



Professionalising the South African public service: A case of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

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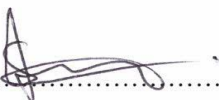
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DECLARATION

I, Siziwe Bulelwa Kenqu, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other University and that the sources I have used have been fully acknowledged in the List of References. This thesis is submitted to the North West University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Sciences with Public Management and Governance.

Signature:  Date: 27 March 2016

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ABSTRACT

This study is intended to assess the feasibility and the extent of the professionalisation of the public service as a crucial aspect of modern governance and ultimately design a Framework through which the public service can be professionalized. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development was used as a case study. This department was chosen mainly for its hybrid setup because it houses lawyers as traditional professionals and senior officials in administration. Professionalisation is aimed at enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of public institutions. This study explored the concept of professionalisation in the public service and its significance and suggested the framework to achieve it.

In recent years, the post-apartheid South African public service has been attempting, for the first time, to implement a framework to professionalise the public service. This study is significant because it provides well-researched data to boost the country's current attempts to professionalise the public service. Therefore, there is still a lot of room for an increase in the body of knowledge on this aspect.

Key aspects of professionalization that came out of the study included a merit-based recruitment and promotion to ensure that public servants are hired and promoted based on their skills, qualifications and performance; continuous training and development to enhance public servants' skills, knowledge and expertise; code of conduct and ethics to guide the behavior of public servants; establishment of a regulatory body to ensure exclusivity of the profession.

The benefits of professionalisation were explored based on the current professions, international organisations and countries and the views of the respondents of the study. The benefits related to improved service delivery, increased transparency and accountability, public participation and enhanced public trust.

The study utilised a qualitative approach, assuming the epistemological posture, particularly interpretivism due to its nature of exploring human behaviours in the corporate world to what is or must be professionalisation. The main research question was whether the South African public service can be professionalised.

The key finding was that the South African public service can be professionalised, based on literature review of other countries' attempts and positive responses from the study respondents.

Key Words: professionalism, professionalisation, profession, professional, occupation

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BAS	Basic Accounting System
BaSSREC	Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
CBL	Case-Based Learning
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CR	Critical Realism
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DDG	Deputy Director-General
DFG	German Research Foundation
DG	Director-General
DOJCD	Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
DPME	Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DTIC	Department of Trade Industry and Competition
EAs	Executive Authorities
EU	European Union
GEAR	Growth, Employment, and Redistribution
GPW	Government Printing Works
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HoD	Head of Department
HPCSA	Health Practitioners Council of South Africa
ICMS	Integrated Case Management System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Institutional Development
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IIA	Institute of Internal Auditors
IIR	Institute of Race Relations
iPARIHS	Integrated Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services
IT	Information Technology
JYP	Justice Yellow Pages

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MLS	Medical Laboratory Science
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NBPF	National Batho Pele Forum
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
NPM	New Public Management
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSG	National School of Government
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
PR	Proportional Representation
PSC	Public Service Commission
QUAGOL	Qualitative Analysis Guide of Leuven
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
SAAPAM	South African Association for Public Administration and Management
SACU	Southern Africa Customs Union
SA-EU	South Africa – European Union
SAMDI	South African Management and Development Institute
SANC	South African Nursing Council
SAPS	South African Police Services
SDAC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDIP	Service Delivery Improvement Plan
SFM	Shop Floor Management
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TQM	Total Quality Management
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

There is an ongoing debate on the professionalisation of public service in the sphere of government and academia in South Africa. Many scholars have written about professionalising the public service. Some scholars agree in terms of the possibility of professionalisation of public service, while others negate the view. Whilst these debates continue, there seems to be a glaring lack of direction or consensus as to what can be done to professionalise the public service, both in South African and internationally.

By its admission, in dealing with the government's weaknesses in capacity and performance, the National Planning Committee indicated that there has been a lot of neglect in harnessing skills at junior levels—skills that foster a sense of professionalism. It further states that the South African state lacks a clear vision of where the next generation of public servants will come from and how specialist professional skills will be produced (NDP 2011:364). Theletsane (2013:175) agrees that in light of current scholarly views on the nature of professionalism, the public administration practice does not fit the rankings of professions because it exhibits very few characteristics commonly associated with professional status. Wissink (2015:133), when narrating the historic challenge of professionalisation in the South African public service post-1994 (NDP) states that the crisis of settling a capacitated and mature senior public service to support the developmental state sought in the National Development Plan (NDP), remained. Therefore, it would demand more government action than what was generated through capacity-building programmes during the first 20 years of democracy.

