that systemic corruption not only undermines integrity, virtue, and moral principles but also deviates from the original purpose, processes, structure, governance and context of systems that were designed to be pure, correct and conducive to development. Systemic corruption, therefore, has a destructive impact on development. Sayeed (2016) emphasises that corruption in public administration is not a new phenomenon. It is often tied to the abuse of government positions, which is primarily associated with the public sector and its officials. The state capture controversy in South Africa highlighted significant ethical challenges in the public sector, stemming from the mismanagement and abuse of public resources by individuals in senior positions.

- **Political corruption**

Mantzaris (2018:285) argues that the administrative authority given to public officials is a key factor contributing to political corruption in South Africa. This idea is highly debated in corruption literature, as it is closely tied to the greed of politicians and their irregular actions across various levels of power and authority. Suttner (2012:737) examines Zuma's involvement in the case against Schabir Shaik, noting that "Mbeki's dismissal of Zuma was portrayed as a plot to prevent Zuma from becoming president after Mbeki's term ended." This alleged plot was not without evidence, as revealed during the Zondo Commission's hearings and the subsequent court cases. These proceedings exposed widespread corruption within the highest ranks of the ANC, showcasing its unethical leadership and the extent to which it would go to conceal this from the public.

- **Bureaucratic corruption**

Apartheid legislation, such as pass laws, encouraged bureaucratic corruption. According to Gans-Morse, Borges, Makarin, Mannah-Blankson and Dong (2018:173), bureaucratic corruption is linked to corruption among public officials at various organisational and professional levels who take advantage of their positions for personal gain. Mle (2012:28) affirms that public workers are frequently accused of enriching themselves at the expense of the public. The influence that public officials exercise in both the formation and implementation

of public policy creates opportunities for them to engage in unethical behaviour. After 1994, the Department of Home Affairs was also deeply involved in corruption. In this department, the level of bureaucratic corruption with regards to immigration was astonishing. Anyone in South Africa who filed for an identity certificate without paying a bribe to a government official risked having their documents sold to foreign nationals for illegal purposes.

- **Petty corruption**

Stahl, Kassa and Baez-Camargo (2017) concur that petty corruption is usually associated with corrupt practices by middle and lower-grade public officials who interact with the public regularly. Petty corruption is a complicated, complex, morally ambiguous, unsolvable problem. In the plight to feed their families, officials in poorly compensated or irregularly compensated positions may turn to corruption. Petty corruption is fuelled by greed, family obligations, opportunity and other cultural reasons. The poor in South Africa are particularly vulnerable to petty corruption.

### 4.4.3.2 Different forms of corruption

The Public Service Commission (PSC) reports that fraud (including identity document fraud), bribery, misappropriation of public funds, abuse of public resources and irregularities in procurement are the five most prevalent forms of corruption in South Africa's public sector. It severely impedes good governance, has a disproportionately negative impact on impoverished communities and is destructive to society in general. Corruption can take the form of fraud, bribery, kickbacks, misappropriation of public funds, misuse of public resources, nepotism, favouritism, conflict of interest, embezzlement, state capture and tenderpreneurism (Monyaka & Nkuna, 2014:1574; Mlambo, Mubecua, Mpanza & Mlambo, 2019:45).

- **Fraud**

According to Coetzee (2012:92) corruption can take many forms, with fraud amongst the most common. Fraud is defined as "…the unlawful and intentional making of a false statement that causes actual or potential prejudice to another" and is seen as a negative trend in the South African public sector (South Africa, 2013). To put it another way, the term relates to all aspects of economic crime as well as deception. Kingsley (2015:205) indicates that fraud, basically, involves using deceit to generate a private gain for oneself or a loss for others. Gwanzura (2012:45) describes fraud as an act in which public officials are presented with the opportunity to make money illegally whether in the areas of procurement, salaries or pensions. It is viewed as a conflict of interest, resulting in a criminal case that could lead to the termination of one's profession. Fraud poses a significant threat to the South African public sector, governance and the country's development due to its detrimental impact on service delivery. The Zondo Commission of Inquiry uncovered widespread fraudulent activities committed by senior

officials in SOEs such as Eskom, SAA and Transnet. The ongoing financial bailouts of these SOEs have cost the government billions of rands.

- **Bribery**

Bribery is commonly referred to as 'corruption' in South Africa. It is an offense that can be committed by public officials, private individuals as well as public and private companies (Berstein & Shaw, 2021). Bribery is one of the most common types of corruption encountered by regular people in their dealings with public officials in South Africa. Bribery, according to Schoeman (2014:13), is defined as the practice of providing, donating, accepting or requesting anything valuable to impact the behaviour or decisions of a government employee or another individual. Bribery can take numerous forms, including cash, gifts, favours, promises or undertakings to influence behaviour. Van Vuuren (2004:13) indicates that bribery is most evident in South Africa when dealing with traffic officials, followed by the police and, finally, when dealing with officials about employment opportunities. The huge number of demands for bribes made during enquiries about public sector jobs reveals the country's massive unemployment rate. The ongoing presence of bribery in local government traffic departments, municipal police agencies and SAPS emphasises the discretionary authority of some of these employees. For instance, people often communicate with traffic officials on the road where it is difficult to monitor corrupt activities. Similarly, Odeku (2018:48) agrees that bribery of public officials is common in local government where favouritism and nepotism are the norm. Tenders are being offered to family members, fraudulent invoices are being submitted for work that has not been completed, gifts and cash are being offered and, in the health sector, suppliers are bribing public officials to pass health and safety inspections.

- **Kickbacks**

Davis (2004:58) highlights that kickbacks are one of the most common forms of corruption in South Africa's public sector. A kickback is an illegal payment made in exchange for preferential treatment or other questionable services. Kenton (2021) explains that kickbacks undermine a public official's ability to make impartial and informed decisions. Van Vuuren (2004:11) observes that opportunistic businesspeople often pay kickbacks to public officials with the hope of gaining access to public funds for projects like housing, schools and services at the municipal and provincial levels. Odeku (2018:47) adds that kickbacks typically occur during the vendor selection process, where procurement officials may demand money or favours from suppliers in return for securing a tender, providing inside information on a bidding process, or influencing the outcome of the contract. The Zondo Commission revealed that Former Transnet Group Chief Executive and Former Transnet Group Chief Financial Officer allegedly received kickbacks in return of the locomotive contracts which was awarded to the McKinsey-

led consortium in 2012, resulting in the procurement of 1 064 locomotives worth over R54 billion (South Africa. Judicial Commission of Inquiry, 2022:49).

- **Mismanagement of government funds**

Talane and Pillay (2013) agree that financial mismanagement involves a range of actions, including the improper use of funds, neglect of established procedures and inadequate financial reporting. Rangongo, Mohlakwana and Beckmann (2016:2) define financial mismanagement as poor management of finances. One of the factors that contribute to financial mismanagement is a lack of monitoring and control. Real-time audits (frequent, short-term audits) are one way of alerting organisations to suspicious activity timeously (Deloitte, 2023). Former Auditor-General, Mr Makwetu, reveals that real-time audits discovered startling findings of COVID-19 funding misappropriation in South Africa. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was purchased for five times the amount recommended by the National Treasury in some situations. The Auditor-General also tracked the expenditure of 500 billion rand, which represents 10% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The allocated funds were intended to procure PPE, provide unemployment grants, provide disadvantaged households with food parcels, support small businesses and assist farmers (Maseko, 2020).

- **Abuse of government resources**

The most common forms of abuse of government resources are theft, abuse and wasteful spending of government vehicles, funds, equipment and time (BusinessTech, 2021). Ohman (2011:2) defines abuse of government resources as the use of government resources to help or undermine a political figure (such as a political party or coalition or a candidate for public office). Maladministration, according to Whitton (2001), can be as basic as incompetence, but it can also constitute 'Abuse of Office' by public officials. The public should be aware of how national, provincial and local government institutions function as well as who is in control and how resources are used.

- **Nepotism**

According to Sebola (2014:301), in African administration, the concept of nepotism has traditionally been defined in a contentious manner, sometimes confounded with favouritism and has been subjected to incorrect interpretation and misinterpretation. Vveinhardt and Sroka (2020:1425) are of the opinion that in both scientific research and popular opinion, nepotism is defined as the use of a person's position, authority or influence to grant a benefit to one's kin. Nepotism is most visible in organisational activity where a person is employed or promoted based on kinship rather than professional competencies or work experience. Likewise, Morris (2011:10) defines nepotism as "…public-sector jobs or benefits…illegally allocated to family, friends, or to the benefit of the decision-maker's own interest". In South Africa, nepotism and

favouritism currently contribute to severe ethical challenges encountered by senior public officials in the public sector. Furthermore, Sebola (2014:301) elaborates that nepotism is typically accompanied with incompetence and a sense of inferiority among senior public officials. Such people seek out someone they can control or manipulate for their own gain. In addition, nepotism robs the nation of skilled workers.

- **Favouritism**

Favouritism is not merely a constitutional or organisational issue; it frequently causes departmental dysfunction that results from limited knowledge and, thus, limited professionalism (Amundsen & De Andrade, 2009:33). Favouritism is the practice of giving preference to relatives, friendships or political and religious partisanship in decisions about who is appointed or promoted to public office (Dağl & Akyol, 2019:35).

- **Conflict of interest**

According to Mohamed and Uregu (2014:24), the practice of public officials doing business with the government continues to be a source of worry because it goes against the public service's fundamental values. It violates the principles of neutrality and fairness. It jeopardises fair administrative action by favouring the public officials who have abused internal information or violated internal measures. In some circumstances, the spouses of public officials who are given contracts try to hide the direct conflict of interest. Conflict of interest happens when a person has conflicting interests that could compromise their objectivity and put their personal needs above of professional principles. Kanyane and Sausi (2015:63) agree that a government employee with a conflict of interest can use his or her position to seek personal gain.

- **Embezzlement**

Morris (2011:10) asserts that embezzlement takes place when a public official allocates or diverts public funds for personal gain. Vargas-Hernandez (2012:15) argues that embezzlement of funds is the illegal stealing of property or money for personal gain by a public official entrusted with it as part of their obligation to benefit the public. Zondi (2015:35) points out that embezzlement has had an impact on South Africa's socio-economic growth and it continues to do so. In particular, the author emphasises that embezzlement is also categorised as one of the most prevalent forms of corruption that has hampered the efforts of government to bring about transformation via development and justice.

- **State capture**

Mbaku (2018:772) describes state capture as a serious kind of corruption. Dassah (2018:1) reveals that in March 2016, state capture became a hot topic after the dismissal of the former Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene, on 09 December 2015. One of the most prevalent forms of

corruption is state capture, which happens when individuals with authority, organisations, or businesses use corruption to manipulate and shape the economy, the legal framework and the policies of the country to suit their personal ends (Martini & Transparency International, 2014:1). Sebake (2020:176) highlights that the depth of corruption across South Africa's public sector has been exposed by the Zondo Commission. The battle for political control has evolved into a syndicate of state apparatus driven by individuals who possess power over the state beyond its legal obligations. This is exemplified by a machination of political networks that determines the fate of citizens with no mandate. During Zuma's presidency, the subject of state capture appeared to be a constant concern. However, the rot was only disclosed during the Zuma administration, even though the syndicate had been detected in the public sector for a long time, as evidenced by the Arms Deal transaction, which is a huge political scandal that has yet to be completely addressed. State capture is more about political power than it is about administrative power. In South Africa, the Zondo Commission was the first step in exposing the influential Gupta family's enormous corruption. The commission stated that state capture is the formalisation of the relationship between government and state peddlers at the cost of regular citizens who have invested in government for services to restore their rights. It is assumed that, in the attempt to deepen and safeguard democracy, South Africans are patiently awaiting the mass prosecution of the Zondo Commission's findings.

- **Tenderpreneurism**

According to Dlamini (2010), the word 'tenderpreneur' became popular during the ruling period of former President, Thabo Mbeki. Piper and Charman (2018) are of the opinion that a tenderpreneur is a South African colloquialism for a businessperson who uses political connections to acquire government procurement contracts (also known as 'tenders'), normally in return for favours or rewards. Tenderpreneurs have become synonymous with corruption, nepotism and clientelism. This is because, rather than following formal procedures, many bids are awarded based on informal interests or political affinity. These social and political interactions are where 'tenderpreneurship' gets its informality. Tenderpreneurs prosper by manipulating the awarding of government tender contracts, primarily through private connections and corrupt associations. A politically appointed or selected official (or his or her family members) with concurrent business interests is normally involved (Bloom, 2010).

### 4.4.3.3 Corruption under the apartheid era in the public sector of South Africa

According to Hyslop (2005:785), during the apartheid era, there was barely any proof of corruption in the public sector. Based on statements of another author that follows, this statement is discerning. For example, the enforcement of the pass laws, provided constructive support for corruption through bribery among the government's lowest ranks. Van Vuuren (2006:12) discusses numerous important problems in investigating apartheid-era wrongdoing,

such as evidence destruction. Another concern was that the government was extremely powerful and the media was heavily restricted. Because of political sensitivity, particular issues could not be resolved and others were used to negotiate, which aided the political power transfer process. The officials who were employed in the former government were expected to collaborate and submit information for successful investigations to take place. Although a few officials supported the new constitutional order, others evidently did not. Some officials lacked enthusiasm in supporting the newly elected democratic government and refused to give information. According to Van Vuuren (2006:13), "...authorities in the previous government have been unhelpful, even before we start looking at what properties the former homelands bought, we should at least be able to determine what the central government owned. However, we were left with an empty house".

Hyslop (2005:784) asserts that the level of corruption in the national government increased significantly between 1984 and 1994. When the government structure weakened under former apartheid president, P.W. Botha, a series of scandals emerged in 1989, exposing several multimillion-rand scams as well as a R650 million foreign exchange fraud incident. Botha's government used both legal and unlawful methods to exclude opposition parties. Individuals were given funds and government institutions carried out undercover actions against anti-apartheid groups and people. For example, Abel Rudman disclosed to the *Weekly Mail* that, due to the significant role that Volkskas Bank played in the distribution of private funds, the Bank's international department moved more than R2.3 million from its London accounts to an investment firm. Furthermore, private funds were also used within the government to kill rivals and to bribe others. Evidence concerning these private funds was gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Van Vuuren, 2006:52–53).

Eberhard (2007:220) asserts that corruption was also prevalent amongst government entities. An example of this is the Electricity Supply Commission (ESKOM), which was dubbed Eskom after amendments in the Electricity Act 41 of 1987 were made after a government inquiry. After concluding the study and making recommendations for changes, the De Villiers Commission criticised ESKOM's electricity prediction methodologies, governance, management, accounting and decisions regarding investment. This indicates that there were numerous problems between the government and Eskom, which provided a platform for corruption through global separation linked with unstable politics and a high level of confidentiality. Dr Gert Rademeyer indicated that in the mid-1980s, Eskom lost "millions of dollars" due to secret deals made internationally. For example, Eskom lost R67 million in a nuclear energy deal due to bribes. The financial loss at Eskom indicated that the government was not honouring the delivery of services. Since the economy was influenced by this shortage, this is considered redistributive corruption (Van Vuuren, 2006:43).

Van Vuuren (2006:43) reveals that F.W. de Klerk, former apartheid president, governed over the most corrupt period in South African history. When state officials, who benefited from the apartheid administration, realised that their time to reap the benefits of power was limited, they openly accumulated wealth through corruption. Because a big portion of SAPS and the Defence Force felt the same way, they saw stealing funds from the government as the only way out. Hyslop (2005:784) supports this argument as the author describes that when it became evident that White authority was coming to an end, everyone rushed to seize as much as they could before their ruling ended.

Despite data collection challenges, the state used the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and other methods to investigate corruption that occurred during apartheid (Van Vuuren, 2006:18). Even though apartheid ended many years ago, examples of apartheid-era corruption continue to be reported. Sylvia Vollenhoven, for example, released a documentary about apartheid corruption in August 2013 but the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) failed to broadcast it. The documentary revealed how a large amount of funds, now valued at R60 billion, was taken from public funds by apartheid-era officials, politicians and bankers. According to the report, Volkskas Bank, which was eventually merged into Absa, was given a large sum of money as a reward. This clearly demonstrates that many untold stories of apartheid corruption have not been brought to the public's attention (Blignaut, 2013).

In the remaining years of apartheid rule, public officials under the leadership of former apartheid president, De Klerk, looted millions of Rands from government coffers. As a result of these corrupt activities, the democratic government, in 1994, took over a corrupt regime, where they had to rectify the errors made by the apartheid administration. The media could not report on corruption activities since they were controlled by the apartheid government. The assertions are supported by former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, who revealed that when the ANC administration took over in 1994, there was nothing in the office. No documentation had been handed over. The NP had destroyed everything (Mbeki, 2024). The ANC, thus, rebuilt the South African government by creating policies and establishing institutions in the public sector to correct past wrongs and deliver essential services to the people.

### 4.4.3.4 Corruption during post-apartheid in the public sector of South Africa

As it is in other African countries, corruption is not an unfamiliar phenomenon in South Africa; it existed even throughout apartheid (Mlambo, 2019:212). According to Kgatle (2018:1), when the interim Constitution took effect in 1994, it preserved a slew of NP apartheid policies of racial division while ushering in a new state based on democratic principles. Mlambo (2019:214) claims that since 1994, the South African government has lacked a robust state-

centred system to combat corruption that is well-monitored and led by ethical individuals. The democratic South African history reveals that the ANC has failed to learn from the experiences of post-colonial Africa and, hence, avoid its unpleasant features. Rather, it has opted to follow in the footsteps of other post-colonial leaders who have shown to be corrupt (Majavu, 2020).

Corruption is commonly considered a great impediment to good governance (Naidoo, 2015). It was found that the public sector was severely affected by corruption, which resulted in delayed progress and poor governance. The public sector has been instructed by the state to prioritise corruption prevention techniques as part of its strategies to curb and reduce corruption. Some departments have investigated these mechanisms. But, because of inadequate practices of governance, like errors and loopholes in legislation, these mechanisms are not in place to curb and reduce corruption. Furthermore, the public sector has witnessed unethical leaders who pursue their own objectives at the cost of their departments by exploiting the gaps in the systems. As a result, it is argued that ethical leadership has become an urgent requirement in the public sector.

### 4.4.3.5 Corruption under Mandela's administration (1994–1999)

According to Van Vuuren (2006:5), "… the legacy of a corrupt system (Apartheid) did not vanish into the night in 1994, when the white flag was dropped, and a new South African flag raised". The author proceeds to clarify that apartheid "…had entrenched itself to such an extent that it would inevitably serve to corrupt the new order". Hyslop (2005:785) concurs with Van Vuuren, as specified by the scholar's claim that "…in bringing together the old central state and its leadership, the homeland bureaucracy and the liberation movement structure and leadership, the new order has both perpetuated old forms of corruption and synthesised new ones". The author further points out that the most severe incidences of lower to middle-level corruption in key government departments may frequently be linked to historical patterns as well as inadequate ministerial leadership. The author uses the Department of Home Affairs as an example, which has seen several officials being arrested for selling fraudulent documents to foreign nationals.

According to Mlambo (2019:213), when the Nelson Mandela administration took power, the people expected significant improvements in areas such as housing, health care, education and employment prospects, all of which were basic requirements that were expected to be met moving ahead. In other words, a lot had to change. While the ruling party has accomplished some of this, corruption has gained centre stage in the South African public sector throughout the years, resulting in extensive media attention. Hyslop (2005:786) mentions that because of the former government's destabilisation and level of corruption, the new democratic government faced fresh internal challenges in various government

departments and entities after assuming power. The governance of the new nine provinces and municipalities, which were extensively exposed to the worst kinds of corruption, proved to be the most difficult part for the new government. The author believes that there was a definite association between the level of systemic corruption and the level of administrative continuity with the former homelands administration. The Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Northern Province (Limpopo), drawn from the ancient Bantustan systems, were the most corrupt. The ANC's protection of corrupt officials did nothing to help the problem.

In South Africa's early post-apartheid years (1996–1997), corruption took many forms, such as nepotism, bribery for housing distribution, extortion for pension and maintenance grants, embezzlement of pension funds, selling of grade 12 exam papers, identification cards and so forth. The new Black elite enriching themselves in provincial government appears to have worsened corruption during the 1990s and South Africa appeared powerless against political corruption (Zindela, 2015:32). Newspaper reports of corruption, according to Lodge (2002:133), from 1994, reflect the behaviour inherited from the apartheid administration. Other newspaper reports point out that up to R5 billion was allocated to individuals who do not exist (commonly known as ghosts) and duplicate claimants between 1994 and 1998. Lodge (2002:416) further states that the Department of Social Welfare took over 14 different bureaucracies that were unable to account for 2.8 million pension payments because many of the alleged recipients had died.

### 4.4.3.6 Corruption under Mbeki's administration (1999–2008)
South Africa had its second democratic elections in 1999. Budhram (2019:155) emphasises that South Africa's corruption by then had reached frightening levels. Former president, Thabo Mbeki, stated that it is "…incumbent on government categorically to express its seriousness and commitment to root out corruption", but this is difficult to do when the government itself is corrupt. Corruption has an extensive number of repercussions, including state capture (in which a government's decision-making is controlled by a corrupt, politically connected elite) and abuse of political and legislative authorities for self-enrichment. In 2000, South Africa's former president, Thabo Mbeki, appointed Mr Selebi as the first Black national police commissioner in South Africa (Fox, 2015). Mr Selebi had a successful political career both before 1994 and during post-apartheid South Africa and was one of the most senior ANC members to be convicted of corruption. He held the position until 2008 when he was placed on an extended leave of absence due to corruption allegations. He was also a former member of South Africa's Parliament, president of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) and ambassador to the United Nations. In 2009, Mr Selebi was charged with accepting cash and gifts from his friend, Glenn Agliotti, a confessed drug kingpin, in return for secret information regarding police investigations. Mr Selebi testified in his own defence,

denying any unlawful activity and claiming that he was using Mr Agliotti as a police informant. Jackie Selebi was found guilty in July 2010 and was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. However, his conviction was upheld the following year by an appeals court. In December 2011, he started to serve his sentence, but 229 days later, doctors diagnosed him with end-stage kidney disease and he was released on parole. He died in 2015 at the age of 64 in Pretoria Hospital (Fox, 2015).

Furthermore, Gumede (2007:476) brought to light that, in June 2005, South Africa's former deputy president, Jacob Zuma, faced allegations of misconduct regarding the Arms Deal transaction after his financial advisor, Schabir Shaik, was convicted for corruption and fraud. The Strategic Defence Package, also known as the Arms Deal, was a multibillion-dollar transaction that included weaponry purchases from Germany and France. The Arms Deal established a precedent for large-scale corruption, bribery and embezzlement within the ANC, which took place during a period when Africa was ravaged by the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic and poverty and inequality were still among the highest levels in the world. A public interest lawsuit was filed by taxpayers to dispute the Arms Deal transaction, saying that it was unlawful and unreasonable. Since the early 2000s, various South African and international evidence teams have been investigating the arms sale. Further investigations have been driven by rumours of embezzlement, bribery and kickbacks by and between external parties in this procurement. In 2000, the Arms Deal was reviewed for irregularities by a combined investigating team made up of the National Director of Public Prosecution, the PP and the Auditor-General. Their assessment from November 2001 found that there was no reason to assume the state had behaved unlawfully. However, documents given by Richard Young – a Cape Town businessman whose company, CCII Systems, lost the competition for the navy's new corvettes – revealed that their first report had been altered, with facts removed and conclusions amended in October 2009. In conclusion, to investigate claims of wrongdoing, fraud and corruption surrounding the 1998 Arms Deal, former president, Jacob Zuma, appointed a Commission of Inquiry, led by Judge Seriti, in 2011 (Gumede, 2007:476).