The NDP, which is the current developmental programme of government, states that ‘A capable state does not materialise by decree, nor can it be legislated or created from conference resolutions. It has to be painstakingly built, brick by brick, institution by institution and sustained and rejuvenated over time. It requires leadership, sound policies, skilled managers and workers, clear lines of accountability, appropriate systems and consistent and fair application of rules.’ (NDP 2011:23). The government of South Africa seeks to build a capable state as articulated in the National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030. Amongst other areas of reform to reach a capable state, the NDP proposes a ‘professionalised public service’ (NDP 2011:399).

The importance of the NDP as the economic and social compass of the entire country makes it all the more important to look at its imperatives for a successful and prospering country. Professionalising the public service is one of its driving forces that can, if done right, change the outlook of government and how it is viewed and accepted by the public. The intended consequences are improved service delivery, people-oriented government, a growing economy and so much more.

It is against this background that this research has been undertaken under the banner of Public Management and Governance studies. The study proposes a professionalisation of the public service framework for South African public service using the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJCD) as a case study. The professionalisation of the public sector refers to the subscription by all public servants to the basic values and principles of public administration as enshrined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, including the values espoused in the Public Service Charter and the commitment to upholding the principles of Batho Pele by showing empathy towards the plight of the citizenry, especially those who rely on government goods and services for their daily living NSG (2022:29).

1.1 Background of the study

The study seeks to suggest how the public service can be professionalized to increase service delivery and contribute to the restoration of confidence in public service. However, the study will be conducted amidst the negativity brought to the fore by Cox 111 and Haruna (2018:68) when exploring the concept of recovering responsibility and integrity in the public service. On a broader or global scale, they indicate that public administration and the public service are basically facing a crisis, the world over. They cite continents such as South America, Europe, Asia and Africa where there are different kinds of governments, e.g. authoritarian, particularly in Africa and almost pure democratic, particularly in Europe; the idea and ideal of a professional government as fundamental to modern government is being challenged in a way ‘not seen since the emergence of professional governance at the end of the 19th century.’ The core values of integrity, capability, and capacity of professional administration which are critical to democracy are being questioned.

The performance of the DOJCD, as is the case with a number of national, provincial and local government departments actually attests to this assertion in the form of missed targets, maladministration, misappropriation of funds and qualified audits for several years in succession between 2016 and 2020.

1.2 Brief Literature Review

Mafunisa (2001:324-339) explores the idea of professionalising employees at the municipal level. He cites challenges faced by municipal managers in setting an example for their staff and keeping a positive and thus productive environment conducive to service delivery. He states that it is the duty of municipal managers to ensure that their staff perform their duties in a competent manner. Therefore, they have to be aware of their professional roles (Mafunisa 2011:325). Levin (2017:136-149) tables a critical discussion on how monitoring and evaluation in government can be professionalised. He notices how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has now taken shape as a discipline and a requirement in all government spheres, especially parliament and the executive, and how academia has responded with various courses in the field (Levin 2017:136).

Matshabaphala (2014:199-205) discusses the relationship between leadership, ethics, and the professionalisation of the public service. He promotes being ethical as almost equivalent to being professional. He further indicates that the public service currently has two different kinds of people: those who do not want to do their jobs and those who display professionalism in discharging their duties. The latter are regarded as the role models in the public service (Matshabaphala 2014:201). This postulation falls short in that it does not emphasise high performance and skill. Doing right is not equivalent to excellent performance wherein targets are met and/or exceeded.

Closer to the holistic professionalisation dialogue is Wissink (2013:124-147), where he proposes a different approach to public administration, from what he deems a deficient public administration model to a public governance and leadership model. In this article, Wissink discusses the failures of the post-apartheid government to professionalise the public service through training and development programs of the National School of Government (NSG). He cites the historic development of this training institution from the time it was the South African Management and Development Institute (SAMDI) during apartheid and the new mandate it was then given post-apartheid. From this historic narrative, it transpires that the training institution simply took chameleonic postures, coupled with a new name, each time a new mandate was given. However, he claims that the holistic professionalisation debate remains unresolved (Wissink 2013).

In the literature reviewed, there appears to be a fragmented approach to professionalising the public service. The direction that can be taken to embark on the professionalisation project is not a clear-cut one. Therefore, the intellectual puzzle of this study is to propose a holistic (rather

than fragmented) framework to professionalise the public service using the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJCD) as a case study. This is inclusive of training and development, code of conduct, ethical behaviours, and so forth.

The DOJCD is a national competency that comprises a combination of lawyers (attorneys and advocates) who are considered as ‘professionals’ and the administrative staff (court managers, clerks, senior managers, and so forth), totalling 18162 as of 31 March 2024 (DOJCD Annual Report 2023/24: 174). The department therefore provided a good platform for both professional and occupational worlds. The research also zoomed into the disparities in reputational relationships between the professionals of the department and the administrative staff, as it might be one of the major causal elements to performance blockages.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which is the supreme law of the country, makes several assertions about professionalism; e.g., Section 195 calls for a ‘high standard of professional ethics for public servants, and Section 22 alludes to all citizens’ right to ‘choose their trade, occupation, or profession freely.’ This is acknowledgement of not just the existence of the phenomenon of professions but also portrays the expectations from the highest office of the country. Therefore, it is important to get the definition(s) and application of professionalism as it relates to government so as to craft strategies to professionalise the state and particularly the DOJCD, as envisaged in the NDP.

It is prudent for the study to identify the definitions and linkages between several terms such as profession and professionalism, as well as occupation and professionalisation. According to Mafunisa (2001:325), professionalism, along with a code of conduct and an oath of office or formal affirmation, develops a value system that serves as a frame of reference for decision-making while also creating a unique type of control favourable to high work standards. He goes on to define professionalism as a ‘commitment to an ethic of product and service quality, and a need to be innovative.’ It is most effective when it starts at the top and spreads down to all levels of the company. Most importantly, it must begin with an individual's philosophy.

Anderson and Pedersen (2012:46) conceptualise professionalism as a level of occupational specialization in theoretical knowledge combined with firm intra-occupational norms. They further assert that different professions may do good for the society in different ways; for example, public servant professionals are likely to be attracted to public policy-making, whereas health care professionals may be more oriented towards doing good, thereby impacting individuals in a broader society.

Bruce and Ahmed (2014:2) define a profession as an occupation that has gained its status by meeting certain criteria and that professionalism is an attitude that individuals assume to portray and protect the image of the profession. This definition implies that not everyone in the workforce can be a professional. Thus, professionalism is expected from a professional (Longoria & Rangarajan 2015). Williamson et al. (2018:46) recognize that professions normally develop from occupations undergoing diverse stages such as formalizing associations, providing professional development, inculcating a body of knowledge, as well as practicing codes of ethics.

A clearer definition of professionalism comes from Bimray, et al. (2019:1) who state that professionalism is ‘the conduct, qualities, values, vision, mission and/or goals that characterise a profession, and describes behaviours that are expected within the profession’s members.’ However, they acknowledge that a person’s values are shaped by their experiences, influenced by their behaviour and interactions with others, and are manifested in many aspects of professional behaviour.

What then of the rest of the workforce in management and administration, which public service largely comprises of? To an extent, there is a notion of exclusivity and self-sacrifice in a profession and therefore professions are characterized by organised associations with explicit standards of entry, training, regulation, and discipline. In a classical way, a profession is described by several characteristics. Perks (1993:12-14) lists common characteristics of a profession to include a scientifically based specialist knowledge with specific subject terminology. A profession has theory-based academic qualification pathways with specific norms and codes of ethics. It seeks to have professional autonomy and is client-based and specialises on social interactions. It is also self-controlled through the establishment of and regulated by professional associations. A profession is often seen to be supporting the public welfare.

Professionalism is one of the core values of the United Nations. The elements listed by Perks above are in line with the United Nations description of a professional, wherein they state that a professional is a person who, amongst other attributes, shows pride in work and in achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines, and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns. This person shows

persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges and remains calm in stressful situations (online source)

Borst and Lako (2017:875) bring a different perspective to the discourse on professionalism. In analysing professional pride of public servants, it would seem professionalism, as it relates to a profession, can be extended to relate to behaviours and attitudes of a public servant to his or her work, rather than a set of rules and regulations governing a particular segment of work. Such behaviours and attitudes can be directly linked to high performance, or lack thereof.

They further indicate that professional pride is an important aspect of work engagement. To this effect, they describe a proud public servant as ‘someone who works honourably, conscientiously and with dedication and makes use of his or her education, knowledge, experience, and professional ethics to reach this state’ (Borst & Lako 2017:875). For example, ‘care and respect for patients’ is a fundamental moral value, or attitude, of the medical profession and guides the performance and emotions of medical professionals toward competent behaviour; this is done regardless of the specific circumstances in which they operate (Solinger et al. 2020:507).

This is confirmed by Matshabaphala (2014:203), who notes that the quest for increased professionalism appears to be a plea for persons of character and competence. He lists some of the most pronounced ideal attributes for character, particularly in terms of public service, as ‘patriotism, humility, caring, positive attitude, respect, temperance, amiability, and considerateness.’

1.3 Theories of professionalism

Further exploration of the concept of professionalism finds expression through exploring the theoretical framework underpinning it. This is necessary to bring more understanding to the professionalisation debate. A simple definition of the word theory is ‘a system of ideas formulated with the intention to explain a certain phenomenon’ (Mngadi 2018:2). Mngadi suggests that another way to look at theory is as a ‘lens’ that may inform understanding of the conditions or events being studied or investigated. Van der Waldt (2017:183-184) proposes that in the absence of well-articulated theories, qualitative or quantitative research data do not have real significance.