### 4.4.3.7 Corruption under Kgalema Motlanthe's administration (2008–2009)

BBC News (2008) reports that on 25 September 2008, after Thabo Mbeki resigned, the South African National Assembly appointed Kgalema Motlanthe as president. However, the ANC made it apparent that Motlanthe would serve as a 'caretaker' president prior to the election on 22 April 2009 in which the ANC's nominee for president was Jacob Zuma. The South African Public Service Commission (2013:18) submitted 1 963 cases of corruption to government departments and public bodies. Between September 2004 and March 2013, a total of 2 202 public officials were convicted of offences relating to corruption, demonstrating the seriousness of government corruption cases. Munzhedzi (2016:5) points out that the majority

of the reported cases have been held up by the commission due to very limited proof and relevant information.

### 4.4.3.8 Corruption under Jacob Zuma's administration (2009–2018)

On May 9, 2009, Jacob Zuma took office as South Africa's fourth democratic Head of State (Kolasa, 2015:216). Jika (2017) reports in the *Sunday Times* that from the beginning of 2016, allegations and proof of state capture in South Africa have regularly surfaced, exposing corrupt and inappropriate relationships between businesspeople, senior managers of parastatals, high-ranking officials, companies and their family members. A series of emails that implicated several government ministers and high-ranking officials, along with senior staff of Gupta-owned companies TNA Media and Sahara Holdings, were published in the *Sunday Times* on 28 May 2017. These emails allegedly provide proof of unlawful influence and links between public officials of South Africa, the Gupta brothers and their workers (Jika, 2017). Desai and Vahed (2017:30) point out that several factors indicate that the Gupta family was linked to high-ranking public officials. The attempts to seize South African Airways' (SAA) routes for India and use the military airbase in Waterkloof, Pretoria, demonstrate this. More proof of unlawful and corrupt interactions involving enormous sums of money between government, parastatals, companies and people has been released (Bhorat, Buthelezi, Chipkin, Duma, Mondi, & Peter, 2017:63).

The former PP received three complaints in relation to the alleged inappropriate and unethical conduct regarding the nomination of Cabinet Ministers and Directors as well as the awarding of state contracts and other advantages to the Gupta businesses. The complaints came after media reports that the Gupta family allegedly offered the position of Minister of Finance to the former Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr Mcebisi Jonas, before former president, Zuma, abruptly fired his former colleague, Mr Nhlanhla Nene, on 9 December 2015. The Gupta family, who supposedly have a long-standing friendship with former President Zuma's family, is said to have offered him the position. It was alleged that Ajay Gupta, the oldest of the three Gupta brothers, offered former Deputy Minister Jonas the position of Minister of Finance and must have had some influence over Minister Nene's removal and Mr Des Van Rooyen's replacement on 9 December 2015, who was four days later then abruptly moved to the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs portfolio in response to a public uproar. According to media accounts, the President's relationship with the Gupta family had turned into state capture, which was supported by the Gupta family's ability to influence the selection of Cabinet Ministers and Directors on the boards of SOEs. The Gupta family allegedly used these relationships to obtain preferential treatment in state contracts, get access to state-provided company financing and secure the granting of business licenses (South Africa. Public Protector, 2016:354).

An investigation was conducted and on 14 October 2016, former PP, Advocate Thuli Madonsela, released the State of Capture report as the result of a probe into allegations of illegal and unethical behaviour by the former president and other public officials regarding alleged inappropriate relationships with the Gupta family in the dismissal and appointment of ministers and directors of state-owned entities (SOEs), which led to a potentially corrupt awarding of government contracts and benefits to the businesses of the Gupta family. Sections 6 and 7 of the Public Protector Act of 1994 were considered in conjunction with Section 182 of the Constitution to guide the investigation. The former PP's remedial action included the appointment of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry by the former President to investigate all matters related to state capture, with the aim of reporting any unlawful behaviour to the NPA and the DPCI. To conduct a full investigation of these allegations, the Zondo Commission of Inquiry was established in January 2018 and the first hearing occurred in August 2018. The Zondo Commission's work is said to have cost the state more than R1 billion ($66 million) and the procedure took four years. Zondo has decided to make the report public in parts. In part one of the report, Zondo outlined significant systemic recommendations for reform aimed at improving and altering the South African anti-corruption landscape so that the state can never again be captured. Zondo recommended that specific individuals be criminally charged, investigated further or be subjected to other sanctions (Out-law Guide, 2022).

Furthermore, Dr Eugene Brink revealed more examples of corruption in the government of South Africa, such as corruption in municipalities, corruption in SAPS, the Tshwane Prepaid Meters contract, widespread tenders relating to government contracts, the inappropriate extension of contracts by the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) and renovations of a private nature at the former president's private residence in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Taxpayers forking out over R240 million to upgrade Jacob Zuma's property in Nkandla, Northern Kwa-Zulu Natal, has also been a source of concern. With the upgrade came widespread charges of tender violations from many government departments in KZN, particularly the Department of Public Works having twelve senior officials facing disciplinary procedures, which were later dropped (Savides, Olifant & Mthethwa, 2017). In summary, assuming the presidency, Zuma's leadership was marked by an accelerated use of state power to advance the interests – business and other – of his own family and his circle of supporters. The most significant of these was the co-optation of Zuma's family by the Guptas, so much so that another shorthand term 'Zupta' briefly entered the local political nomenclature (von Holdt et.al., 2023:6).

### 4.4.3.9 Corruption under Cyril Ramaphosa's administration (2018–current)

The National Assembly of South Africa elected acting president, Cyril Ramaphosa, as Head of State of the country on 15 February 2018, following the resignation of Zuma. The former PP, Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane, found Cyril Ramaphosa guilty of "…inadvertently misleading…" Parliament by failing to account for a R500 000 payment from Bosasa head, Gavin Watson, during his 2017 ANC presidential campaign. According to the PP, the President breached the Constitution and was served with a section 7(9) notice on 30 May 2019. This notice formally notifies a person that they are being investigated by the PP and it gives them ten days to reply to the findings (Wa Afrika & Rampedi, 2019).

Since the lockdown began in March 2020, various government initiatives have been supplemented by the R500 billion COVID-19 relief package, which includes increases in social grants, billions for wages and businesses, a focus on health issues and the Temporary Employer-Employee Relief Scheme for those whose salaries have been affected. Unfortunately, these measures provided possibilities for corrupt people, groups and syndicates as well as governmental and private sector 'mediators' who could not resist stealing. This was seen in the distribution of food handouts and the R431 million "deep cleaning" and "decontamination" controversy by the Gauteng Education Department (Daily Maverick, 2021). As the former AG of South Africa's first special report during the first lockdown period addressed the administration of funds set aside for the government's COVID-19 response, it has become common knowledge that such instances are but a few examples of the widespread corruption and greed in South Africa (Pillay & Mantzaris, 2021).

Booysen (2021:1) indicates that, according to the former AG, Mr Kimi Makwetu, a scathing study regarding the usage of South Africa's COVID-19 relief fund uncovered overpricing and possible fraud. Frightening findings, according to Kimi Makwetu, were discovered during the audit. The coronavirus pandemic exposed deep layers of the ANC's weaknesses, failures, state ruptures and the failure of opposition parties to address these. The ANC's historical legitimacy and assurances that it was organisationally united and had firm intentions to improve policy and governance, had helped citizens to continue their belief in the ANC as a viable political force and to continue granting them second chances. However, the ANC suffered a growing disbelief in whether any of its leaders had sufficient integrity to lead South Africa into a better future. The ANC oversaw national finances but was unable to counter deficits and stop the drain of public funds in ways that could guarantee sustainability. Problems of economic growth, unemployment and budget shortfalls were endemic, even before the coronavirus pandemic and recovery will take far longer than the Ramaphosa presidential term (Booysen, 2021:3).

### 4.4.4 Challenges in addressing corruption in the South African public sector

Naidoo (2012:26) claims that the South African government has approved several measures to combat and eliminate corruption in the public sector. But, despite several initiatives aimed at eradicating corruption, it is clear that the problem is becoming worse. Adetiba (2016:ii) agrees that the issue of corruption, as a global problem, has continued to come up in conversations about development and nation-building, notably in Africa. Since 1994, various national, regional and international accords have been passed into law and ratified. Furthermore, several institutions have been set up to combat corruption. Yet, in South Africa, corruption thrives because public officials have extensive power of discretion. Gumede (2011:20) is of the view that "…there are still many 'legislative gaps' in South Africa's anti-corruption infrastructure, such as how to deal with dual employment of public officials, how to manage conflicts of interest, and how to deal with the 'revolving door' phenomenon, in which senior public officials and politicians, after leaving a job in the public and political sector, join the private sector in the same field".

There are many temptations in public affairs, owing to the fact that politicians and public officials deal in power and influence. The question, according to Du Toit, Van der Walt, Bayat and Cheminajs (1998:156), is how to prevent corruption and organise public affairs so that the chance of being exposed is considerably increased. Other specific obstacles to eliminate corruption include a lack of political will to confront the issue, political interference with anti-corruption authorities' operations, internal capability limitations and inadequacies in the institutional structure. Regulations are not strictly enforced, despite regulations being in place, and this is one of the main reasons why corruption is becoming more prevalent, which is one of the reasons why the anti-corruption system is ineffective (Dintwe, 2013:555). In a similar view, Sardan (2014:30) points out that corruption will continue as long as the government does not prosecute corrupt public officials severely. Therefore, corruption will go unchecked as long as the implementation of relevant legislation is inadequate. As part of the approach to solving institutional framework weaknesses, the suitability of a single, well-empowered and independent anti-corruption body with a clearly defined mandate must be reconsidered. Grobler and Joubert (2004:95) state that the discrete nature of corruption by its very nature, is challenging to detect since offenders make every effort to hide their tracks. This demonstrates that there is a chance that there are more corrupt actions taking place than are being recorded.

The previous discussion highlights the ongoing challenge of corruption, emphasising that it remains prevalent in the South African public sector despite the existence of various mechanisms aimed at combating fraudulent behaviour. Additionally, it is clear that some leaders entrusted with state resources are enriching themselves rather than fulfilling their responsibility as stewards and protectors of those resources.

## 4.6 Summary

The chapter discussed the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. It explored the relationship between public administration, governance and good governance. A discussion was forwarded regarding different events in the past that shaped and improved public administration practices and the discipline at large. Administrative theories were unpacked to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the different methodologies that influence public administration. This chapter confirmed that corruption is increasing in the South African public sector despite preventative mechanisms instituted. It is found that some leaders, entrusted with state resources, enrich themselves instead of acting as guardians and custodians of the state resources, as demonstrated elsewhere.

The next chapter forwards the research methodology employed in this study.

## CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research methodology chosen for the study. The research methodology chosen was used to analyse ethical leadership, accountability and transparency as components of good governance in the South African public sector as displayed by senior management public officials in the local and provincial spheres of government. This chapter defines the concept 'research' and clarifies the research design; it includes qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches. The chapter further elaborates on the data collection methods used to gather primary, the study population, the sampling method and the constructs employed to ensure reliability of the findings. Finally, the data analysis techniques and the ethical considerations observed throughout the study are discussed.

### 5.2 Research

Western Sydney University (2021) defined research as:

> …the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes.

Kumar (2014:2) is of the opinion that research is a method of thinking as well as a set of skills. Researchers usually examine what they are seeing or searching for, then analyse and interpret the observations to develop informed insights to increase their research skills and knowledge base. Habib, Pathik and Maryam (2014:3) describe research as "… a systematic and scientific investigation to answer specific questions or solve problems. It is a process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to increase our understanding of a phenomenon". Driven by a question or problem, research follows a structured approach to investigating information with a clear objective.  It is a methodical process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to arrive at reliable and well-founded solutions. Devi (2017:1) indicates that research is the most important process for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress and for enabling human beings to relate more effectively to the environment to accomplish the purpose and to resolve conflicts.

In summary, research can generally be explained as a method by which people create information to solve problems and add new information to an existing body of knowledge.

## 5.3 Research methodology

Creswell and Creswell (2018:3) define research methodology as a framework for conducting research with specific methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. This plan involves several decisions, which researchers must make in a logical sequence. An important consideration is choosing the appropriate approach for studying a particular topic. Bairagi and Munot (2019:22) emphasise that research methodology focuses on the research process itself. It provides a structured way to address a research problem and can be understood as the science of studying how research is conducted in a systematic manner. Researchers need to be familiar not only with research methods but also with the methodology, as it guides the logical steps used to study the problem. Below, the three types of research methodology are discussed.

### 5.3.1 Quantitative research methodology

According to Ghanad (2023:3794), quantitative research measures things and asks questions like *how long*, *how many*, and *to which degree*. It seeks to determine and assess relationships, patterns and trends in a sample or population in order to generate consistent and accurate findings. Creswell and Creswell (2018:4) describe quantitative research as "… an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures". Quantitative research measures variables using instruments that produce numerical data that is analysed through statistical methods. It aims to determine the quantity or extent of something and is suited for studying phenomena that can be expressed numerically to draw conclusions. This method helps in responding to questions such as who is involved, what is happening, where and when it occurs, how many are affected and how something takes place (Apuke, 2017:40).

Bryman (2012:27) argues that quantitative research methodology is often connected with positivistic and deductive studies since it aims to provide generalised findings in the form of theories and equations. "Quantitative research is the process of collecting and analysing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations" (Bhandari, 2020). Quantitative research is grounded in the philosophy of rationalism and adheres to a strict, structured and pre-established set of procedures to investigate a phenomenon. The approach focuses on quantifying variations within a phenomenon, emphasising the objective measurement of variables and objectivity of the research process. It values evidence drawn from larger sample sizes, and places strong importance on the validity and reliability of the findings. The results are presented in an analytical and summarised form, leading to conclusions and inferences that can be generalised (Kumar, 2019:48).

### 5.3.2 Qualitative research methodology

According to Rovai, Baker and Ponton (2014:21), qualitative research is often inductive in nature, with certain assumptions at its foundation: reality is a social construct, factors are difficult to quantify, research is complicated and intertwined, subject matter is paramount and data gathered will reflect an insider's perspective. Kumar (2014:14) agrees with the preceding ideas and identifies qualitative research as being based on observation that is carried out using an open, flexible and unstructured methodology. The author further explains that qualitative research seeks to explore diversity rather than quantify it, focusing on describing feelings and perspectives. Additionally, it communicates findings through a descriptive and narrative style rather than an analytical one. Bryman (2016:548) holds similar views, asserting that qualitative research primarily focusses words above numbers in data collection and analysis. As a research strategy, it is inductivist, constructionist and interpretivist. Creswell and Creswell (2018:4) explain that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. According to Bhandari (2020), qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data such as text, video, or audio, to gain insights into concepts, opinions or experiences. It is useful for obtaining a deep understanding of a topic or for generating new research ideas.

### 5.3.3 Mixed-methods research methodology

Mixed-methods research methodology integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches in one study to explore and describe the research problem (Bergman, 2008:53; Creswell & Clark, 2007:6). Mixed-methods research is the type of research in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis and inference techniques are used to acquire breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration of results (Creswell & Clark, 2011:4). Likewise, Burke-Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Tuner (2007:124) concur that mixed-methods research is an empirical study in which a researcher blends quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to strengthen understanding and confirm findings. Researchers have become increasingly willing to recognise the unique strengths and limits of both qualitative and quantitative methods in recent years, resulting in the rise in popularity of a mixed-methods approach (Statistics Solutions, 2021). Furthermore, George (2021) points out that mixed-methods research integrates elements of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to address a research question. This enables researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding than relying on either quantitative or qualitative research alone.

As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018:4), "… mixed-methods research is a methodology of inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and a theoretical framework. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the integration of qualitative and quantitative data produces additional insight beyond the information provided by either quantitative or qualitative data alone".

According to Creswell (2014:217), when a researcher employs a mixed-methods methodology, the qualitative research component generates open-ended data with no predetermined responses, whereas quantitative research generates closed-ended data. The mixed-methods methodology uses the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research. It aims to select the best methods, regardless of the qualitative-quantitative divide, to find answers to research questions (Kumar, 2014:14). Creswell, Fetters and Ivankova (2004:7) are of the opinion that mixed-methods research entails more than simply gathering both quantitative and qualitative data; it also indicates that data are integrated, connected or mixed, at some point, during the study process. The authors continue to indicate that the idea behind mixing is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient in and of themselves to capture the patterns and specifics of a situation. When both quantitative and qualitative data are combined, a more comprehensive analysis is produced and they complement each other. In addition, Tashakkori and Creswell (2007:209) argue that the mixed-methods methodology encompasses more than simply combining quantitative and qualitative methods but, rather, reflects a new "third-way epistemological paradigm that occupies the conceptual space between positivism and interpretivism".

Mixed-methods research methodology proved apt for a study of this nature as the researcher wanted to understand the topic in greater depth, obtain an in-depth understanding of the research problem and attain the study's research objectives. This methodology was appropriate and effective for the study because it explored the research questions that could not be fully answered by employing a single research methodology. It reflected the participants' points of view, by ensuring that the findings of the study are grounded in the participants' experiences. Moreover, the study employed a mixed-methods research methodology to examine the relationship between ethical leadership, accountability, transparency and good governance. As a result, a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the research problem was provided, the information was enriched, and the accuracy of the findings was enhanced. This also increased confidence in findings, providing more evidence while offsetting possible shortcomings when using a single research approach. The researcher first gathered the quantitative data by means of a structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire could not generate the lived experiences of the participants, hence the researcher conducted

semi-structured interviews, thereafter, to augment the data generated by the structured questionnaire.

## 5.4 Research design

Babbie (2008:122) notes that "…research design involves a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied among what population, with what research methods, for what purpose". Kumar (2014:123) is of the view that a research design is a plan, which a researcher creates for him or herself and communicates to others the decisions regarding what study design the researcher proposes to use, how the information will be collected from the respondents, how the respondents will be selected, how the information gathered is to be analysed and how the findings will be communicated by the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher details the rationale and justification for each decision taken.

Kumar (2019:208) further defines a research design as a road map that the researcher decides to follow during the research journey to find answers to the research questions in the most valid, objective and accurate means possible. De Vaus (2006:23) refers to a research design as "… a logical structure of inquiry. It is not a set of decisions about what data to collect and how to analyse them, but a framework for the collection and analysis of data". Boru (2018) explains that a research design is known as the overall framework that links conceptual research issues to pertinent and viable empirical research. It is a form of investigation that provides extensive guidance for research methods.

Asenahabi (2019:77–78) states that:

> Research design is a step-by-step procedure, which is adopted by a researcher before data collection and analysis process commences so as to achieve the research objective in a valid way. The essence of research design is to translate a research problem into data for analysis so as to provide relevant answers to research questions…Research design always determines the kinds of analysis that are to be done to get the desired results. It articulates what data are required, what methods are going to be used to collect and analyse the data and how it is going to answer the research questions.

Creswell and Creswell (2018:251) concur that research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods methodologies that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study. Mukherjee (2019:8) explains that a research design is an important plan that guides every step of the research to meet the goals based on the problem or hypothesis. It also delineates the type and quantity of data needed to reach the research objectives. The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is

conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Devi, 2017:52). Rose and McKinley (2017:3) note that "…there are immeasurable ways in which research design faces obstacles in the research process no matter how carefully a project was planned".

The following section provides an exposition of the research design used in the study.

### 5.4.1 Explanatory Research Design

An explanatory research design, according to Creswell (2014:15), is concerned with determining how events transpired in the phenomena, why they occurred and how they might be controlled. Thus, this study identified the factors that contributed to the research problem at hand and recommended possible solutions to address the issue. The causal relationship between the variables under study is indicated by the explanatory research design. Ethical leadership, accountability, transparency and good governance are the four variables used in this study. Fisher and Ziviani (2005:33) support the statement of Creswell (2014:15) by indicating that explanatory research design should demonstrate that there is a relationship between the variables and that the variables have a causal effect on the phenomena which, in this case, are ethical leadership, accountability and transparency, all of which are essential for good governance. Furthermore, explanatory research design was used to determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector.

Through the analysis of correlation among the four variables, the study investigated the causal impacts of relations. The causal impact of a limited ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in the South African public sector has mostly contributed to corruption, state capture and poor governance. According to Creswell (2014:15), explanatory research design is applicable to a mixed-methods research methodology, as is the case with this study, because the researcher first gathered and analysed the data generated through the structured questionnaire, whereafter the findings were used to develop the semi-structured interview questions to explain the concepts and phenomena further.

### 5.5 Data collection

Mishra and Alok (2011:12) emphasise that, in research methodology, data collection is a very important step because if the data are inadequate, the research could be biased, resulting in the collection of inappropriate data. Dorsten and Hotchkiss (2005:30) share similar views with Mishra and Alok (2011:12) that one of the most important stages in conducting research is collecting data. Even if a researcher has the strongest research plan in the field, if he or she is unable to combine the relevant data, the study will be illogical and unclear. Data collection refers to observing, measuring and recording information (Kabir, 2016:2). Data collection is

known as the systematic process of collecting observations or measurements (Bhandari, 2020). Devi (2017:92) explains that data collection begins once the research problem is defined and the research plan is prepared. When choosing a data collection method, the researcher must consider two types of data, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data is new, original data, while secondary data has already been gathered by others and has been processed statistically. The researcher must decide which type of data to use and select an appropriate method for collecting it.

Bhat (2021) defines data collection as:

> The procedure of collecting, measuring, and analysing accurate insights for research using standard validated techniques. A researcher can evaluate their hypothesis on the basis of collected data. In most cases, data collection is the primary and most important step for research, irrespective of the field of research. The approach of data collection is different for different fields of study, depending on the required information.

In view of the above, the researcher views data collection as the process through which a researcher gathers inputs from a variety of sources to provide insights and answers about the study subject. The researcher also concurs with various authors that data collection is a vital stage in guiding the study and gathering information to meet the research objectives, often through tools like questionnaires and interviews. As a result, the following data collection instruments were used in the research study to generate primary data.

### 5.5.1 Structured questionnaire

Taherdoost (2021:14) defines a questionnaire as an instrument that includes a series of questions and secure answers that respondents (from a particular group of people) complete to provide the researcher with the information required for the study. Taherdoost (2022:8) continues to explain that "… a questionnaire is an important instrument in a research study to help the researcher collect relevant data regarding the research topic. It is significant to ensure that the design of the questionnaire is arranged to minimize errors". Two commonly employed questionnaires can be applied, as well as combinations of those types. The two types are structured and unstructured questionnaires and this combination is referred to as quasi-structured questionnaires (Taherdoost, 2022:8). The quantitative data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire that consisted of Likert scale questions.

As described by Kuphanga (2024:5), a structured questionnaire is used in quantitative research to obtain numerical data using different survey methods, such as postal, electronic, face-to-face and telephonic means. Ranganathan and Caduff (2023:153) assert that a structured questionnaire offers participants a predetermined selection of responses from which

to choose. The use of standard questions makes the questionnaire easy to complete and enables rapid aggregation, quantification and data analysis.

Bryman (2016:546) states that the Likert scale is a widely used format developed by Rensis Likert for asking questions eliciting responses based on attitudes, perceptions and opinions. Kumar (2014:204) explains that the Likert scale assumes each statement on the scale holds equal importance in reflecting an attitude toward the issue. However, it is important to note that the Likert scale does not directly measure attitude itself. Instead, it assists with comparing responses by showing the relative strength of their attitudes toward an issue. A structured questionnaire consisting of Likert scale questions should ideally be used in conjunction with other data-gathering methods to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation and to overcome the inherent limitations of numerical Likert-scale data, inter alia, that numerical data cannot provide a complete picture of phenomena. Open-ended questions, participant observations, interviews and objective testing should all be used to obtain an in-depth understanding of phenomena. It is then more likely one will accurately comprehend a concept and arrive at more defendable interpretations and conclusions.

The structured questionnaire for this study was formulated to address the research problem. The structured questionnaire provided reliable information and reduced inconsistencies. Furthermore, the responses were more consistent, which simplified the management of the data gathered. The structured questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A was designed to extract the respondents' biographical information. Sections B to Section E contained statements based on the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency to promote good governance in the South Africa public sector. These concepts were elicited from the study's literature review chapters. On the five-point Likert-scale, senior management public officials were asked to indicate their level of agreement (from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'). All the statements together illustrated a specific feature of the attitude towards the topic at hand and were thus linked to one another. Moreover, the scale measured the intensity respondents felt about the research problem. A structured questionnaire was devised by the researcher and then collaborated with CPUT's statistician and the research supervisor. The Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) gave its final approval.

The structured questionnaire was forwarded to two appointed liaison individuals at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape to distribute it amongst the selected participants. This data collection tool offered confidentiality as there was no direct communication between the researcher and respondents. It took 11 months for the completed questionnaires to be returned. Despite the

long period of time, only 15 questionnaires were returned. Some of the departments identified to partake in the study, in the end, declined. The data generated through this data collection instrument was compared and integrated with data generated by means of the semi-structured interview.

## 5.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Mashuri, Asak, Alhabsyi and Syam (2022:22) attest that a semi-structured interview allows a high degree of flexibility and adaptability in terms of asking new questions or discarding old ones as well as allowing for the emergence of new ideas throughout the debate. Furthermore, it enables researchers to obtain in-depth information and evidence from respondents while considering the subject of the study. Pin (2023:1) defines a semi-structured interview as a popular qualitative research method, consisting of a verbal interaction requested by the interviewer from a respondent and based on a grid of questions used in a very flexible manner. The interview strives to acquire information while also providing an in-depth description of the individual's experience. Furthermore, it proves useful for several kinds of public policy evaluations, such as explaining a policy's objectives, analysing how it is implemented and exploring how it is perceived. Ayres (2008:811-813) defines a semi-structured interview as a qualitative research method that combines a set of open-ended questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to learn more about particular topics or responses. Respondents are not limited to a set of pre-determined responses. Bryman (2016:550) refers to semi-structured interviews as a scenario in which the interviewer has a number of questions that are in the general form of an interview guide but can change the sequence of questions. The questions are often somewhat more general in their scope of reference than those typically found in a structured interview schedule. Additionally, the interviewer usually has an opportunity to ask further questions in response to, what are considered, interesting remarks.

Pollock (2019) states that:

> A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks only a few predetermined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned in advance. Since semi-structured interviews combine both the structured and unstructured interview styles, they can offer the advantages of both. They allow for the objective comparison of candidates, while also providing an opportunity to spontaneously explore topics relevant to that particular candidate.

Semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to gather in-depth information about the experiences of three senior executive public officials at a selected metropolitan municipality, and two senior executive officials at a department within the Western Cape Provincial

Government in South Africa. The researcher was able to engage in a dialogue with the participants, and in the process gained a clear and thorough understanding of how good governance can be promoted in the public sector of South Africa. In summary, the researcher used semi-structured interviews because this data collection tool is neither too formal nor too informal. It is a moderate method for obtaining a large amount of information from respondents (Zohrabi, 2013:256).

The semi-structured interview questions were devised in line with the research objectives and the findings of the structured questionnaire. Although all the participants were asked the same questions, the interviewer adjusted the formulation, including the terminology to fit the background and the senior position the participants hold in the hierarchy of the organisation. The CPUT's in-house statistician and researcher's research supervisor both approved the semi-structured interview questions. Consequently, changes and recommendations, to address minor issues such as language rephrasing and selection of words, were effected. Subsequently, the FREC received the semi-structured interviews for review and approval. The interview sessions were conducted during office hours in the boardrooms of the selected metropolitan municipality and the designated department within the Western Cape Provincial Government in South Africa. One of the interviews was held virtually, via Microsoft Teams. The researcher faced a challenge when one interview could not be completed due to time constraints. The participant was willing to reschedule for a follow-up interview. Unfortunately, the senior executive management official was dismissed. The researcher had to wait several months to reschedule the interview with the new official employed in the position. Each interview took about 90 minutes. The purpose of the extended discussions was to identify common themes while providing the interviewer with the opportunity to ask insightful to obtain the clarification and interpretations needed for the subject of the study. The responses of the participants were recorded with a digital voice recorder and each interviewee received a copy of the interview schedule as well as the researcher's contact information in case of any further questions they may have wanted to address after the event. In some cases, where sensitive questions were asked, the possibility of gaining reliable information increased (Kumar, 2019:289).

The selected data collection tools were administered in two phases. In phase one, the structured questionnaire was administered, followed by semi-structured interviews in phase two. Due to an organisational restructuring at the selected Metropolitan municipality of South Africa, the researcher had to restart the liaison process with new contact individuals before the structured questionnaire could be forwarded. Thus, the distribution of the structured questionnaire commenced from 1 May 2022 and the last completed questionnaire was received in March 2023. The semi-structured interviews were carried out over a period of

seven months, extending from 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2022. The researcher also had to reschedule the interview with one of the participants, since the former senior executive management official was dismissed and the liaison person was usurped in another unit. The researcher had a discussion with the newly appointed official in June 2022 via Ms Teams where an agreement was reached that the interview would be conducted face to face in order to engage more on the study topic. Thereafter, follow-ups were made. Due to the participant's demanding schedule, the interview was ultimately conducted in November 2022. In addition, COVID-19 also had a negative impact on the data collection process, because the researcher struggled to get hold of management staff at both public sector institutions to obtain written consent to conduct the study at the institutions. The researcher received consent in June 2021 and September 2021 and was granted limited access to the participants. Departments and individuals, initially identified to partake in the study, chose not to do so.

## 5.6 Sampling method

Sampling, as defined by Kumar (2014:229–230), is the act of selecting a small number of individuals (a sample) from a bigger group (the population) in order to estimate the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome pertaining to the bigger group. A sample is a smaller group of individuals selected from a larger population to be focused on in a research study. It is carefully selected to obtain the necessary information. Goddard and Melville (2001:34) explain that it is often not practical or possible to study an entire population. It is, therefore, necessary to base findings on data drawn from a subset or sample. The sample size is always smaller than the population's total size. Bryman (2016:549) concurs with Goddard and Melville (2001:34) that a sample is the smaller group of the population that is selected for investigation. The method of selection may be based on probability sampling or non-probability sampling principles. Since it would be impossible to research the entire population, data from a variety of sources suggest that a sample of the population be chosen to participate in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2010:164). The accuracy of the findings largely depends on how the researcher selects the sample of the study (Kumar, 2019:89).

### 5.6.1 Non-probability sampling

According to Greener (2008), non-probability sampling identifies individuals from a population who are not chosen randomly but rather intentionally by the researcher (Devi, 2017:79). Non-probability sampling selects elements from a sampling population without applying probability theory. Kumar (2014:242-243) identifies five commonly used non-probability sampling techniques in both qualitative and quantitative research, each based on a distinct selection criterion. These techniques are quota sampling, accidental sampling, convenience sampling, judgmental (or purposive) sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is regarded

as appropriate for the study, because the researcher selected the research participants based on individuals' knowledge and experiences on the subject under investigation.

### 5.6.1.1 Purposive sampling

Bryman (2016:408) indicates that purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling is the process of selecting participants for a study who have specific characteristics and knowledge that will help to address the research question, aim and objectives (Prior, Campbell, Greenwood, Shearer, Walker & Young, 2020). The key factor to consider in purposive sampling is the researcher's rationale regarding who can provide the most relevant information to attain the objectives of the study (Ragab & Arisha, 2018:11). Purposive sampling is particularly valuable when the researcher aims to reconstruct a historical reality, describe a specific phenomenon, or explore a topic with limited existing knowledge. While it is more commonly used in qualitative research, it can also be applied in quantitative studies. In such cases, the researcher intentionally selects a specific number of individuals who are best suited to provide relevant and insightful information for the study (Kumar, 2014:244).

Purposive sampling allows the researcher to reach out to individuals who have conceptual knowledge as well as those who have detailed information due to their occupation, authority, experience and necessary expertise (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Babbie, 2013; Liamputtong, 2013). The researcher selected those who were believed to hold the necessary information and who would be eager to discuss it with the researcher. Senior management public officials have the necessary experience and expertise in ethical leadership, accountability and transparency and can elaborate on challenges faced in the attempt to promote good governance. As a result, senior management officials employed at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape were purposively chosen to partake in the study.

### 5.6.2 Research participants

Research participants are individuals who participate in a study, either directly or indirectly through a representative, and have provided informed consent (Child Ethics, 2024). Participants have expectations from both the study investigators and the research study in which they participate. Assertiveness and self-protection among research participants can enhance the quality of the study (Rodriguez, Hanna & Federman, 2003:108). Potential research should be provided with detailed information before consenting (Manohar, MacMillan, Steiner-Lim & Arora, 2018:4). The researcher defines research participants as a collection of people who partake in a research study for several reasons and play a significant role in the research process. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the research participants for this study were:

- 15 senior management public officials from the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected department in the Western Cape Provincial Government who are liable for promoting good governance in the respective government institution; and
- five senior management executive public officials employed at the two selected public sector institutions.

As shown in Table 5.1 below, a structured questionnaire was distributed to five senior management officials at a selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa, and ten senior officials from a provincial department in the Western Cape. These public officials provided their insights on the significance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance within the South African public sector. Below Table 5.1, Table 5.2 presents the individuals who participated in semi-structured interviews at the chosen public sector institutions. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior executive management officials from the selected metropolitan municipality, and two with senior executives from the provincial department in the Western Cape.

**Table 5.1: Structured questionnaire administered to senior management public officials**

| The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa | | The selected provincial department in the Western Cape | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Chief Director | 6. | Chief Director |
| 2. | Director | 7. | Chief Director |
| 3. | Director | 8. | Director |
| 4. | Director | 9. | Director |
| 5. | Director | 10. | Director |
| | | 11. | Director |
| | | 12. | Director |
| | | 13. | Director |
| | | 14. | Director |
| | | 15. | Acting CFO |

**Table 5.2: Semi-structured interviews conducted with senior executive management public officials**

| The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa | | The selected provincial department in the Western Cape | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Manager of the Ethics Department | 4. | Head of Department (HOD) |
| 2. | Chief of Forensic Services | 5. | Member of Executive Council (MEC) |
| 3. | Member of the Mayoral Committee Member (MAYCO) | | |

## 5.7 Quantitative research: Ensuring Validity and Reliability

Sugiarta, Arofiati and Rosa (2023:48) concur that in quantitative research, the reliability and validity of the measuring tools determine the study's accuracy. Sürücü and Maslakçi (2020:2694) explain that the validity and reliability of the scales used in research are critical factors that allow the research to provide useful results. It is thus important to understand how researchers accurately measure the scales' reliability and validity. Zikmund (2003:304) states that validity and reliability are important considerations when assessing questionnaire designs. The validity of a questionnaire is determined by whether it measures what it claims to measure. Validity and reliability refer to the extent to which the subject under study has been accurately measured as well as whether the measurement procedure or approach produces consistent results when applied to similar research objects by others (Haq, 2014:9). In quantitative analysis, validity and reliability are the two fundamental concepts which ensure the accuracy and consistency of the study findings. While these terms are often employed concurrently, they correspond to completely separate aspects of research.

### 5.7.1 Validity

According to Middleton (2019), validity is the accuracy with which an instrument measures what it is designed to measure. When research has a high level of validity, it generates outcomes that are accurate descriptions of real characteristics and changes in the social and physical world. In agreement with the statement, Devi (2017:57) contends that a tool used for measurement is considered to be accurate when it measures what it is designed to measure. Validity plays a key role in preserving the reliability and credibility of quantitative research findings. When conducting quantitative research, the researcher is worried about validity on two different levels: the quality of the results obtained from the instruments used and the quality of the conclusions derived from the quantitative analysis results. In quantitative research, validity implies that the results obtained from participants are important indicators of the construct being measured. Researchers employ content validity to determine whether the items or questions adequately represent the full range of possible items. Criterion-related validity evaluates whether the scores correspond with an external standard, such as results

from a similar instrument. Construct validity assesses whether the instrument truly measures the intended concept. To ensure a study's validity, researchers carefully select their instruments and apply criterion-related and construct validity procedures to assess their scores (Creswell & Clark, 2011:210).

Zohrabi (2013:259) emphasises that validity is crucial since it dictates which questions to include in a questionnaire and ensures that researchers are measuring aspects that are actually important. The structured questionnaire's design, layout, as well as its items, were constructed in such a way that the researcher could obtain the necessary information. The structured questionnaire was constructed to measure and determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. The researcher ensured that the variables, namely ethical leadership, accountability, transparency and good governance, which were measured, aligned with the study's objectives and reflected the research problem under investigation. As mentioned earlier, checks by CPUT's in-house statistician and the research supervisor, further lend validity to the content of the data collection instrument. The validity of the data collection instrument was also confirmed by members of the university's FREC. The data generated confirmed the overall validity of the data collection tool.

## 5.7.2 Reliability

Reliability implies that the measurement instrument produces consistent results under the same conditions (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020:2723). Reliability refers to consistency where the same or similar answer can be reproduced through a series of questions. Thus, the researcher should construct a questionnaire with items that provide consistency (Devi, 2017:57). Creswell and Creswell (2018:154) claim that the consistency of an instrument is referred to as reliability. The most crucial form of reliability for multi-item instruments is the internal consistency of an instrument, which is the extent to which sets of items on an instrument act similarly. Kumar (2014:220, 380) indicates that a research tool is described as reliable when it has the ability to produce similar results when used continuously under the same circumstances. Reliability shows the predictability, accuracy and stability of a research instrument – the higher the reliability, the higher the accuracy. When an instrument is administered under the same or similar circumstances to the same or similar population and acquire similar results it is said that the instrument is reliable. It is crucial to focus on the reliability and consistency of the data. The aim is not necessarily to produce identical outcomes but rather to ensure that the findings are dependable and consistent with the data collection methods used. An instrument is considered more reliable when it demonstrates a high degree of stability and consistency over time.

The data collected through the structured questionnaire proved reliable since it included first-hand information from individuals actively involved in the promotion of good governance at the two selected public sector institutions as well as secondary information from credible sources such as studies and scholarly publications. The structured questionnaire is regarded as reliable because all the factors have been addressed and the respondents provided the same or similar responses, which were stable, accurate and consistent. Furthermore, to increase the study's reliability, the researcher explained the different methods and phases of the investigation clearly. The researcher provided detail on every aspect of the study.

## 5.8 Qualitative research: Ensuring Objectivity, Trustworthiness and Credibility

### 5.8.1 Objectivity

According to Kvale (1996:64–65), in the literature, objectivity is commonly defined as "freedom from bias", which refers to trustworthy information that has been examined and controlled and is free of personal bias and prejudice. This definition states that if sound research is conducted and the results are properly cross-checked and confirmed, the information acquired can be deemed objective. Data must be intersubjective, testable and repeatable, which means that many observers should be able to extract the same information from repeated observations of the same phenomenon. Although a single interview and observation cannot be duplicated, various researchers may obtain nearly identical information from the participants provided they follow comparable protocols. Objectivity can further be attained when the researcher is unbiased in his descriptions and interpretations, or when the researcher develops trust and establishes rapport in order to get close to the study objects and to generate valid and truthful descriptions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:273). Guided by the aforementioned statements, the researcher treated the participants with respect and avoided permitting the measurement tools to influence them in any manner. Participants were also able to speak openly without being interrupted. During the interview sessions the researcher engaged in prolonged discussions and remained flexible and open, with the intention of reaching a common understanding of the perspectives and attaining the research objectives. The researcher ensured that the data acquired through the semi-structured interviews were accurately described and documented. Consequently, the verbatim presentation of the qualitative data collected ensured that the words used were as close as possible to those that the research participants used. Throughout the study, raw data, analysis, interpretations, findings and recommendations were scrutinised to ensure that they were supported by the data and, therefore, were internally consistent. The ultimate findings were derived from the participants' input rather than that of the researcher.

### 5.8.2 Trustworthiness

Zwakala and Steenkamp (2021:132) are of the view that trustworthiness issues must be addressed to ensure the credibility and quality of the study. According to Delport and Roestenburg (2011:177), the extent to which qualitative data are reliable, steady, consistent and dependable, resulting in the same findings or outcomes in the future as it did in the past, is referred to as trustworthiness. Pilot and Beck (2014) further explain that the level of confidence in data, interpretation and processes applied to guarantee the quality of a study make up the elements of the study's trustworthiness. Amankwaa (2016:123) declares that "… in each study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers". Despite the fact that the majority of scholars believe that trustworthiness is important, there have been disputes in the literature on what trustworthiness involves (Leung, 2015). Andrew and Halcomb (2009:126) debate that trustworthiness is associated with the processes used in data collection and data analysis as opposed to the trustworthiness or interpretive ability of the researcher. The level of confidence a researcher has in the dependability, transferability and credibility of their qualitative data and findings is also referred to as trustworthiness.

In this study, the data collection and interpretation methods were clearly explained to ensure trustworthiness. The researcher ensured that the information collected for the study was measured in a manner that is trustworthy. The researcher used primary information from sources with in-depth knowledge and the necessary expertise concerning the practices of good governance in South Africa's public sector and also consulted secondary sources of information gleaned from academic journals, books, legislation, policies and similar studies. Where necessary, the researcher played the audio recordings several times while carefully reviewing the transcripts to ensure that there were no blatant mistakes made during transcription. Moreover, the researcher ensured that the study produced findings that can be accepted as persuasive and credible by others. In other words, everything the researcher did in designing, conducting and reporting the research, ensured trustworthy findings. In addition, the researcher presented the findings based on the responses provided by the research participants and not on the researcher's influence or personal intention. This implies that the perspective of the researcher does not affect the interpretation of the responses provided by the research participants to fit a specific narrative. It is the researcher's contention, that any other future researcher, employing the same qualitative data collection measures, would come to more or less the same results, thus confirming trustworthiness.

### 5.8.3 Credibility

Trochim and Donnelly (2007:149) assert that "…credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible from the perspective of the participant in the research". Since qualitative research explores the beliefs, feelings, opinions and experiences of people, it is argued that those who participated can best assess whether or not the research findings accurately portray their views. Thus, credibility, which is the same as validity in qualitative research, is measured by the degree of respondent concordance when the researcher presents the findings to the participants of the study for congruence, verification, validation and approval. The greater the outcome of these, the greater the credibility of the study. According to Kumar (2014:368), credibility in qualitative research is similar to internal validity in quantitative research, which refers to a scenario where the findings acquired through qualitative research are acceptable to the research participants. George (2021) explains that using different methods to collect data on the same subject can make one's results more credible.

Member-checks, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985:314), are "…the most crucial approach for creating credibility". To ensure that a researcher has accurately understood the data, analysis, interpretations, findings of a study and member-checks (seeking participant feedback) are conducted. When credibility is the basis for mixed-methods research, the emphasis is on the representational qualities of the approach in terms of its ability to give legitimacy to the research and its findings outputs (Creswell & Poth, 2018:645). During the interviews, the researcher allowed the participants to examine transcripts or review rough drafts based on the researcher's interpretations to double-check the accuracy of what the participants said throughout the interview. The credibility and accuracy of the data was identified and supported in this way. In this study, the researcher also ensured that the level to which the findings are perceived accurately translated the experiences of the participants.

The researcher produced high-quality work that can withstand examination and promote development, through safeguarding the credibility and influence of the study by thoroughly analysing the relationship between validity and reliability and employing appropriate techniques to solve problems. Moreover, the researcher attained credibility by maintaining transparency, applying robust methods and displaying an extensive awareness throughout the research process. The researcher enhanced the findings of the research by creating an audit trail that allowed the research supervisor to review the decision-making process used in the data analysis.

## 5.9 Data analysis

Devi (2017:109) states that data analysis implies analysing the information provided to determine any underlying facts or significance. It entails breaking down existing complicated factors into smaller parts and rearranging the parts for the purpose of interpretation. Kabir (2016:2) argues that data analysis is the process of arranging and organising the information that has been gathered so as to determine its significance and draw conclusions from it. The data analysis process contains a number of processes like a review of the collected data, editing of the information and use of statistical methods to evaluate the data (Mishra & Alok, 2011:13).

Kumar (2014:327) indicates that in mixed-methods studies, the researcher is required to merge several data analysis techniques, considering how data are gathered and how the researcher prefers to present the findings. Two methods from the same or different research paradigms are used in mixed-methods studies. Mostly, techniques employed in gathering data and the researcher's intention regarding how the findings should be presented, dictate how the data should be analysed. If the data was gathered using two techniques, from two different paradigms, the researcher must employ different methods for data analysis that are suitable for the manner in which the data was gathered.

### 5.9.1 Quantitative data analysis: SPSS

Bryman and Bell (2011:299) point out that quantitative data analysis aims to produce raw material based on the categories defined by coding rules. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) claim that quantitative data analysis involves counting the frequency with which certain words or content appear and the researcher focuses on obvious content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Samuels (2020) argues that analysing quantitative data basically means analysing data that is numerical in nature or data that can be easily converted into numbers without losing meaning. In social science research, quantitative analysis is used to determine the relationship between an independent and dependent variable within a specific population (Rahman & Miktadir, 2021:301).

For quantitative data analysis, SPSS is regarded as one of the most essential, influential and effective statistical tools. It has a distinctive quality of generating variables from existing data (Rahman & Miktadir, 2021:300–301). The structured questionnaire was completed by 15 participants as mentioned earlier. The recorded responses were captured in an MS Excel document. This data was analysed by a registered statistician using SPSS. Bryman and Cramer (2011:xxiv) explain that the SPSS was created in the 1960s and was the first major attempt to provide software for social scientists. SPSS for Windows is probably the most extensively used computer software for social scientists to analyse quantitative data. All

aspects of the analytical process are covered by SPSS, including data management, preparation, analysis and reporting. Using a program like SPSS in this study had the advantage of allowing the researcher to quickly analyse the quantitative data. The researcher was also allowed to employ more complex and, in many cases, more appropriate statistical formulations. Wherever possible, the program describes phenomena, examines relationships and determines causality between variables. Statistical analysis was employed to discover important relationships and similarities or differences within and between different categories of data. It accurately described the qualities of the participants and the organisational procedures followed in terms of promoting good governance by prioritising ethical leadership, accountability and transparency.

### 5.9.2 Qualitative data analysis: Content Analysis

To analyse the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews, the researcher employed content analysis. Content analysis is used to determine the purposes, messages and effects of communication content. Content analysis is explained by Klenke (2016:94) as "…a clan of techniques for reviewing the contents on paper and writing down text which allows the researcher to take in enormous amounts of written data and systematically recognising its belongings such as regularities of the most frequently used words". Content analysis is normally assumed for "…making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004:18). Schram (2014:2621) argues that, in content analysis, the researcher might use both deductive and inductive reasoning when analysing the data. Content analysis is frequently thought to be purely deductive, involving the counting of words or phrases. It has, nevertheless, proven to be particularly useful in mixed-methods investigations.

Devi (2017:105) states that content analysis entails analysing the contents of printed sources such as newspapers, magazines, books and the contents of all other verbal resources, whether they are spoken or written. Luo (2019) refers to content analysis as a method of research that identifies patterns in recorded conversations. To perform content analysis, a researcher gathers information from spoken, written or visual formats and focuses on interpreting and understanding the data. The researcher categorises or 'codes' concepts, words and themes within the texts in both methods, then analyses the findings. Bryman and Bell (2011:299) share similar views with Devi (2017:105) that content analysis is a method of analysing texts and documents (whether written or visual) that seeks to measure data within the framework of specified categories in a manner that is logical and replicable. Content analysis is mostly used to analyse items published in the mass media but can also be applied to analyse other forms of unstructured information, such as transcripts of unstructured

interviews and semi-structured, qualitative case studies of organisations or visual images and text in company annual reports (Bryman & Bell, 2011:299).

Furthermore, Krippendorff (2018:24) describes content analysis as "… a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text to the context of their use. As a research technique content analysis provides new insights, increases a researcher's understanding of a particular phenomenon, or informs practical actions. Content analysis is a scientific tool". Bryman and Bell (2011:354) describe content analysis as an approach for identifying communicative characteristics of language by concentrating on the text, fundamental themes and meaning of text. The textual data may be printed, be saved electronically or be kept as audio data. Williamson, Given and Scifleet (2018:423) concur that content analysis employed in qualitative research is a method for interpreting and describing the topics and themes contained in communication content to find key consistencies and meanings. Furthermore, Gheyle and Jacobs (2017) explain that content analysis focuses on semantic relationships as well as the meaning of texts rather than merely the appearance of words.

The researcher was able to understand the research problem at hand by employing content analysis. Moreover, the researcher also sought verification, elaboration and findings from one data collection method to complement the other. The researcher read texts repeatedly to become familiar with the data. Through attentive reading of the transcripts, the researcher developed an aptitude to construct concepts and comprehend the information at hand. The researcher highlighted words in the text which captured key concepts. Concepts identified were ethical leadership, institutional performance, accountability, transparency, good governance and corruption in the South African public sector. To identify the primary themes that derived from the descriptions provided by the participants in response to the questions, the researcher thoroughly reviewed the detailed and factual answers provided by the participants to every question to understand the meaning they convey. The researcher observed how the participants expressed themselves through different languages and words. The researcher selected the wording of the themes in a manner that accurately illustrated the meaning of the answers classified under a theme. From these answers, the researcher created broad themes that embodied those meanings. Identifying themes is one of the most important aspects of qualitative data analysis. The themes identified were the importance of ethical leadership in promoting good governance in the South African public sector, the importance of accountability in promoting good governance in the South African public sector, the importance of transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector, significance of good governance and institutional performance, and challenges hindering the promotion of good governance in the South African public sector. The researcher considered

and clarified the relationship between these identified themes. These themes thus prominently feature in both the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

After identifying the themes, the researcher categorised the answers under the different themes. While describing the primary themes that arose from the data, the researcher presented the responses verbatim, to maintain the 'feel' of the responses. To explain and demonstrate how the phenomenon under investigation had evolved and to simplify the reader's entire understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher made sure that the story thread was linked to the literature around which the study revolved. The researcher transformed the raw data into a coherent and credible narrative constructed around facts.

## 5.10 Ethical considerations

Polonsky and Waller (2019) stress that the importance of ethical considerations in research is expanding, particularly when the study involves interaction such as interviews, focus groups or surveys with businesses or people who participate in the study. As a result, it is vital that the researcher comprehends the fundamentals of ethical research and how these could impact the study. Welman et al. (2005:181) explain further that, in research, ethical behaviour is essential as it is in any other sphere of human activity. Particular ethical considerations, associated with issues such as honesty (in the reporting of results) and plagiarism appear in all research, but additional problems emerge when individuals are involved in both social sciences and biological research. The principles guiding research ethics are broad and address concerns such as respect for the rights of individuals and honesty. Welman et al. (2005) state that ethical considerations are relevant during three stages of a research project, namely:

- during the recruitment process of the participants;
- during the intervention or the measurement process to which they are exposed; and
- when the results attained are released.

The key principles normally mentioned in codes of research ethics are, firstly, that no harm should affect the research participants and, secondly, that participants ought to participate freely based on informed permission. When collecting data from people, researchers must always follow a set of guidelines.

The following is a summary of this study's ethical considerations:

- The researcher's first step was to seek permission to conduct the research from the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa as well as the selected provincial department in the Western Cape.
- Consent from the FREC of CPUT was needed before the research commenced.

- The researcher evaluated whether any form of harm could occur and ensured that precautions were in place to prevent it. As a result, the researcher carefully assessed the risk of harm and committed to acting ethically by considering how the research might negatively affect participants, how the researcher could protect herself and how the researcher could protect the researcher's supervisor and institution from being placed in situations where individuals could make claims of inappropriate behaviour, which could result in public criticism or even legal action.

- The researcher guaranteed the participants that their identities would remain anonymous, the information used in the study would be regarded as highly confidential and that identifiable information in relation to the participants would not be revealed. The participants were guaranteed that their trust would not be misused for personal interest by deceiving them during the study process or in the final results.

- The participants of the research were allowed to ask questions concerning anything they were unsure of at any point in time. Additionally, the participants were also presented with the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

- The researcher considered the participants' time and respected their inputs in achieving the purpose of the research.

## 5.11 Summary

The chapter described the terms 'research' and 'research design'. The chapter also covered the research methodology in detail and explained the data collection tools employed to acquire the primary and secondary data needed to meet the research objectives. The sampling method and the research participants were discussed. Reliability, validity, credibility and trustworthiness were addressed and applied in the data analysis and ethical considerations were also explained. The data analysis and interpretation of this study are presented in Chapter 6.

# CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

## 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 puts forward the research methods employed in the study. This chapter discusses the results produced from the structured questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. The chapter is then discussed in relation to the previous chapters. The researcher compared the findings to the secondary literature discussed in the literature review chapters. To begin with, the results are presented for each item, followed by the researcher's interpretation. The quantitative data gathered are presented as graphs and each section is analysed and interpreted to represent the participants' viewpoints. The following section forwards an analysis of the data, generated through the semi-structured interviews. This was done in line with the objectives of the study in particular:

- to determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector;
- to identify the obstacles that prevent good governance in the public sector of South Africa; and
- to develop a comprehensive framework that promotes good governance in South Africa's public sector, for consideration by the selected public sector institutions as well as public offices with both direct and indirect roles in institutionalising good governance in the country.

The final part of this chapter forwards a link between the objectives and the findings of the research.

## 6.2 Mixed-methods data analysis

Creswell and Clark (2011:212) believe that data analysis in a mixed-methods study, is the application of analytic methods to both quantitative and qualitative data as well as the simultaneous and sequential mixing of the two types of data in a single project or a multiphase project. Data analysis can occur at a single point in the process of mixed-methods research or at several points. It also includes certain steps carried out by the researcher and important decisions made at different steps. Following the completion of the analyses, the mixed-methods interpretation entails scrutinising the quantitative results and the qualitative results and determining how the information answers the mixed-methods questions in a study. Delve (n.d.) concurs with Creswell and Clark (2011:212) that a mixed-methods study merges quantitative and qualitative research methods in the same research study. It entails collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data to answer research questions and gain insight into a phenomenon. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:300) refer to this process as

drawing 'inferences' and creating 'meta-inferences'. Inferences are conclusions or interpretations drawn from the separate quantitative and qualitative aspects of a study. Creamer (2018:110) states that a meta-inference links or integrates numerous claims, some of which are the result of the analysis of quantitative data and others which are the result of the analysis of qualitative data. Schoonenboom (2022:55) argues that the meta-inference is the final step in a mixed-methods research process.

In this study, the SPSS was used with the help of a certified statistician to analyse the data produced by the structured questionnaire to identify significant correlations, differences or similarities within and between various categories of data. The structured questionnaire was used to determine the importance and influence of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. For the qualitative data, content analysis was used to point out communicative characteristics of language by concentrating on the text's content, fundamental themes and significance. To emphasise the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector, the researcher conducted the study at a selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and a selected provincial department in the Western Cape. Both are considered good examples of promoting good governance.

## 6.3 Analysis and interpretation of results

The findings of the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are presented in two sections. The first section focuses on a total of 15 completed questionnaires that were completed and returned by the senior management public officials employed at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape. The second section presents the semi-structured interviews that were conducted to obtain the qualitative data among the five senior executive management public officials at the two selected public sector institutions.

### 6.3.1 Structured questionnaire

The aim was to distribute the structured questionnaire to 24 senior management public officials at the two selected public sector institutions, but the researcher was only granted access to 15 senior management public officials. The structured questionnaire consists of five sections. The structured questionnaire was administered to five senior management public officials employed at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and to ten at the selected provincial department in the Western Cape.
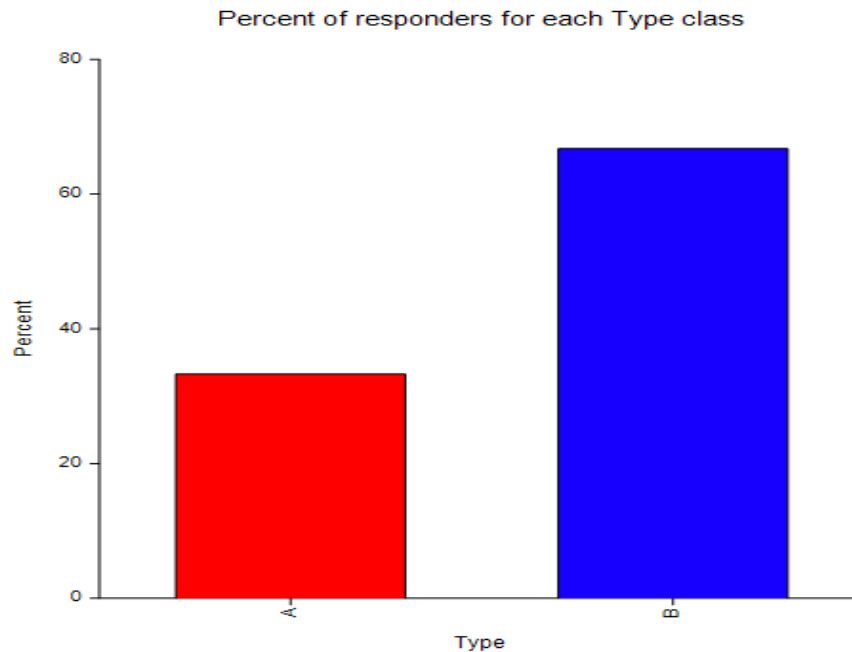
**Figure 6.1: Percent of respondents for each Type class**

Figure 6.1 displays the percentage of the participants from the two selected public sector institutions in South Africa that completed the questionnaire. Of the 15 respondents, Type A (33.33%) refers to the respondents employed at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and Type B (66.67%) refers to the respondents employed at the selected provincial department in the Western Cape.

**Section A: Demographic Information**

This section consisted of the biographical data, which are reported below. The demographic section includes a summary of the participants' characteristics, including their gender, age, educational background, position in the hierarchy of the organisation and the years of service in the South African public sector. This information is relevant for a study of this nature because it allowed the researcher to identify similarities and differences based on the characteristics of the respondents amongst the different categories.

Percent of responders for each Gender class
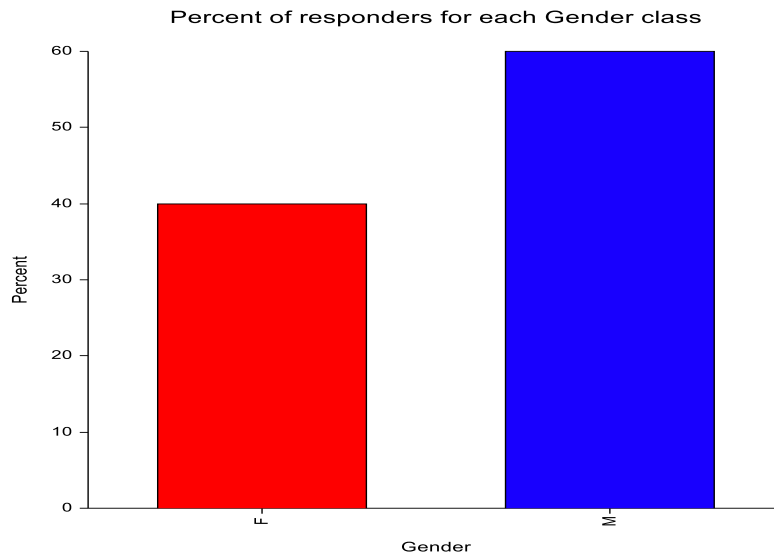
**Figure 6.2: Percentage of females and males who completed the
structured questionnaire**

The participants of the research study were requested to reveal their gender as the researcher intended to determine the number of females and males who participated in the study and it also gave an indication of how many females and males occupied higher positions. Figure 6.2 demonstrates that, of the fifteen respondents, Type F refers to the respondents who are female (40%) and Type M refers to the respondents who are male (60%). The graph demonstrates that more males than females hold leaderships positions in the two public sector institutions.



Percent of responders for each AgeGrp class
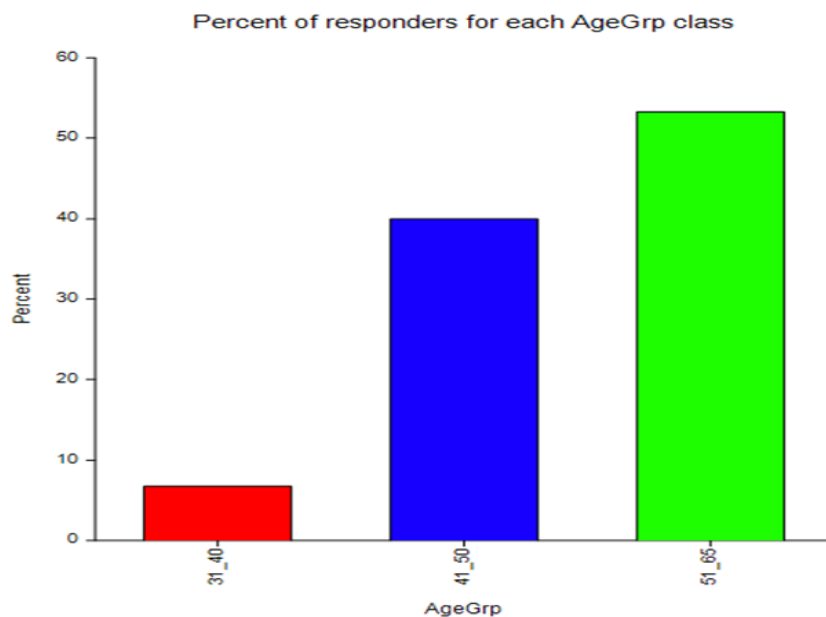
**Figure 6.3: Percentage of respondents for each age group class**

To gather useful data that helped the researcher determine whether there is a close affiliation between age and senior management positions held in the public sector, the participants were requested to specify their age in the ranges of 21–30, 31–40, 41–50 and 51–65. This section illustrates that most respondents (53.33%) are between the ages of 51–65 years, followed by the second-most respondents (40%), who are between the ages of 41–50 years and the least respondents (6.67%) who are between the ages of 31–40 years. This is a reflection that senior positions are occupied by older public officials.
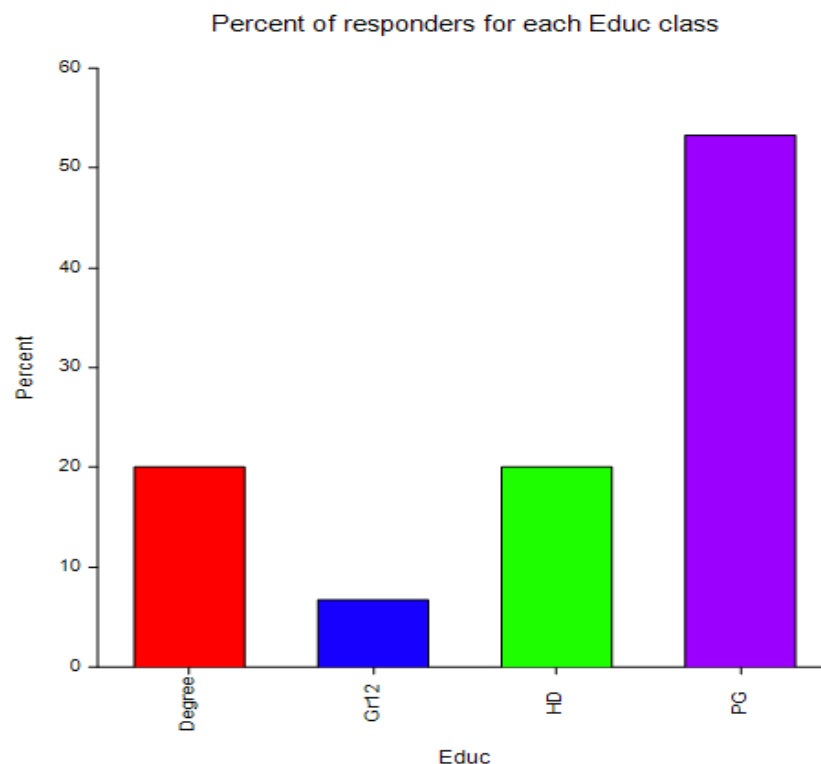


**Figure 6.4: Educational background on respondents**

The researcher needed to know about the respondents' educational backgrounds to assess if these adequately equipped them for the specific responsibilities given. The statistics show that 53.33% (most of the respondents) have postgraduate degrees, followed by undergraduate degrees and Honours degrees at 20% each and Grade 12 certificates at 6.67%. It is evident that when it comes to the appointment of senior management public officials in South Africa's public sector, education level is a key factor needed to carry out their specific duties effectively and efficiently.
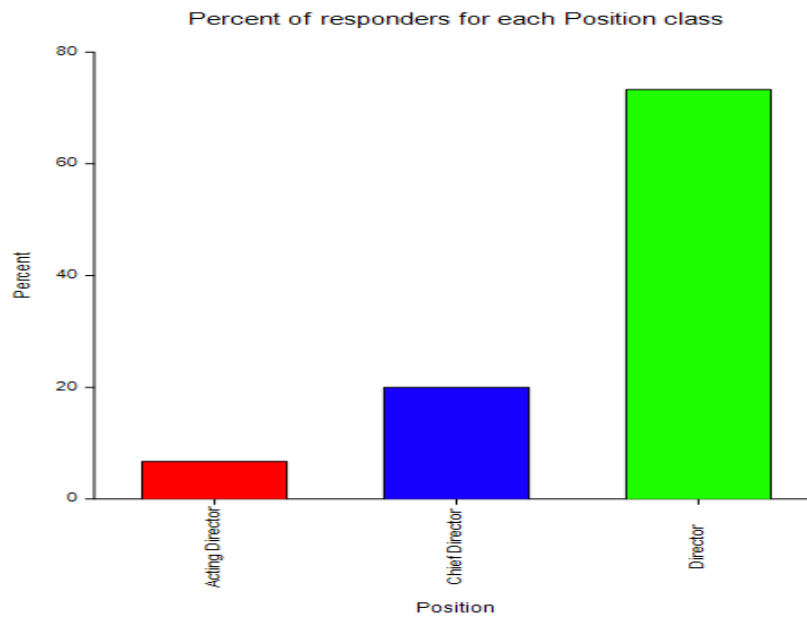
**Figure 6.5: Percent of respondents for each position**

Considering each senior management position has insightful information and expertise, the respondents were required to disclose their positions within the hierarchy of the two selected public sector institutions. The position held by most of the respondents, as shown in Figure 6.5, is the position of Director (73.33%), followed by the positions of Chief Director (20%) and Acting Director (6.67%). This revealed that most of the insightful information stems from the perspectives of the position held as Director.
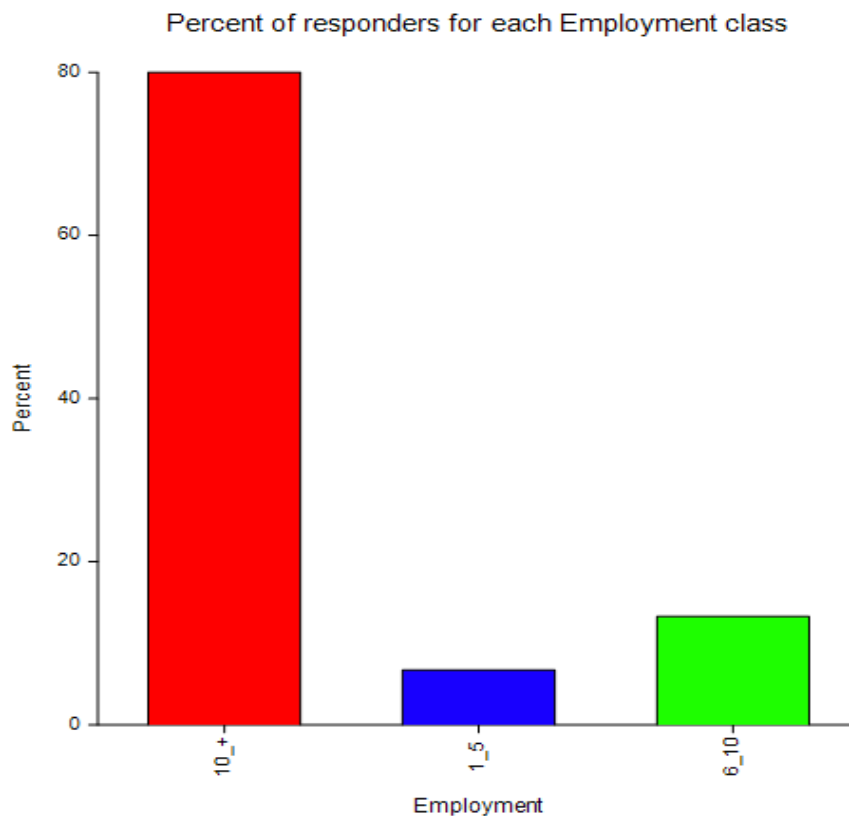
**Figure 6.6: Numbers of years of employment in the public sector**

To gather valuable insights, participants were asked to indicate how long they have been serving as public officials in South Africa. As shown in Figure 6.6, 80% of respondents have over 10 years' service, followed by 13.33% with 6–10 years' service and 6.67% with 1–5 years' service. This shows that the experience of senior management public officials who have service of more than 10 years puts them in a position to determine whether governance systems and processes are effective or not. These senior management public officials can also determine how effectively the implementation process is working and identify any weaknesses in those systems.

**Section B: The importance of ethical leadership in promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

This section aims to determine the importance of ethical leadership in promoting good governance in the public sector of South Africa.
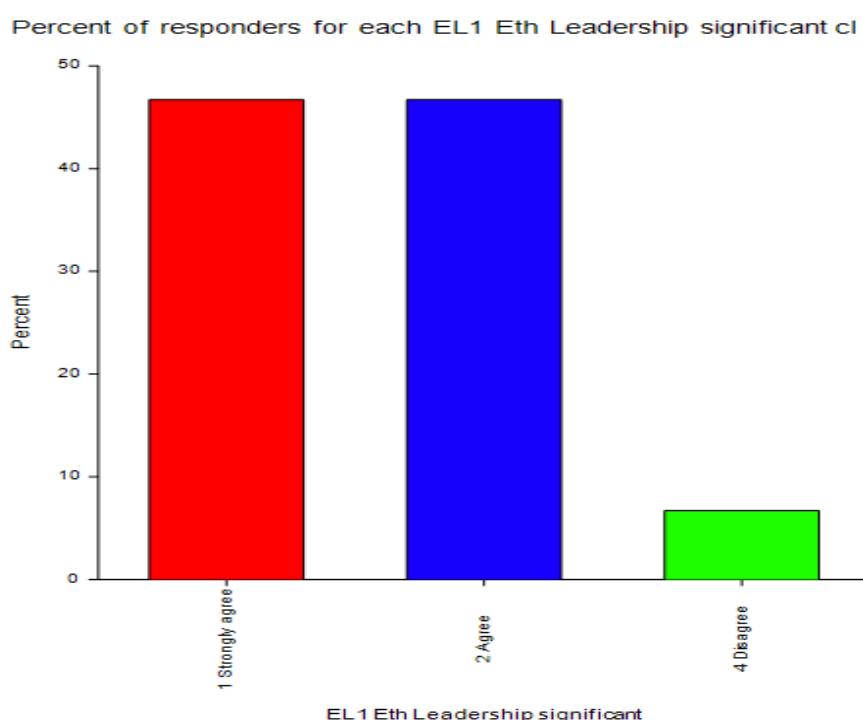


**Figure 6.7: Ethical leadership is regarded as a significant aspect in my organisation**

Ethical leadership is a two-dimensional concept that affects both individuals and organisations. This figure displays that 93,34% of the participants agreed that ethical leadership is considered a significant aspect in their respective organisations and 6.67% disagreed with the statement. According to the response rate, it is evident that the selected public sector institutions consider ethical leadership as a cornerstone of good governance in their institutions. However, a 6.67% disagreement indicates that there is still potential for improvement since not all senior management public officials have the same level of understanding of the importance of prioritising ethical leadership in their respective institutions.
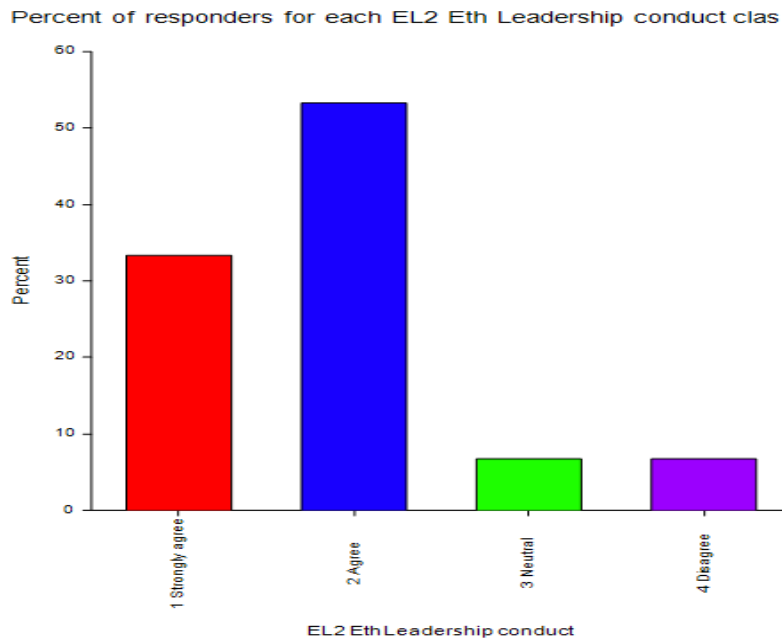
**Figure 6.8: There is a very close affiliation between ethical leadership conduct and employees' behavioural conduct**

Ethical leadership is about transformative behaviour because it speaks to the essence of humankind. Of the 15 participants, Figure 6.8 shows that 86.66% agreed, whereas 6.67% was neutral and 6.67% disagreed with the statement. Most of the participants concur that ethical leadership is carried out by senior management public officials. Senior management public officials must display ethical leadership in their everyday behaviours, decisions and actions because their behaviour determines the behaviour of their subordinates. In addition, how the senior management officials apply values, beliefs and standards to real-world situations and possible ethical predicaments sheds light on their leadership style.
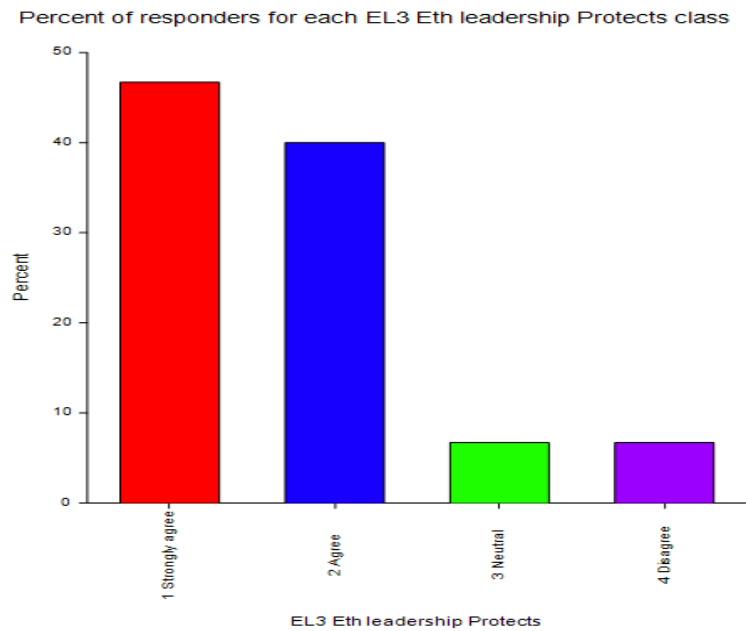
**Figure 6.9: My department protects employees who report illegal activities**

Any employee, who has suspicions about behaviour or acts they consider to be illegal or in violation of the legislation frameworks in place at the South African public sector, is allowed to report those allegations without fear to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. It is the responsibility of the government to protect the whistle-blower's identity and to ensure that the individual and those close to the whistle-blower are not exposed to any harm. Should the confidentiality code not be adhered to, disciplinary action may follow, which can lead to the authorities being fired. For disclosing confidential information, law enforcement authorities may also face a trial and receive heavy sentences. The responses in Figure 6.9 show that 86.67% of participants agreed with the statement, 6.67% were neutral and 6.67% disagreed. This indicates that while the majority believe it is safe to report illegal activities, some respondents are unaware of the safety measures implemented by public sector institutions. Additionally, those who disagreed may be concerned about potential targeting or victimisation in the workplace after reporting illegal activities.

**Section C: The importance of accountability in promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

This section determines if accountability in the public sector of South Africa exists.
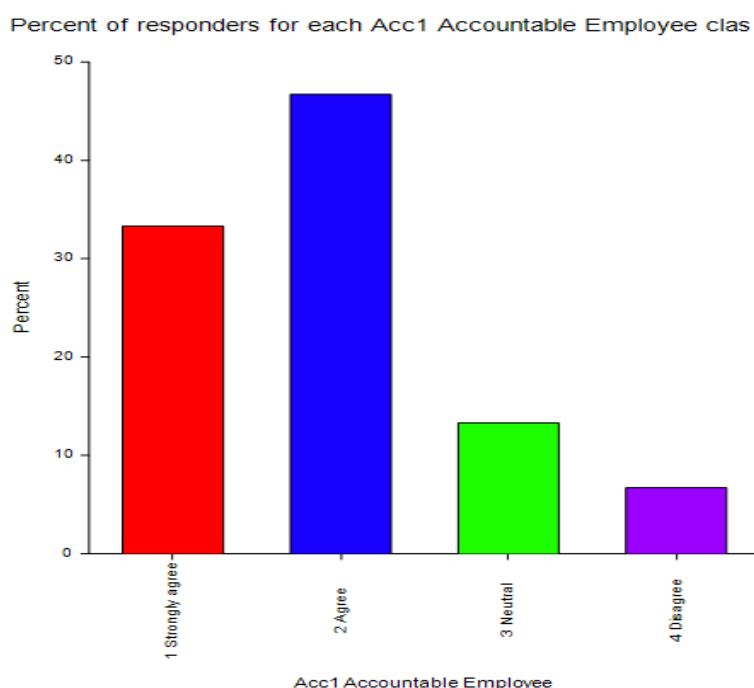


**Figure 6.10: Our organisation disciplines and holds employees accountable for violating ethical conducts**

Accountability measures are put in place in the South African public sector to ensure that any institution, manager or leader using public funds and making decisions that affect people's lives can be held responsible for their actions. Figure 6.10 shows that 80% of respondents agreed that public officials in the two selected public sector institutions are disciplined and held accountable for breaches of ethical conduct. This suggests that most respondents believe public officials understand the importance of accountability in promoting good governance. However, 13.33% were neutral and 6.67% disagreed, indicating that the implementation of accountability mechanisms remains a concern in the public sector.

Percent of responders for each Acc2 Accountable Government cl
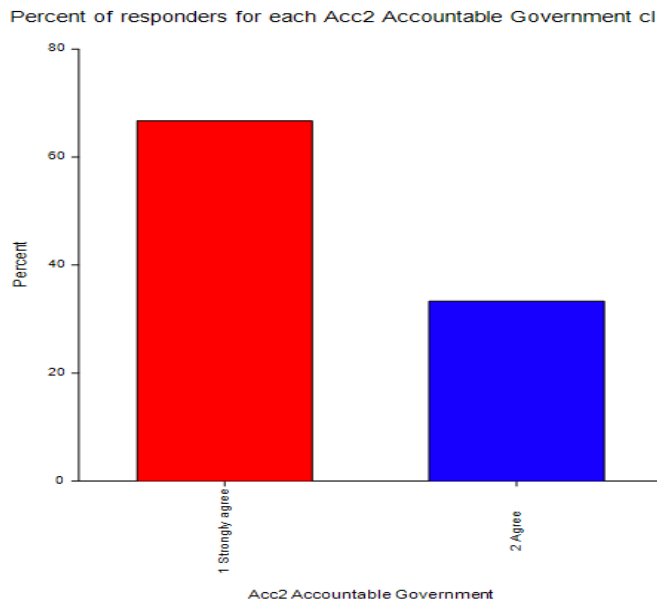


**Figure 6.11: The public have the right to hold government accountable when they fail to deliver quality services or keep their promises**

Accountability, liability, responsiveness and openness are highlighted as important pillars of democracy in South Africa's constitution, underpinning the relationship between government and its people and the level to which government is accountable for its actions. Figure 6.11 also supports the aforementioned statement as it shows that 100% of the respondents agreed that the public has the right to hold the government accountable when they fail to deliver quality services and when they fail to keep their promises. Citizens are entitled to quality services, as articulated in the Batho Pele Principles.

**Section D: The importance of transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

This section investigated whether the two selected public sector institutions are open and transparent as indicated in the guidelines.
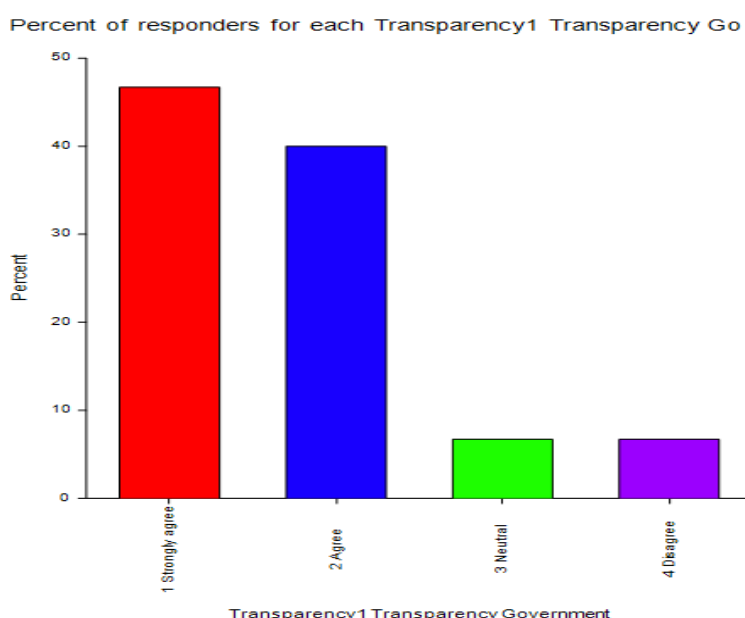


**Figure 6.12: My department adheres to Batho Pele Principles, which states that the public should be informed how national, provincial, and local government departments are run, how much they cost and who is in charge**

The Batho Pele Principles state that the people should be informed of how national, provincial and municipal government departments operate, how much they cost and who is in control. According to the numbers in Figure 6.12, 86.67% of the respondents agreed that their department complies with these principles. Public sector institutions make this information available to the public by publishing an annual report that is based on the operations that occurred during a financial year and its expected future direction. However, 6.67% of respondents were neutral and the remaining 6.67% disagreed, demonstrating that not all public sector institutions are transparent in their operations. This is a matter that raises concern because the Batho Pele Principles highlight the importance of providing quality customer service to those who use government services.
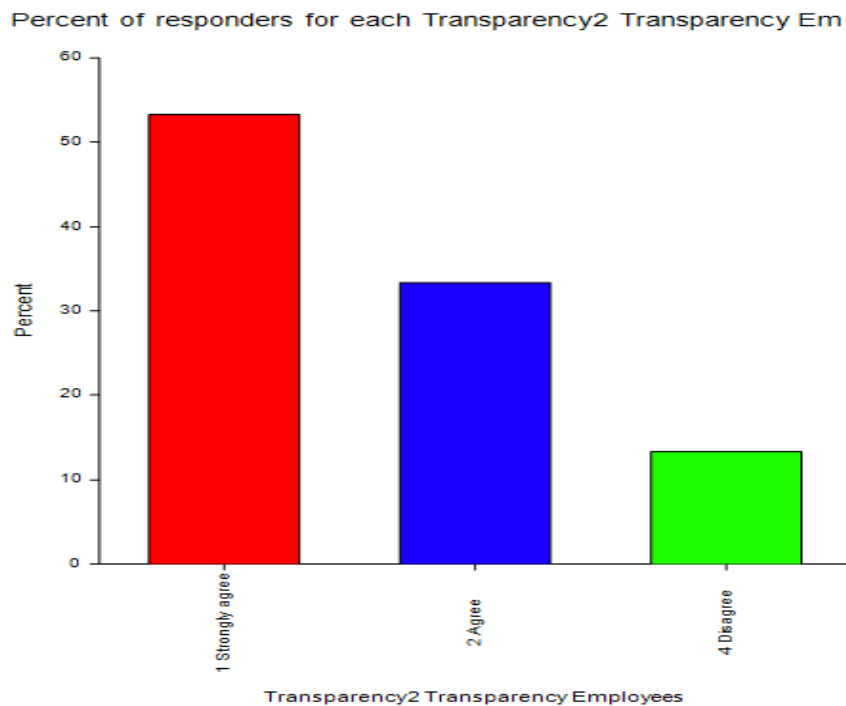
Figure 6.13: Professionalism and honesty are being
practised by our employees in the organisation

The underlying foundation of professionalism in the public sector is a government official's knowledge and understanding of the truth and realities of the community they serve. It is a key value that governs how its operations are carried out and it includes all other values that influence the public service, such as honesty and transparency. Professionalism in the public sector is determined and assessed by honesty, shared trust, knowledge, ethical behaviour, competence, commitment and collaboration. Furthermore, the authors emphasise that professionalism, based on honesty, can establish an atmosphere for the constant development of organisational and institutional mechanisms to fight corruption. Figure 6.13 demonstrates that most respondents agreed, with a response rate of 86.67%, that the public officials of the two selected public sector institutions exercise professionalism and honesty. The remaining 13.33% disagreed with the statement, demonstrating that there is still room for improvement regarding professionalism and honesty within the two selected public sector institutions.

**Section E: The significance of good governance and institutional performance**

The relationship between good governance and the performance of the organisation is emphasised in this section.
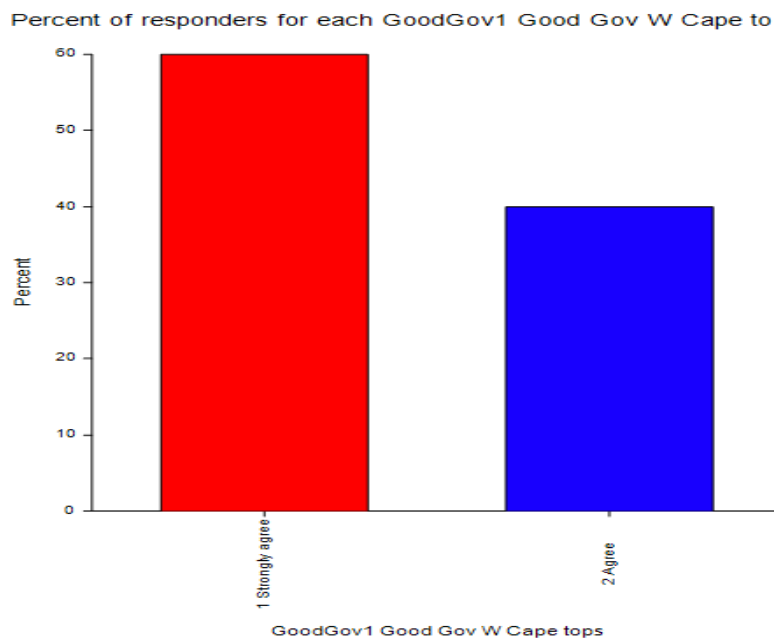


**Figure 6.14: In 2017, South Africa's Auditor-General, Kimi Makhwethu   highlighted the Western Cape as the leading province for good governance**

As shown in Figure 6.14, all participants agreed with the statement made by former Auditor-General of South Africa, Mr Kimi Makwetu, that the Western Cape is the leading province in terms of good governance. The data in Figure 6.14 indicates that public officials in the two selected public sector institutions are committed to upholding the principles of good governance, which are rooted in the rule of law and a capable state. Furthermore, the results suggest that internal controls and processes are functioning effectively and that these public officials take pride in promoting good governance and delivering quality performance.
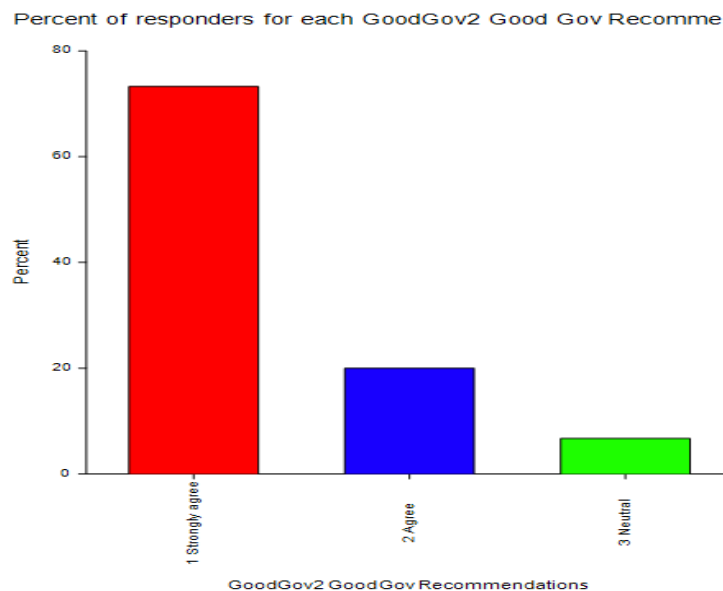
**Figure 6.15: The Auditor-General's recommendations are implemented in the department**

The Auditor-General's role is constitutionally defined as ascertaining, investigating and auditing all financial statements of all government departments across the public sector including any statutory body or any other institution that is funded entirely or partially by public money. The institution itself does not implement the recommendations made by the Auditor-General because only the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) has the authority to recommend strict measures to be taken against the offender. According to Figure 6.15, 93.33% of respondents agreed that the two selected public sector institutions do implement the Auditor-General's recommendations. This demonstrates that good governance is closely linked to the performance of these institutions. A small percentage, 6.67%, remained neutral.

**As a government employee I adhere to the following mechanisms that aid in preventing any form of corruption in the South African public sector**
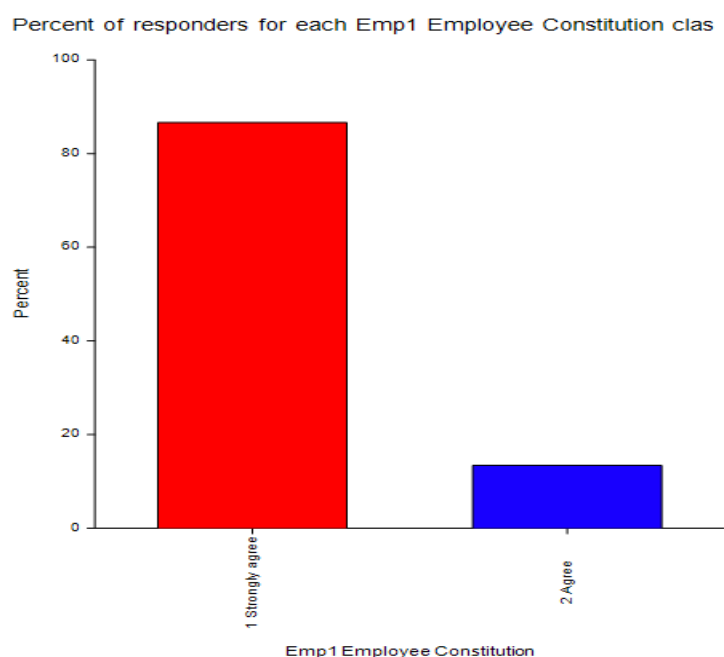


Figure 6.16: The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,
Act 108 of 1996

In South Africa, the Constitution is the supreme law that governs the country. The most significant regulations governing the political system of South Africa are preserved in the Constitution. The Constitution also protects the rights of citizens but further documents citizens' responsibilities attached to those rights. Furthermore, it describes South African institutions, their powers and how they may use those powers. Figure 6.16 demonstrates that 100% of the respondents agreed that senior management public officials do adhere to the Constitution. In other words, the respondents understand the content in the document and they are aware that no one is above the law in South Africa.

Percent of responders for each Emp2 Employee PFMA class
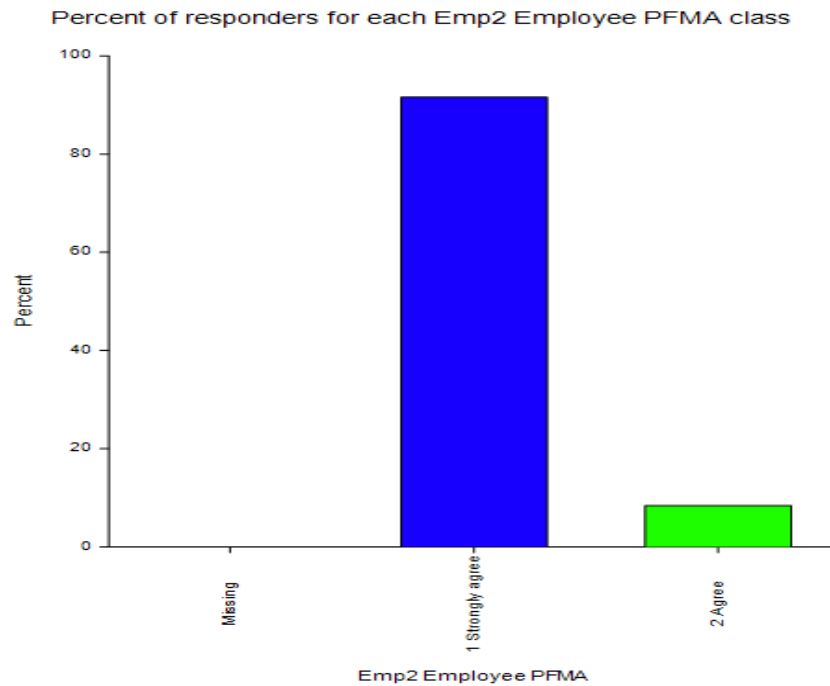
**Figure 6.17: Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999**

The aim of the PFMA is "… to regulate financial management in the national government and provincial governments; to ensure that all revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities of those governments are managed efficiently and effectively; to provide for the responsibilities of persons entrusted with financial management in those governments; and to provide for matters connected therewith" (South Africa, 1999:1). As stipulated in Figure 6.17, 100% of the respondents agreed because, as senior management public officials, they are aware that the PFMA allows officers to manage while also holding them accountable for the resources they utilise. Furthermore, the objective of the PFMA, in relation to public funds, is to guarantee accountability and transparency in the applicable government institutions.
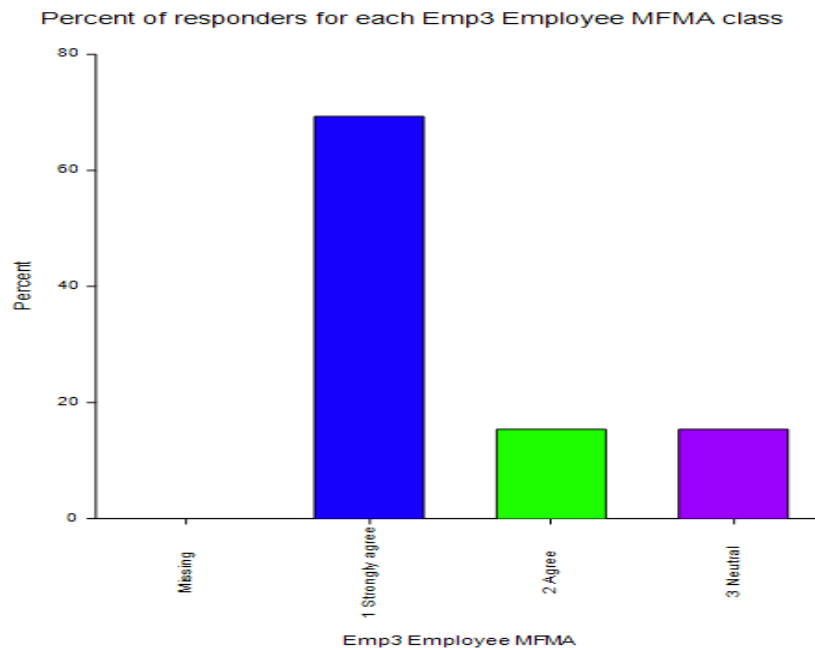
**Figure 6.18: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003**

The MFMA aims to modernise financial management procedures, budgeting and accounting by putting the finances of local government on a more sustainable foundation to maximise municipalities' capacities to provide services to their residents. The MFMA also intends to establish a good framework for financial governance by defining and distributing the tasks and obligations of the officials, mayor and council. Figure 6.18 demonstrates that 84.61% of the respondents agreed that senior management public officials do act in accordance with the MFMA, but there is a small percentage of 15.38% which was neutral because this specific Act only applies to municipalities. According to statistics in this section, it is evident that most of the respondents are aware that all three spheres of government must be transparent concerning their financial affairs.
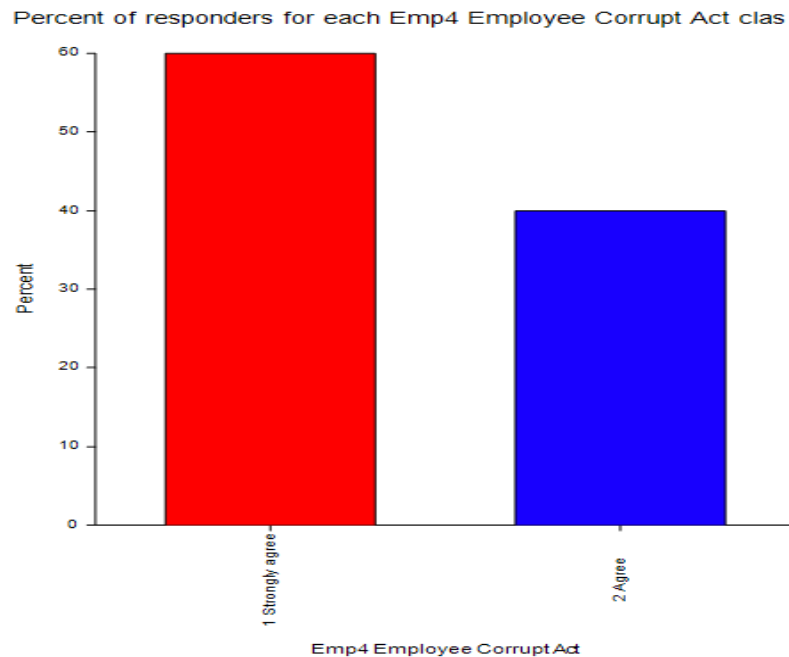
**Figure 6.19: Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities
Act 12 of 2004**

In South Africa, the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004 (PCCA) is known as the primary law regulating bribery, corruption and enforcement. In this Act, enhancing measures to avoid and fight corruption are outlined. Figure 6.19 illustrates that all the respondents (100%) agreed that the senior management public officials in the two selected public sector institutions are implementing the necessary measurements to fight and prevent corrupt activities. The study found that, as per requirement, the selected public sector institutions often perform procurement audits of projects to detect mistakes and irregularities in the process of acquiring goods and services.

Percent of responders for each Emp5 Employee Prot disclosure
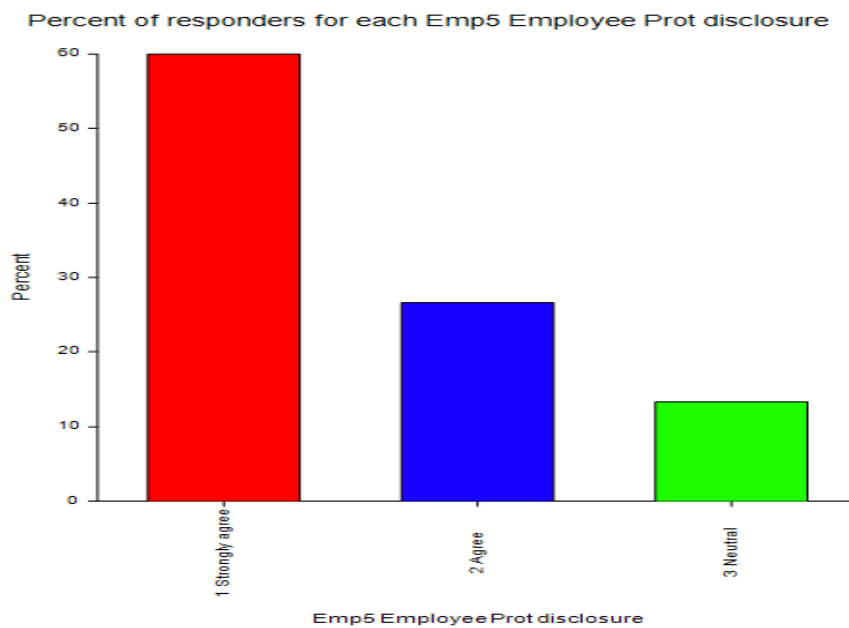
**Figure 6.20: Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000**
**(Whistle-blowers Act)**

Public officials are encouraged to report any unlawful activities and corrupt behaviour at the workplace in a responsible way and, in return, they will be protected by the Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000.  By reporting these illegal and corrupt activities, a greater sense of accountability will be promoted in the workplace. The response rate in Figure 6.20 illustrates that 86.67% of the respondents agreed that the senior management public officials adhere to this Act because it helps to prevent any form of corruption in the public sector. However, 13.33% was neutral, which indicates that the two selected public sector institutions should address the significance of this Act. In addition, the Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000 serves as a blueprint for senior management public officials and it promotes public sector accountability. It is crucial that senior management public officials understand and apply this legislation correctly as it can assist them with identifying and managing risk as well as protect both the reputation of an individual as a senior management public official and the reputation of the public sector.
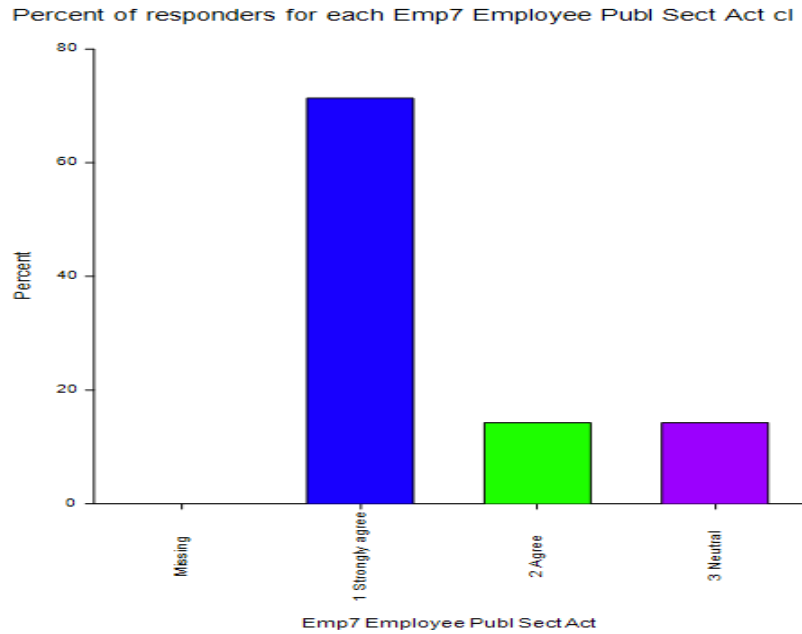
**Figure 6.21: Public Sector Act 103 of 1994**

In Figure 6.21, the statistics show that 85.71% of the respondents agreed that the Public Sector Act 103 of 1994 is one of the mechanisms that aids in preventing corruption in the South African public sector. It confirms that the senior management public officials are aware that no government employee shall conduct or participate in remunerative work beyond the scope of their employment in the applicable department, except when written approval is given by the executive authority in the department. Of the total number of respondents, 14.29% gave a neutral response.
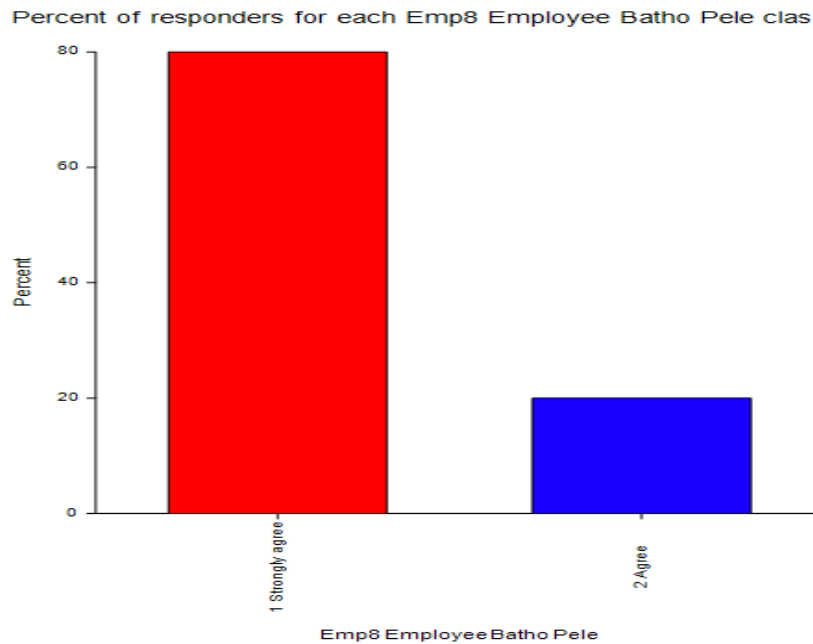
**Figure 6.22: Batho Pele Principles**

Figure 6.22 illustrates that in order to eradicate corruption in the South African public sector, 100% of the respondents agreed that officials at the two selected public sector institutions comply with the Batho Pele Principles. It also illustrates that since the Batho Pele Principles are viewed as the standard for provision of services to the residents of South Africa, all senior management public officials are familiar enough with the content of the Batho Pele Principles to understand the influence it has on service delivery.
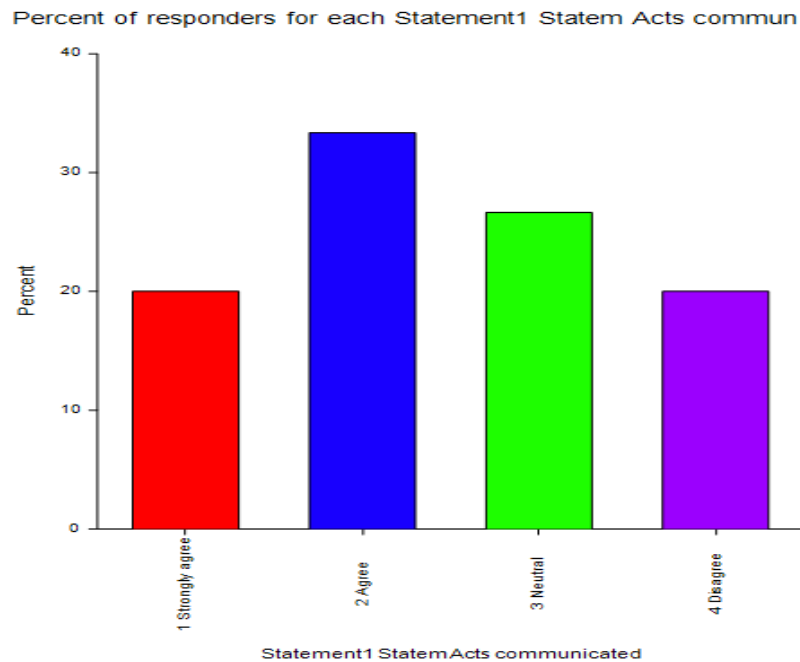
**Figure 6.23: The aforementioned Acts are effectively communicated in my organisation**

Figure 6.23 illustrates that 53.33% of the respondents agreed that the aforementioned Acts are effectively communicated in their respective organisations. 26.67% was neutral and 20% disagreed with the statement. This illustrates that the senior management public officials need regular training on how to communicate the Acts across the selected public sector institutions.
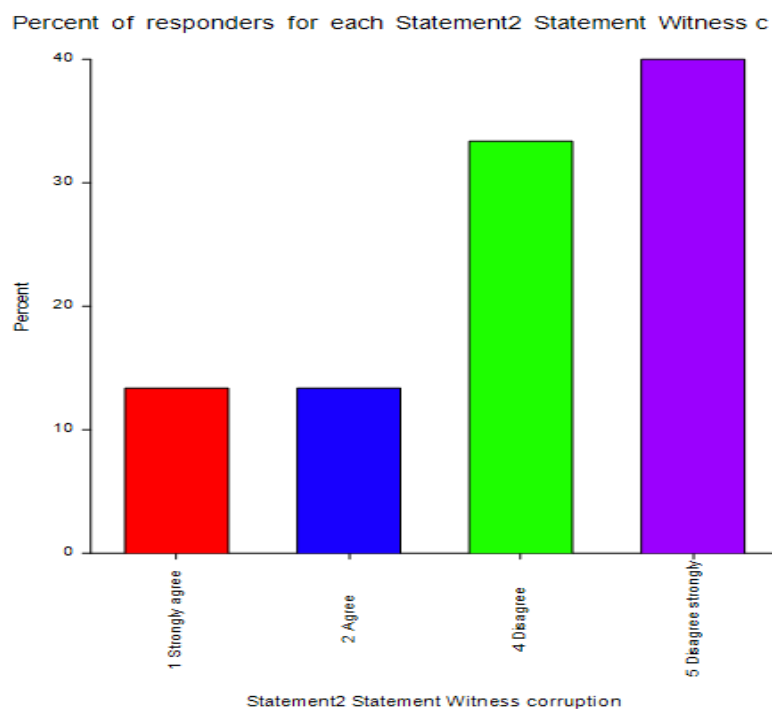


**Figure 6.24: Based on evidence I have been aware of illegal activities by fellow colleagues**

Based on the statistics presented in Figure 6.24, most respondents from the two selected public sector institutions strongly disagreed (73.33%) that they have been aware of illegal activities undertaken by colleagues. 26.33% agreed with the statement. This is a sign that, regardless of the mechanisms in place to fight illegal activities in the South African public sector, unethical behaviour persists. This is a serious concern that requires the attention and intervention of the senior executive management public officials of the two selected public sector institutions.

### 6.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

The researcher conducted five semi-structured interviews with senior executive management officials from the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the chosen provincial department in the Western Cape. The interview questions were designed to align with the objectives of the study, which were as follows:

- to determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector;
- to identify the obstacles that prevent good governance in the public sector of South Africa; and
- to develop a comprehensive framework that promotes good governance in South Africa's public sector, for consideration by the selected public sector institutions as well as public offices with both direct and indirect roles in institutionalising good governance in the country.

As previously stated, content analysis was used to analyse the data, in order to identify and discuss the primary themes that emerged from the responses of the participants, this section analyses the qualitative data that was collected.

### 6.3.2.1 The primary themes
**Theme 1: The importance of ethical leadership in promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

This theme emanated from the following question:

How does ethical leadership contribute to good governance in South Africa's public sector?

**Responses**

**Participant A:** *An important affiliation between ethical leadership behaviour and the ethical conduct of employees at the metropolitan municipality exists, because leaders must be an example to employees in lower hierarchy. It is unacceptable for senior management officials to disobey the legislative frameworks in place but expect the lower-level employees to follow*

*a different set of rules and guidelines. Ethical leadership is all about setting the tone on top and leading by example in order for employees to reciprocate the actions of the senior management public officials and if that does not happen repercussions must follow.*

*To highlight the importance of ethical leadership in promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector, Line managers and Directors must have ethical leadership as a regular item on the meeting agenda. For ethical leadership to become second nature to the daily task of the public institution's daily tasks, employees must be trained, communicated to and reminded of the rules and policies in place. Success stories, such as whistle-blowing cases and employees that go the extra mile for ethical aspects must be celebrated often and published in the public institution's magazine. The values of the particular institution must also be instilled in the employees to remain on track. The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa was the first to implement the Ethics code in the municipality. The institution got input from the Ethics Institute of SA before getting the code through Council and Executive Management, which is a great step in the direction of reminding employees about key values.*

**Participant B:** *Because the tone at the top filters down, there exists a proportional and direct connection between ethical leadership behaviour and the ethical behaviour of employees at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa. The leadership express themselves quite strongly in the working environment space and it does filter down into the rest of the organisation. The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa currently has put a different strategy in motion by starting to promote good governance and linking it to ethical leadership culture have a solid Executive Management Team (EMT). In 2017, only the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa has done to the best of their ability, adopted the King IV report and the code of good governance in SA. Principle 1 and 2 speaks about ethical leadership and setting the tone at the executive level.*

**Participant C:** *Ethical leadership is a cornerstone of the administration of the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and all MAYCO Members commit themselves to following the most stringent good governance principles in the offices of Corporate Services. One of the five strategic pillars for the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa is to be a well-run city that concentrates on good governance to guarantee that the metropolitan municipality continues to be a corruption-free, efficient and well governed administration that is approachable to the requirements of its residents. As a leader my continuous dedication to ethical leadership and good governance is to enhance the ethical maturity of the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa, which imitates not only a commitment to its values as outlined in this Ethics Code but also an ongoing attempt to establish and maintain the ethical culture in the metropolitan municipality. To accomplish this, it is pertinent to incorporate ethical*

*decision-making into the daily operations of every employee, based on the metropolitan municipality organisational values. The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa remains an example in the establishment and institutionalisation of ethics in local government and has developed its own ethics function under Risk, Ethics and Governance, which is instructed with the significant role of driving the process of safeguarding, nurturing and supporting the ethical culture of the metropolitan municipality. Public accountability, objectivity and integrity should never be affected or compromised by personal interests while fulfilling the official duties of the metropolitan municipality in South Africa. Each employee must dedicate to enhancing the ethical benchmark by 'doing the right thing', despite of who is watching. This should be the one consistent in everyone's behaviour of ethical conduct, thus contributing to the reputational prominence and sustainable existence of the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa.*

*Ethical leadership is vitally important. We have seen what happens when metropolitan municipalities fail their people and fail to pass audits by the Auditor-General. This means that unqualified audits, the responsible stewardship of the metropolitan municipality on behalf of its citizens is vitally important. Since 2003/2004, the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa has obtained nineteen unqualified audit reports. This follows on from the successful implementation of the new accounting guidelines to ensure fair presentation and compliance with National Treasury (NT) guidelines. The Asset Management Division drafts policies and strategies for effective asset management and ensures that the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa assets are recorded in the fixed asset register.*

*Employees are also bound by the Code of Conduct for municipal staff members, as specified in Schedule 2 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, presents the proper process required with regard to compliance with legislation and the relevant policies and processes of the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa. While the said code mainly outlines the guidelines that staff members must follow, many of our policies derive directly or indirectly from the values that the metropolitan municipality and its employees stand for. It clarifies the purpose of these fundamental principles and values, which each employee must implement in their decision-making when performing their tasks as an employee at the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa. The Code of Conduct for municipal staff members specifies that municipal employees must always, devotedly implement the constitutional policies of the municipal council, execute the duties of office thoroughly, honestly and in a manner that is transparent, behave in such a way that the essence, importance and objectives of Section 50 are upheld, act in the best interest of the municipality and in such a manner that the municipality's integrity and credibility are not jeopardised and act fairly and treat all people, including colleagues, equally without favour or prejudice.*

*While codes and policies for compliance are one aspect, continuous ethical behaviour (visible leadership) led from the top is essential to achieve widespread support for ethical values. The commitment of management to ethics programmes and projects and the acknowledgment of departmental ethics leaders will help drive the organisation's envisioned ethical conduct through decisions, behaviours and actions. Management must assist and guide subordinates with the implementation of this ethics Code, the Code of Conduct for municipal staff members, the organisational values, related policies and procedures, including professional ethos enhancements and functional roles. Management is encouraged to include relevant ethical concerns on the agendas of departmental/section meetings for open discussion.*

**Participant D:** *Ethical leadership is described as "… leadership demonstrating and promoting 'normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relations". When you boil it down, this really means that ethical leadership is defined as putting people into management and leadership positions who will promote and be an example of appropriate, ethical conduct in their actions and relationships in the workplace.*

**Participant E:** *Ethical leadership conduct and employees' behavioural conduct are critically important in South Africa's public sector. Any person who is in public service has a responsibility to guarantee that there is overall trust from the public in what the government is doing. Ethical leadership demonstrate fairness, honesty, and accessibility and refuses to compromise on its principles. Leading by example goes both ways, both internal and external stakeholders do not only want to hear of ethical leadership, but they want to see it in action and consistently. Also, ensure that any commitments that are made are followed through and trust can be built. To promote ethical leadership is to be transparent, accountable and honest when approaching co-workers on all levels in the working.*

**Interpretation**

The question was posed to determine the importance of ethical leadership in the South African public sector. The researcher focused on two selected South African public sector institutions well known for clean audit outcomes and promoting good governance. With reference to the previous verbatim responses, the senior executive management public officials concur that there is a significant relationship between ethical leadership behaviour and the ethical behaviour of employees in the public sector of South Africa. To eliminate limited ethical leadership in the public sector, ethical leadership must be modelled by leaders of the public sector institutions so that subordinate employees can reciprocate the behaviour. Ethical leadership is viewed as the cornerstone for promoting good governance by using public resources appropriately and delivering quality services to the residents of South Africa. It is essential that ethical leadership begins at the top of public sector institutions and filter down

to every single employee. This calls for oversight and a regular commitment to serve employees and citizens at large.

**Theme 2: The importance of accountability in promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

This theme emanated from the following question:
What influence does accountability have on promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector?

**Responses**

**Participant A:** *With reference to accountability, regarding governance structures that are implemented, each directorate must have a Portfolio Committee that holds the Director accountable. The key performance indicators must be made measurable and those in charge must be held accountable by the same key performance indicators. In addition, some of these ethical good governance requirements must be made part of the directorate personal score cards.*

**Participant B:** *Accountability leads to bringing public officials to account for how the individual have conducted as a person responsible for providing services to the society with the resources availed to them. Due to legislation, there is many oversights and all structures withing the public institution aligned. The selected metropolitan municipality, have Mayoral Committee Members, Portfolio Committees, Audit Committee and all these Committees in and out of itself is independent holding the Administration to account. Within Administration there is an EMT, MAYCO meetings and other forums where a person is held to account for how an individual express themselves. Over and above that, at Chief level, the public institution also has a Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP), where the Chief Director must in terms of funds granted to the department at the beginning of the financial period indicate how the pre-limit objectives are met. Those are all in terms of accountability and obviously when there are issues that speaks to unethical conduct, fraudulent corruption activities the Forensic department look at such issues to build on accountability.*

**Participant C:** *Accountability is of the utmost importance, without good governance that is applied fairly and understood by everyone in the organisation, public officials would fail in their commitments and promises that are made to the people who are the constituents. Poor governance is not an abstract principle, it impacts on service delivery, safety and being a transparent and accountable organisation. Without this, the entire South African public sector fails. The Constitutional rule of Law and acts that govern accountability, along with the importance of the Auditor-General and clean audits, need to be adhered to and monitored.*

**Participant D:** *Accountability implies to the willingness to accept responsibility for the office an individual holds. Every action or decision taken in the department, every payment made and every report submitted is taken seriously and its importance in the greater context of the province is respected. When public sector institutions are deemed accountable, they eradicated corruption and fraud. The South African public officials are being kept honest in carrying out their duties in the best interest of the public while ensuring that no laws are transgressed in the process. Accountability facilitates a feedback mechanism between Government and its citizens. Accountability to the citizens is most critical in order to ensure sustenance of public trust and confidence in the existing democratic systems.*

*On Provincial level the SCOPA is the official body that holds public officials accountable. The Annual Report is interrogated and Management Reports scrutinized to ensure the department is transparent. There are also other mechanisms to ensure accountability takes place such as, improving transparency around the feasibility of major projects, stronger oversight, accurate reporting (Annual Report), engagements with communities, partnerships with various community-based organisations and media report.*

**Participant E:** *It is important to highlight the impact of excellent service delivery when officials take responsibility. Governments across the world must make a norm to boast about the good work done by public officials, even when it is not a topic that gets always covered by the media. Accountability goes a long way where public officials must be able to stand up and take responsibility for and must be able to show appreciation and celebrate public officials who are accountable and who are working to serve the residents of the province.*

**Interpretation**

The question aimed to determine the role of accountability in promoting good governance within the South African public sector. The responses revealed that holding public officials accountable for the misuse of public resources is essential for fostering good governance. Various systems and forums exist to hold the administration and politicians accountable, but this is not effectively practised. In conclusion, the responses highlight the need for robust mechanisms to ensure accountability at all levels of the public sector hierarchy. In other words, both public officials and politicians must be held responsible for their actions at all times.

**Theme 3: The importance of transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector**

This theme emanated from the following question:
How does transparency contribute to good governance in the South African public sector?

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**Responses**

**Participant A:** *In the South African government institutions communication must regularly take place, such as a reminder of key policies requirements and a reminder of values, for example an initiative implementation of a yearly code of conduct. Transparency is all about reminding and having that mechanism where employees can also ask when they are in doubt.*

**Participant B:** *Transparency is the indicative of openness and willingness to engage with stakeholders to be placed under scrutiny and be asked difficult questions in a difficult context in a different conversation. The importance of transparency is when public officials are transparent it builds public confidence, it shows that government is not hiding anything and when questions are asked, it will be answered to the best the ability. The only provision is within legislation context, in instances of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000 (PAJA) and the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) an official does not just make information available, but that does not mean the official is hiding behind legislation. The public institution is still transparent in what they do. There are various Council sessions, which allow the attendance of the public. It speaks to the ability of public members to engage with Politicians in a government space.*

*To add on, with reference to transparency in promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector, there is an annual publication of an annual integrated governance report and that document speaks to the efforts that was put in to address issues relating to good governance within the public institution. From a transparent perspective the institution needs to be open to individuals who wants to engage with the particular document, this is the findings that were made and this is how management is responding to it, the document necessarily goes out with Annual Integrated Report.*

**Participant C:** *Transparency is vitally important and, therefore, it needs to be communicated to all the public officials. The South African public sector institutions have all the necessary tools in the Constitution and in the ethical guidelines for employees in the selected metropolitan municipality of South Africa. The institution also has guidelines for ethical commitments for employees. That said, it is necessary for organisations to constantly keep top of mind that especially in public service bodies and metropolitans and elected bodies the eye cannot be taken off the ball on making sure that we prioritise the focus on transparency, ethics and behave beyond reproach in everything we do.*

**Participant D:** *Transparency is a process when the departmental processes can be scrutinised and its processes analysed against prescripts and legislation. The importance of this is that the public can be confident that the department does everything in its power to execute its mandate efficiently and effectively. Transparency means that everything the*

*selected department do is open. The selected provincial department in the Western Cape publish our Annual Report on a public portal for the public to view, it is important for the public.*

**Participant E:** *It is crucial to understand that public officials are citizens too and the same measure they require from the entity that service them, the same must be given to those they service. We must collectively promote transparency, but it is each public official's responsibility to understand the moral importance of transparency in promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector.*

## Interpretation

The question was posed to the senior executive management public officials to determine the importance of transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. The respondents concurred that South African public sector institutions must be open and honest regarding the processes and procedures of governance in public administration. The citizens of SA must be well-informed regarding the public resources entrusted to the public institution. Information about the services available or delivered must be available and accessible in every South African language and reach the public to make sure they are well-informed. In other words, with regards to transparency and openness, public sector institutions must comply with the Batho Pele Principles.

## Theme 4: The significance of good governance and institutional performance

This theme emanated from the following question:
In what way is increased institutional performance linked to good governance?

## Responses
**Participant A:** *There is a Forensic department at the selected metropolitan municipality in SA and the mandate is to deal with an anti-corruption strategy, whistle-blowing policy, fraud prevention policy and fraud prevention plan that speaks to corruption, collusion, and forensic fraud type elements. Policies are updated based on changing legislation, Integrated Development Plan (IDP) five-year plan and gaps. Contribution towards good governance in South Africa's public sector is about the functioning of the various departments in terms of mandate, reporting, transparency and legislative correctness. Particularly, the SCM department and the work they do in terms of financial statements, by checking and ensuring legislatively that there are no public officials on any documents, directorships and companies that do work with the particular public institution. The Internal Audit department of each public institution must do risk-based audits and scan in on business processes, financial statements and consistent interactions with the AG. The Internal Audit department must also assist when it comes to the management audit finding report and based on risk, they might decide to put*

*something on their audit plan. The public institution must set-out a full-circle of communication and draw up a risk-based audit plan.*

*In order to monitor and evaluate the progress of good governance in the South African public sector, the public sector institutions must have a pillar as part of IDP, making some of these measurable, deliverable, or key performance outcomes. There must be a fully functional Audit Committee in place of external independent business professionals that report on the various governance aspects in the public sector institutions on a quarterly and annual basis. In addition, the Audit Committee must zone in on labour relations, the performance of all the directors, financial statements, and AG reports and question anything that is identified as a red flag.*

**Participant B:** *In accordance with the Constitution, local government is set up as a separate sphere of government and the Council it is deemed to be an Executive Authority on its own. Within the broader WC context local government and with a broader SA local government context, the organisation is at various aspects, and at a various point and times, hailed to be the leading metropolitan municipality and in that, the institution has many other municipalities that do a little bit of fact-finding and walk through the process to see how the selected metropolitan municipality do things, so that they can go back and do things/carry out tasks in a similar way. In the aforementioned manner that is how the selected metropolitan municipality in SA achieve their audit outcomes and good governance by improving the system of control. When good governance is in place, it translates to more optimal use of resources becoming more effective and efficient in how obligations is discharge. By default, that leads to service delivery and improved service delivery as good governance becomes better, the services provided to the public improve. Good governance has an impact on service delivery by doing things better and proving services to the public.*

**Participant C:** *The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa contributes towards good governance by complying fully with the Auditor-General and own compliance metrics fully and timeously and making sure that all employees and officials are au fait with them as an example all staff have access to guidelines such as the following:*

- *Protects whistle-blowers against harassment and victimisation.*

- *Members of the public and service providers are encouraged to raise concerns regarding the selected metropolitan municipality's activities so that it can be investigated and appropriate action can be taken. Reporting through the fraud hotline can be done anonymously.*

*The selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa will not tolerate any level of unethical behaviour. This does not only include corruption, theft, fraud and maladministration (as defined in the Fraud Prevention Policy) but any other conduct that contravenes our standards of ethical conduct and values, such as sexual harassment, the unauthorised disclosure of private or privileged information, not declaring conflicts of interest, the abuse of Council property and the unfair treatment of and disrespect towards colleagues, stakeholders and the public. In line with legislative requirements, the metropolitan municipality has formed governance committees such as APAC, the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) and the Risk Committee (RiskCo), all of which are mandated with oversight functions relating to and ensuring good governance practices.*

**Participant D:** *In Finance, the Finance Management Committee, will focus on governance of public funds via various programmes and sub-programmes. This will report on the expenditure in terms of the allocated resources via equitable share funding, priority funding, ear-marked funding and conditional grants. In SCM we find, departmental bid committees, quotation committees, who ensure that all prescripts are followed for responsible spending of public funds during procurement of goods and services. In People Management or Human Resources, monitoring instruments have been developed and implemented to ensure that the recruitment, appointment and payment of staff is done timeously and according to legislation. In Information Management, governance structures, monitor the acquisition, installation and maintenance of IT equipment in line with National and Provincial legislation and standards.*

*The Department must ensure that the Financial Statements are not subject to substantial misrepresentation. There are no major findings on non-compliance with key legislation or on the annual performance report. The selected provincial department in the Western Cape have an Internal Control Unit within the Directorate Finance who is responsible for conducting a Post Audit function on all payments processed on the Basic Accounting System (BAS), Logis system. They conduct a 100% check to make sure that all processes followed is in accordance with National and Provincial prescript. The unit also performs a high-level review on the Interim Financial Statements as well as the Annual Financial Statements and to ensure the statements are free from any material findings and in line with the Modified Cash Standards. There is a Monitoring and Evaluation unit within the Directorate Strategic Services and Communication who performs a 100% check on the BOE submitted by the various directorates relating to their indicators, to ensure that the evidence provided is in line with the technical description of the indicator.*

**Participant E:** *The selected provincial department in the Western Cape are fully aware that the department's responsibility is to govern in a manner that benefits the residents of the province. Every aspect of the entire Western Cape Government, which includes all programmes, methods, functions, funds and resources are geared towards assisting the neediest in the province. Systems are produced and put in place that not only seeks to achieve the objectives but to also safeguard processes. Both the internal and external controls of the department are non-compromising, as it has mechanisms in place to highlight any form of mismanagement, corruption and maladministration. When the aforementioned occurs and it is not a technical error, the public will suffer and the department refuse to have the residents suffer.*

**Interpretation**

Good governance is about formulating and implementing policies and making sure public officials understand them and abide by them. Public institutions in South Africa must comply with all Acts and legislation and must be constantly open to improving an already good system in order to promote good governance in the public sector. In terms of promoting good governance, public sector institutions must set good policies as well as communicate these efficiently and effectively to make sure all public officials are on board. Across all the spheres of government, the public sector institutions must be committed to keeping governance clean, transparent and in compliance with legal requirements. When good governance is in place, it translates to more optimal use of resources, becoming more effective and efficient in how obligations are discharged and quality services delivered to citizens.

**Theme 5: The challenges hindering the promotion of good governance in the South African public sector**

This theme emanated from the following question:
What are the obstacles faced by South African public officials in promoting good governance in its public sector?

**Responses**
**Participant A:** *The limited resources are a big hinderance when it comes to the promotion of good governance at the selected metropolitan municipality of South Africa.*

**Participant B:** *From a practical aspect, the organisation looks at undue influence because that would be a hinderance. There is an Annual Statement of Independence, that is submitted to the Portfolio Committee (PC) to tell if there was any actual or intended undue influence. The issues regarding effectiveness can also be regarded as a hindrance, hence the selected*

*metropolitan municipality needs to be more innovative to stay tuned with changes in technology.*

**Participant C:** *At the moment none that I am aware of, that does not mean that there are no areas where improvements could be made and as senior management public officials it is our duty to keep an eye on this potential risk. In isolated cases it will be non-adherence to the policies and guidelines. Not all political party disciplinary measures are the same, for example, Councillors need to be disciplined on the party level before it gets to a bigger issue at the metropolitan municipality level. The governance of running municipalities has two spheres of accountability, which is political and public official. Hence, a set of rules applies on both and the stronger the oversight of the party elected, the fewer problems will arise.*

**Participant D:** *The limited resources and capacity hampers the promotion of good governance. Owing to budget cuts and rising costs, the number of personnel and the acquisition of new up-to-date resources will always be a challenge. Keeping up with the latest technology in a competitive environment and constant threats across networks and the internet make good governance difficult.*

**Participant E:** *As the selected provincial department, we are currently seeking ways to establish offices across our regions to improve our footprints in the province. The communities' access to public officials across the province is currently limited, hence we want to eradicate this obstacle.*

**Interpretation**

This question was designed to identify the challenges that serve as hindrances to the promotion of good governance in the South African public sector. Limited public resources, insufficient staff members and a limited accountability mechanisms came forward as hindrances to the promotion of good governance. The respondents revealed different obstacles, however. One that was mentioned more than once was the limited resources, restricting public sector institutions from carrying out their tasks in a dignified manner.

The following section connects the findings of the study with the research objectives set, as per Chapter 1.

**6.4 Linking the findings with the research objectives**

Findings resulting from the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are presented below.

- **To determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector**

This objective is achieved through the discussions in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 as well as the findings of the study, demonstrating the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance. From the responses analysed in this chapter, the study found that the senior management public officials agreed that ethical leadership, as a crucial aspect in the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa as well as the selected provincial department in the Western Cape, can strategically create and sustain an effective and successful organisation. Another significant finding that emerged from the study is that ethical leadership refers to the behaviour of the individual in power because, in order for a senior management public official to be deemed an ethical leader, one must look at the official's conduct, that is, how the person behaves in both favourable and difficult situations. In addition, the importance of ethical leadership in creating an ethical environment and promoting good governance has been acknowledged.

The study found that most of the senior management public officials share the sentiment that good governance refers to the willingness of political parties to succeed. Hence, accountability should apply to both political officials and public officials because with stronger oversight by the party elected, fewer problems will arise. Figure 6.10 shows that most of the participants agree that the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa as well as the selected provincial department in the Western Cape are holding public officials accountable when ethical boundaries are violated. However, the study demonstrates that 6.67% of the respondents agree with the statement made by Gumede (2021) that the Zondo Commission's investigation exposed a persistent lack of accountability by public representatives in South Africa. This assertion is further supported by the study's findings that the implementation of accountability mechanisms is also still a matter of concern in the public sector of South Africa.

Transparency is a fundamental principle of public administration, a principle that intends to establish a democratic rule of law. According to the statistics in this study, the researcher can see that most of the respondents are aware that all three spheres of government must be transparent concerning how they spend public money. However, the minority of the senior management public officials stated in the study that not all the public sector institutions are open and transparent about their financial affairs. Batho Pele Principles are specifically aimed at transforming the service delivery of all public services through improved efficiency and

effectiveness. The study points out that it is pivotal for the public sector institutions to comply with the Batho Pele Principles because, as delineated in the document, the Public Service of South Africa will be evaluated on their effectiveness in meeting the basic requirements of all of its residents. The Auditor-General's performance audits are essential, particularly in measuring value for money. SCOPA audits the reports submitted by the Auditor-General and determines whether the Executive preserved the value for money principle. The study showed that the public sector must implement the recommendations made by the Auditor-General because there is a relationship between the performance of the organisation and good governance.

Good governance is about formulating and implementing policies and making sure public officials understand them. However, according to Figure 6.23, 20% of the senior management officials disagreed that the legislative frameworks are effectively communicated across the selected public sector institutions. With all mechanisms that aid in preventing any form of corruption in the public sector of South Africa, the enforcement of these legislative frameworks has been unsuccessful as corruption persists. Moreover, a minority (of senior management public officials) revealed that employees are not protected when they blow the whistle on illegal activities and unethical behaviour. In summary, good governance starts with the political commitment to govern wisely and the effectiveness of the political party in control influences whether good governance exists or not.

- **To determine the relationship between public administration, governance and good governance in the public sector**

Chapter 4 discussed the key developmental role played by public administration in South Africa. The discipline of public administration examines how government policies and programmes are structured as well as how public officials conduct themselves in the working environment. The study found that public administration is deeply situated in the formation of public policy and its management, structure and policy interventions through the re-shaping of the public service to deliver effective and efficient services to the public. Public administration both impacts and is impacted by the everyday life of the public it serves. Public administration and its officials serve as the guardians and executors of a democratic political system that is closely connected to individuals who serve as the political system's watchdogs. The success of public administration can be developed and strengthened through good governance. Moreover, public administration guarantees that government processes are properly organised and comply with the legal framework to attain and maintain good governance. From a South African point of view, public administration is the management of public resources and the coordination of prevailing policies set by society through its self-government systems.

- **To identify the obstacles that prevent good governance in South Africa's public sector**

Chapter 4 demonstrates that corruption, bribery, kickbacks and poor financial management contribute to poor governance. After 30 years of democracy, corruption has surfaced as a key impediment to South Africa's growth as several cases of corruption have been reported and dealt with in the Zondo Commission Inquiry. The Zondo Commission of Inquiry revealed how businessmen and politicians worked together to influence the country's decision-making process to further their own interests. According to the findings of the study, scandals such as limited accountability, mismanagement and corruption in the public sector, demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the current control mechanisms. Given the lack of effective control measures, it is easy for public officials to embezzle public funds, which has a negative influence on the provision of services in South Africa's public sector. In addition, the study has discovered that poor governance in the South African public sector can be linked to a number of things, such as conflict at the political-administrative interface, unethical leadership, limited skills, a limited focus on the government's role in developing the skills it needs, loopholes in organisational structure and underqualified public officials who lack competence. The study's findings demonstrate that good governance in the South African public sector, cannot coexist with poor financial management, incompetence of public officials, unethical practice, fraud, corruption or bribery. The literature studied, together with this chapter, has also identified clear loopholes in terms of the enactment of existing laws. Such failures have manifested as state capture, poor financial management, bribery, fraud and corruption, which seem to be among the severe challenges facing the South African public sector. In summary, the study proved that the challenges addressed are contradictory to good governance in South Africa's public sector.

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter presented an analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The findings of the study addressed the primary research objective, determining the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector, as well as the obstacles encountered by public officials in promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector.

The study developed a framework for promoting good governance in the South African public sector, which is put forward in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 7: PROPOSED FRAMEWORK TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

## 7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 presented the findings derived from the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, highlighting connections with the previous chapters. The study's final objective is to propose a framework that promotes good governance in the South African public sector, based on the analysis of the collected data. The results of this study are not meant to be generalised. However, other metropolitan and provincial administrations share a similar context, which means the findings my be useful. The proposed framework, aimed at promoting good governance in the South African public sector, is based on the principles of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency, and is illustrated in Figure 7.1.

## 7.2 Definition of a framework

According to Partelow (2023:512), a framework is a specific kind of conceptual model that offers a more organised and thorough picture of a subject and is normally based on already-established theories, facts or principles. It can help with the planning and assessment of actions, policies or programmes as well as with organising, explaining or anticipating occurrences. A framework lists the variables that are thought to affect a result. It gives a comprehensive overview of several descriptive categories and possible connections between them (Crockett, 2017). Frameworks are defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2020) as "…a supporting structure around which something can be built; a system of rules, ideas, or beliefs that is used to plan or decide something".

## 7.3 The proposed framework to promote good governance in the South African public sector

Good governance has been acknowledged as an important instrument for achieving sustainable development and an element that must be included in sustainable development objectives. Figure 7.1 demonstrates how ethical leadership, accountability and transparency correlate with each other to promote good governance in the South African public sector. The importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in the South African public sector is illustrated and discussed by the proposed framework below. The proposed framework recommends that senior management public officials should be committed to prioritising ethical leadership, accountability and transparency because these fundamental elements form the foundation of good governance. Furthermore, the proposed framework demonstrates that good governance can function optimally in the South African public sector if senior management public officials and all public sector employees implement ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in their daily activities.
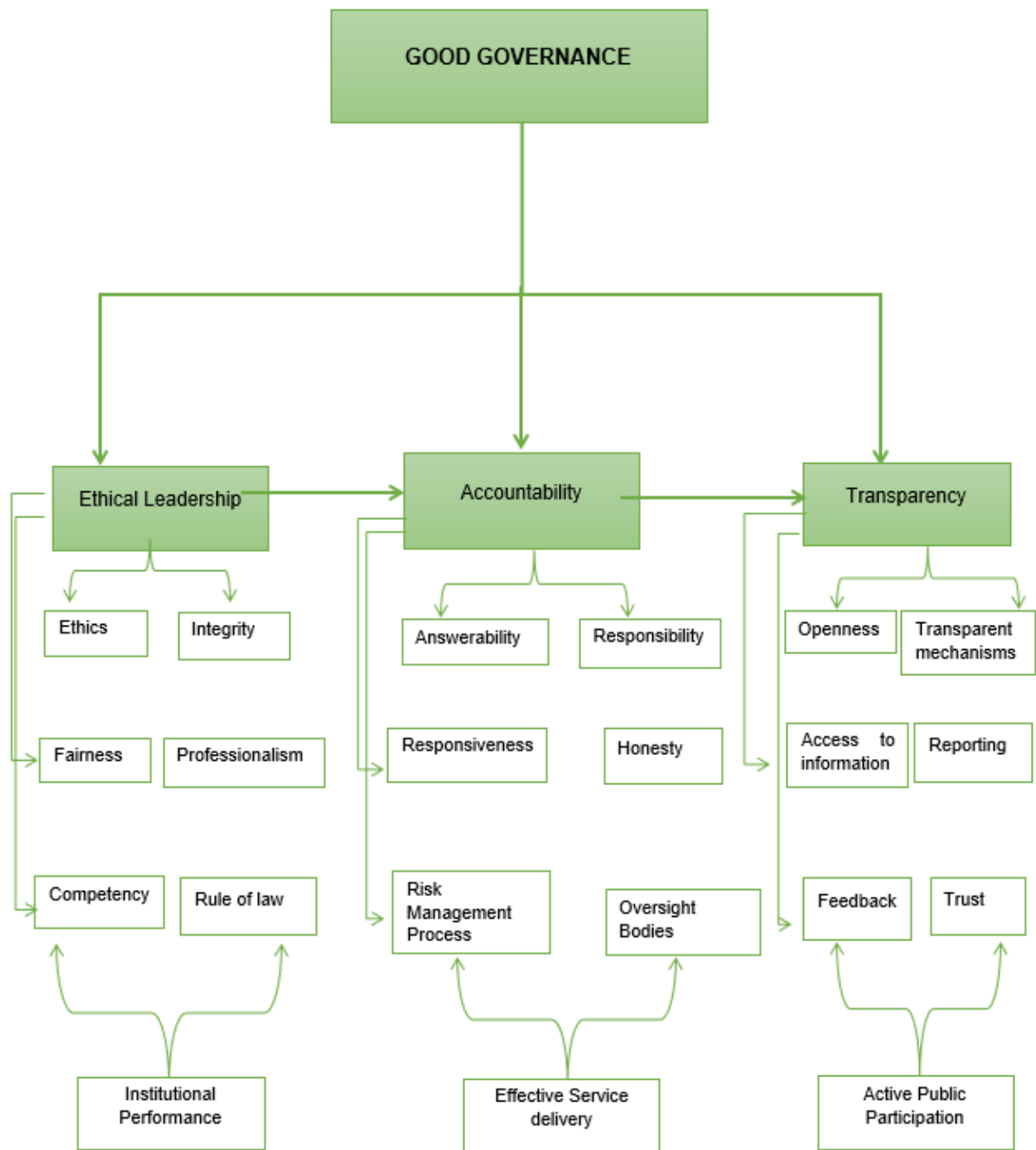
**Figure 7.1: The proposed framework to promote good governance in the South African public sector**

This study proposes that a requirement for good governance, namely ethical leadership must be demonstrated by senior public management officials. The function of ethical leadership is critical in creating an optimal atmosphere which, in turn, fosters outstanding performance. The research study proved that the affiliation between ethical leadership and institutional performance is indisputable. Ethical leadership encompasses ethics, integrity, honesty, fairness, professionalism, competence and adherence to the rule of law. Moreover, it entails anticipating and mitigating the negative implications of the institutions' operations and

outcomes on the environment, economy and society as well as the resources that it uses and influences. As illustrated by the research study, ethics implies ethical values that guide public officials' behaviour, emphasising that every government employee and politician should behave in a manner that is morally acceptable. It is crucial for public officials to always operate ethically because they serve as examples to South African citizens. Furthermore, ethics is concerned with the application of individual principles, beliefs and attitudes that strengthen all personal, social and political relationships. The key factor determining ethical behaviour in the South African public sector is senior management public officials in all spheres of government. The ethical behaviour of the leader defines the type of environment in which subordinates must operate. A workplace with a low ethical culture will be steered by unethical behaviour because of several factors like negligence from senior management public officials, the exploitation of power and other issues that define unethical leadership. Ethics plays a critical role in the South African public sector by providing officials with a code of conduct that allows them to execute their duties in a manner that is open and transparent. Furthermore, ethics is vital in driving service delivery because it promotes accountability and trust, both of which are required for good governance. Ethics is a key value that can reveal the public sector's effectiveness, accountability, efficiency and integrity in providing services to citizens. Good governance is profoundly anchored in ethics and must be measured against specified standards and objectives.

Both political and administrative officials in the South African public sector should uphold the values of democracy, as outlined in the Constitution, and always behave in a manner that displays integrity in order to promote good governance. Integrity is a prerequisite for ethical leadership. The integrity of public officials should generate trust from citizens. Therefore, to serve in the public interest, public officials must perform their responsibilities in a manner that is honest, fair and moral. Honesty is a prerequisite for ethical leadership because it builds trust, facilitates feedback and promotes accountability. Thus, the study recommends that senior management public officials must be honest, fair and accountable as well as hold subordinates accountable for their own actions and behaviour because this can lead to the establishment of a culture of responsibility where everyone takes ownership of their duties and performs well to accomplish organisational objectives. The proposed framework also urges public officials to demonstrate professionalism in obtaining, evaluating and communicating information regarding activities or procedures under investigation.

The study also found that the South African public sector is challenged by incompetent employees. It is, therefore, recommended in the proposed framework for the public sector to only employ individuals with the required experience and verified qualifications. This is in line with statement by Hendrickse (2023:364) that "…the South African National Framework

towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service, moots the belief that professionalising public administration is one of the key requirements for building state capacity". Public officials should continuously be equipped with professional skills to improve their performance as well as to maintain and strengthen productivity in public sector institutions to improve the impact they have on the people they serve. The proposed framework further indicates that, to effectively and efficiently perform the duties placed under the South African public sector jurisdiction, government institutions should have enough resources, be proficient and have effective mechanisms. The term 'rule of law' describes the presence of policies, regulations and laws that are applied to organisations and society in a manner that is equitable, fair, consistent and orderly. It is a principle that states that the law generally develops a framework to which every act and behaviour must adhere and all members of society are governed by the same framework. The rule of law is a key aspect that contributes towards promoting good governance as it entails applying constitutional and legislative requirements resulting in a working and living environment that is stable and secure for planning and decision-making. Hence, it is crucial that all public officials to comply with all the required statutory frameworks, policies and regulations. Public officials who deviate from adhering to the mechanisms in place must be held accountable according to the procedures in place. Moreover, accountability, according to anti-corruption organisations, play a key and unwavering role in combating corruption, misuse of public funds and other unethical behaviour. The proposed framework further recommends that public sector institutions adopt and incorporate the King IV code into their policies as it provides organisations with the required building blocks for a solid foundation of good governance.

The aptitude of all public officials to appropriately explain and justify their actions is referred to as accountability. Likewise, from the perspective of the research study, accountability can be defined as the responsibility of all the South African public officials to take proper care of public assets at their disposal as well as all finances and the interests of their stakeholders. The primary rationale for adopting the principle of accountability in the South African public sector is that the purpose of all mechanisms must be to identify and manage the underlying risks that each public sector institution faces. This is significant because the consequences faced by the public sector can have an impact on all its stakeholders, including its political leadership, management, general staff and, most importantly, the public it serves. Accountability is necessary for the establishment of organisational purpose as well as effective and efficient delivery of services. Hence, it is required of public officials to be responsible and accountable as well as to display the value of responsiveness in their daily tasks to meet society's needs with dignity and respect. To attain good governance, the risk management process developed inside the public sector institutions must be understood and supported by all, particularly in

terms of its objectives and advantages. To restore and preserve public trust in the South African public sector, the study recommends that the oversight bodies must function independently from others to maintain professional grounds.

Public sector institutions are also encouraged to disclose financial, social and environmental performance to obtain the trust of South African citizens. Transparent processes for the elimination of corrupt senior management public officials, incompetent and underqualified public officials, inadequate human resource management and poorly managed internal controls are critical for good governance. Promoting transparency is of paramount importance in the South African public sector and, therefore, it should be put into practice in compliance with the stipulations of the Constitution. The South African government should allow its citizens to access and obtain an honest view of the processes and decisions of the public sector. To promote oversight, the study recommends that the government should encourage active public participation in the processes of policy-making, decision-making and development planning. Hence, as stipulated in the Constitution, the public sector institutions should strengthen and promote public participation, as required by the Constitution.

Owing to limited transparency by South African leaders, citizens feel they can no longer place their confidence in them. There is neither any trust in public sector institutions nor confidence in the levels of government. Activities of corruption and unethical behaviour also weaken trust in the government institutions of South Africa. Relationships between public managers and between departments within public sector institutions are strengthened through trust, which can then improve public officials' performance. Moreover, trust shows the presence of ethics, which serves as the bond that connects senior management and public officials to improve the standard of services provided to society. Ethics, through trust, creates a working environment that is supportive and positive for various forms of leadership within an organisation. This statement implies that, without a doubt, there is an affiliation between ethical behaviour and good governance in the two selected public sector institutions, which is important for institutional performance and overall service delivery. Furthermore, the proposed framework recommends that South African public sector institutions should frequently engage with communities and encourage them to provide feedback on the services delivered as it will assist with identifying and reporting on service delivery areas that need attention and improvement. In summary, the study emphasises that the purpose of creating a culture of reciprocal participation will establish trust between society and the ruling government.

## 7.4 Summary

The proposed framework for promoting good governance in the South African public sector was presented. The proposed framework demonstrates the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector and how these variables influence each other in attaining good governance. The next chapter concludes the study.

# CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 8.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this study was to determine the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. The proposed framework, in lieu of the foregoing, was presented in the previous chapter. This chapter concludes the study by providing a summary of each chapter as well as forwarding recommendations for consideration by the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape. South African public sector organisations, plagued by poor governance, have much to gain from this study.

## 8.2 Chapter summaries

### Chapter 1

This chapter introduced the study and provided background information on the research problem. The research questions were recorded and the research objectives were explained. Literature on promoting good governance in the South African public sector was reviewed and the significance of the study was explained. The research methodology and data collection methods employed in the study were presented. The chapter concluded with an outline of the study.

### Chapter 2

Chapter 2 explored the conceptual framework of good governance in the South African public sector. It served as a mind map for the study and gave the readers an idea of what to expect in the ensuing chapters. Furthermore, to provide a comprehensive understanding, this chapter provided a thorough understanding of good governance. The main theories that form the foundation of the research were delineated and the concept 'governance', theories of governance, fundamental principles of governance and elements of governance within the framework of South Africa were addressed. This chapter has also provided an understanding of governance and leadership in the South African public sector by discussing dimensions and elements of good governance.

### Chapter 3

Chapter 3 consisted of two sections. The legislative frameworks to promote good governance in the South African public sector were discussed in the first section. The second section covered the independent institutions that combat unethical activities and monitor good governance in the South African public sector.

**Chapter 4**

This chapter described the history of South Africa, the functions and powers of the South African public sector and discussed, in detail, three elements to promote good governance in the South African public sector, namely ethical leadership, accountability and transparency. These elements were examined through an extensive study of different sources of data including the internet, newspapers, reports, research results and relevant literature. Literature based on the relationships between public administration, governance and good governance were revised in this chapter. Different occurrences in the historical development of the discipline and the practice of public administration were discussed. The development of administrative theories and schools of administrative theories were also discussed to provide a more comprehensive view of the different methodologies that influence public administration. This chapter identified and discussed the obstacles that prevent good governance in South Africa's public sector. Characteristics and practices of poor governance as well as causes of unethical conduct were also identified and discussed in this chapter. A conceptual overview of corruption in the South African context was discussed in depth, by looking at corruption in the different administrations before and after apartheid. In summary, challenges in addressing corruption in the South African public sector were also discussed.

**Chapter 5**

This chapter described the terms 'research' and 'research design'. The researcher also discussed, thoroughly, the appropriate research methodology employed in the research study. The chapter outlined the data collection tools used to collect data (needed to attain the research objectives), discussed the sampling method as well as the research participants. Validity and reliability in quantitative research as well as objectivity, trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research were addressed. The data analysis methods employed in the study and ethical considerations were also explained.

**Chapter 6**

The research data were examined in Chapter 6. Thereafter, the data were analysed and presented. The structured questionnaire was analysed using SPSS. Each section was presented in the form of a graph and interpreted to replicate the views of the participants, whereas the semi-structured interviews' data were analysed through content analysis. In accordance with the research objectives of the study, the findings that resulted from the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were also presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 7**

The proposed comprehensive framework to promote good governance in the South African public sector was presented based on the findings and analysis of the data collected in the research study. The chapter demonstrated and highlighted the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency to promote good governance in South Africa's public sector.

**Chapter 8**

This chapter concludes the study. It forwards recommendations for consideration by the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa, the selected provincial department in the Western Cape and for consideration by South African public sector institutions at large.

**8.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings listed above, the proposed recommendations are:

**Recommendation 1**

The findings revealed that senior management public officials agree on the importance of ethical leadership in the public sector to purposefully create and preserve an organisation that is effective and successful. The study, thus, recommends that the public officials in senior management positions should display ethical leadership skills from the top of the institutions' hierarchies by using public resources appropriately and by providing South African residents with high-quality services. This should be incorporated into the Key Performance Areas (KPAs) as an instrument of assessing, monitoring and managing the performance of the senior management public officials. In addition, requirements of ethical good governance should become part of the directorate's personal score cards.  It is also recommended that each senior management public official at the selected public sector institutions, take collective ownership of the resources assigned and they should be held equally liable for those resources. In instances where senior management public officials fail to execute their assigned duties and lack the required performance standards, they should be replaced by more competent incumbents.

**Recommendation 2**

It is highlighted in the study that the existing accountability mechanisms and systems placed in South Africa's public sector are inefficient in resolving governance issues, such as misallocation of resources and limited accountability. Due to a lack of appropriate processes and mechanisms, South Africa has encountered several challenges, which have overshadowed the country's growth and positive developments over the years. Therefore, it is recommended that since the Oversight Committees are responsible for enhancing good governance and accountability of public resources, the existing accountability mechanisms

should be revised and adjusted by these Oversight Committees. These committees should also, strengthen oversight measures such as reporting, auditing and monitoring systems to ensure that public funds are spent responsibly and efficiently by the assigned senior management public officials. To guarantee financial accountability and transparency, effective and efficient oversight must be implemented by establishing an independent Portfolio Committee for each Directorate that holds the Director accountable. This is an accountability mechanism already enforced to hold the Administration to account in the selected metropolitan municipality of South Africa. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be made measurable and individuals with authority must be held accountable using the same key performance indicators. Should senior management public officials deviate from these accountability mechanisms and systems, they must be held accountable by the Portfolio committee in the particular directorate and face the repercussions as spelled out in the performance agreement for management. Furthermore, anti-corruption offices lack independence because they report to public officials who are political appointees who often playing a key role in governmental financial matters. To enhance checks and balances, these offices should report to public oversight bodies that are as free from political influence as possible. For example, a civic board with no ties to politicians could be a viable option.

**Recommendation 3**

The findings indicate that not all financial matters in the public sector institutions are transparent and open and this results in a limited professionalism and honesty. Limited transparency perpetuates suspicious corrupt behaviours, threatening to undermine good governance and hindering growth within the public sector. Citizens' confidence in the leaders and government institutions of South Africa is very low. South Africa is considered as an African country with poor governance and the citizens have lost trust in the public sector as a whole. The study recommends, therefore, that citizens' trust and confidence in the governance systems of local government be restored. It is crucial to address the identified limited transparency and internal monitoring in local government. Moreover, professionalism should be incorporated into the job descriptions of public officials to improve moral ability and enable them to provide quality services to the people. This aligns with the South African National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service that presents the philosophy that professionalising public administration is a fundamental prerequisite for establishing state capacity (Hendrickse, 2023:364). This is vital for South Africa because the performance of public officials can improve and an ethical and conducive working environment will be established. Additionally, it can also restore the trust between the government and the people. Furthermore, it is imperative that public institutions implement the Batho Pele Principles into their daily operations. This could be done by integrating the principles into the Code of Conduct

for staff members or into job descriptions of the employees with the intent of upgrading the standard and availability of the services rendered to the beneficiaries. The Batho Pele Principles can assist with eliminating corruption and fraud and encourage public institutions to be truthful and transparent concerning each aspect of the work they do with the view to providing quality services.

**Recommendation 4**

It was revealed in the findings that several forms of corruption continue to occur in South Africa's public sector because the implementation of mechanisms and legislative frameworks have been ineffective and have not been communicated effectively across the public sector institutions. The study recommends that, in each public sector institution, a specific department should each deal with anti-corruption strategies, whistle blowing policy, fraud prevention policy and fraud prevention planning (that speaks to corruption, collusion and forensic fraud elements), respectively. To monitor and evaluate the progress of good governance, public sector institutions must include, as part of its Integrated Development Plan (IDP), criteria that are measurable, deliverable or are seen as key performance outcomes. There must be an established Audit Committee that consists of external independent business professionals who report on several governance components of public sector institutions on a quarterly and annual basis. Furthermore, the Audit Committee must focus on labour relations, the performance of all directors, financial statements, AG reports and the scrutiny of all issues dealt with red flags.

**Recommendation 5**

In Chapter 4, it is revealed that a democratic political system is implemented and guarded by public administration and its officials, which is intimately linked to individuals who act as the political system's watchdogs. Thus, as the sole guardians of accountability, integrity and efficiency, the study recommends that public officials should be transparent, honest, accountable and ethical. The study also discovered that public administration is strongly rooted in the formulation of public policy and its administration, structure and policy initiatives through the reforming of the public sector to provide the people with quality services. According to the study, good governance is only good if it improves the citizens' standards of living. By being politically, socially and economically motivated, good governance is often a popular theme within the sphere of public administration. The cornerstone of good governance is the obligation of the state and ruling bodies to provide the security and welfare of their citizens. The local government's purpose and mission are underpinned and supported by good governance. It develops a long-term, sound and ethical strategy that is acceptable to the entire institution as well as external organisations and stakeholders. In summary, the study recommends that execution of the strategy should be monitored by the established Portfolio

Committees in a manner that is open and truthful with carefully planned procedures and processes.

**Recommendation 6**

The research highlights that the increase in corruption reflects a limited ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in the South African public sector. High levels of corruption, misuse of public funds, failure of government to provide citizens with efficient services, incompetency and poor public administration practices have severely hindered South Africa's ability to grow and stabilise the nation. To overcome the highlighted barriers that prevent good governance, it is recommended that the alarming issues in South Africa's public sector be monitored and assessed. Thereafter, policies should be amended accordingly. The King IV Report should be adopted and built into various programmes across the public sector in South Africa. Moreover, to avoid employing incompetent and underqualified public officials, the recruitment and selection process must be extremely stringent in terms of required experience and qualifications and a qualification check must be performed to ensure that the qualifications are valid and not fraudulent. This process should be guided by the regulatory framework that underpins the norms and standards set for recruitment and selection, which includes advertising, applications, management of applications, committees, short-listing, interviews, personnel suitability checks, recommendations and appointments.

**Recommendation 7**

The final research objective was to propose a framework for promoting good governance in South Africa's public sector. Good governance, based on ethical, accountable and transparent administration of public resources, aims to improve the quality of life for government beneficiaries. The study also recommends that low-performing government departments and municipalities can learn significantly from the selected metropolitan municipality in South Africa and the selected provincial department in the Western Cape in terms of promoting good governance. From an administrative perspective, public officials must be united concerning the vision, values and strategies of the government department or institution in which they are employed. Their actions, attitudes and performance must be continuously monitored and assessed. Another important principle of good governance is liability. Liability is a relatively new concept that significantly impacts governance. Liability strengthens ethical leadership, accountability and transparency, adding a punitive aspect necessary for enforceability in South Africa, across all levels of political and public administrative leadership. Additionally, for meaningful change, the South African public sector must embrace innovation across all levels of government. As shown in Figure 7.1, a framework has been developed to promote good governance in the South African public sector. This framework could also be useful to other metropolitan areas and provincial administrations, given their similar context.

### 8.4 Area for future research

For future research purposes, poorly governed provincial departments and municipalities can also be used to learn from and the national sphere of government can gain a broader perspective on governance-related issues. Moreover, since the focus of the study was only on three elements of good governance, the importance of the other elements such as liability can also be determined and discussed in detail. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the expansion of the study is hampered. A smaller sample size is employed since the researcher were not granted access to more participants. Future researcher can use a bigger sample size.

### 8.5 Conclusion

Good governance plays a key role in any community's growth and future success, thus the purpose of good governance in the public sector is to promote the provision of quality services and ensure that institutions always act in the best interests of the public. Yet, if the government persists in postponing the elimination of corruption across all spheres of government, there is still a lot of work to be done. From the empirical study, it transpired that the selected public sector institutions are known for consecutive clean audits and the promotion of good governance. These public sector institutions express zero tolerance for poor performance, unethical conduct and corruption. The senior management public officials and their subordinates prioritise fraud prevention and risk management and governance decisions are implemented and monitored well. Hence, they have very few corruption cases reported. The selected public sector institutions have effective administrative and political systems with strong internal audit and financial management structures in place and, thus, the functionality of the institutions is exceptional.

The primary objective of the study has been met because the study was able to determine and highlight the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. This chapter delineated the main conclusions and recommendations deriving from the empirical findings of the study. In conclusion, the study proposed a comprehensive framework to emphasise the importance of ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector. Finally, the study offers guidance to public officials, to attain and maintain effective institutional performance and to render quality services through active public participation.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: CPUT RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE



**Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

P.O. Box 1906 | Bellville 7535
Symphony Road Bellville 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 21 4603291
Email: fbmsethics@cput.ac.za

| Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee | FACULTY: BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES |
|---|---|

The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC) on **9 December 2021**, ethics **APPROVAL** was granted to **Lindi E V Sindelo (212182307)** for a research activity for **Doctor of Public Administration** at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

| Title of project: | Ethical leadership, accountability and transparency in promoting good governance in the South African public sector<br><br>Researcher (s): Dr S. E. Cronje |
|---|---|

**Decision: APPROVED**

| (signature) | |
|---|---|
| Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee | **14 April 2022**<br>Date |

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the CPUT Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study requires that the researcher stops the study and immediately informs the chairperson of the relevant Faculty Ethics Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines, and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, notably compliance with the Bill of Rights as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution) and where applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003 and/or other legislations that is relevant.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after two (2) years for Masters and Doctorate research project from the date of issue of the Ethics Certificate. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report (REC 6) will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

**Clearance Certificate No | 2022 FBMSREC 011**

**APPENDIX B: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR**

# Megan Alexander
**English Language Editing**
Constantia
Cape Town
7806
083 6011 596
meganalexander@mweb.co.za

21 May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

This letter serves as confirmation that I have made further English language editing suggestions for certain sections of the doctoral thesis titled *ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR,* authored by the researcher, Lindi Sindelo.

I have indicated deviations from conventional English language usage and made alternate suggestions to better convey the researcher's intended message and improve general readability and clarity. Language areas include:

- UK English
- language structures and conventions
- punctuation
- spelling
- syntax
- style
- standardisation of terms
- clarity
- fluency
- word choice
- general readability
- logic
- coherence
- ambiguity
- repetition

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Megan Alexander

## APPENDIX C: STATISTICIAN CERTIFICATE

<div align="center">

**To whom it may concern.**

</div>

This is to certify that I assisted Ms Lindi Sindelo (student number 212182307) with the statistical analysis of her data gathered for the purpose of her research thesis.

Regards

Emeritus Professor D J van Schalkwyk

30 Kingfisher Street

Fairtrees Retirement Village

Durbanville

7550