Research findings therefore make little scientific sense when presented outside the context of a particular theory or of certain theories in combination. He emphasizes that for scholars in

Public Administration, it is important to build a constant body of knowledge of this emerging and applied discipline within the social sciences, while appreciating that there are multiple theories applicable to analysing phenomena of a particular domain. The theories discussed below are selected for their close description and articulacy of professionalism. They will serve as a broad framework for practice and may also articulate the goals of the study and its core values.

1.3.1 Modern theory of professionalism

According to Kazun (2016:573-574), the issues of professionalism and professional occupation received a lot of attention from many prominent sociologists in the past, such as Emile Durkheim (Durkheim 1997), George Simmel (Simmel 1994), Max Weber (Weber 1992; Saks 2010), and others. He indicates that the origin of the notion of profession, which later became the foundation for the modern theory of professionalism, was first formulated by Parsons (Parsons 1937; Parsons 1939; Parsons 1940; Parsons 1968), and Carr-Saunders and Wilson (Carr-Saunders & Wilson 1933) described it in their work titled *The Structure of Social Action*. The essence of Kazun's historic view of professionalism theory is in tracing the origins through various scholars and sociologists defining or attempting to define professions and what constitutes professionalism.

1.3.2 Habermas' theory of communicative action

Links et al. (2019:90-92) describe how the Jurgen's theory of communicative action underpins professionalism. Jurgen Habermas, a philosopher of the Frankfurt school and one of the founders of critical theory, has a broad interest in the relationship between reason and public life that critiques the boundaries between science and humanism for practical endeavours. That makes his work particularly relevant to professionalism. He views human action as 'taking place in lifeworld' comprising the subjective, objective, and social worlds. He also looked at late modern capitalism and found that there is a crisis of legitimation, characterized by a mistrust of the authority of experts, organisations, and governments. From these studies, he developed a theory of communicative action, which is 'co-operative action undertaken by individuals based upon mutual deliberation and argumentation'. It is concerned with how truth claims might be validated in a post-modern society.

Links et al. contend that all these trepidations are extremely relevant to considerations of education, assessment, and professionalism in the 21st Century. Heilman and Sementelli (2020:430), whose research areas cover professional development and pedagogical strategies,

environmental and resource management, public sector economics, critical theory, and organization studies, argue that Habermas's theory thus far remains underutilized in the public administration discourse. Therefore, they presented a practical interpretation of the theory as a remedy, putting forth the argument that it can be included in a modified framework to add utility to discussions of public administrative practices.

1.3.3 The Weberian Bureaucratic Model of Management and Likert's System 4 Model of Management

According to the bureaucratic theory of Max Weber, bureaucracy is the basis for the systematic formation of any organisation and is designed to ensure efficiency and economic effectiveness. It is an ideal model for management and its administration to bring an organisation's power structure into focus. Max Weber lays down the basic principles of bureaucracy and emphasizes the division of labor, hierarchy rules, and impersonal relationships generally one can identify bureaucratic organizations based on its regulations. A bureaucratic organisation relies on the use of policies rules and a strict hierarchy. Accordingly, one can see an enforced chain of command and regulated operating procedures in an organisation (Hashimov, 2025:129).

Hashimov (2025:130) also critically analyses the negatives of the bureaucracy in that in the contemporary landscape, the bureaucratic method remains present in the workplace with all its advantages and disadvantages. Organisation, expertise, productivity, oversight, and specialization arises from bureaucracy, and hierarchy is likewise regarded as an element of this framework. Nonetheless, its adverse impacts have persisted unchanged. For instance, people operating inside an inflexible environment slowly grow used to it and form a type of adjustment response that they cannot change. Consequently, they are unable to dedicate time to their individual creativity, they separate themselves from creative thought and neglect to chase objectives with a visionary mindset, as the nature of free will is notably diminished, alongside various other concerns.

Hashimov's concern is supported by Sørensen and Torfing (2024:143) who note that recent studies highlight the significance of ongoing conceptual modifications and changes to maintain the relevance of ideas, ideologies, and frameworks by rephrasing or revitalising their detailed semiotic elements. Therefore, when a well-known public governance model such as "bureaucracy" encounters increasing issues, challenges, and critiques, its defenders and proponents often respond defensively and initially seek to safeguard it by dismissing emerging issues, considering specific deviations as negligible, addressing core criticisms, and cautioning that any effort to diverge from its essential principles will result in disaster.

Although the rejection of issues and rigid thinking might grant the advocates of the prevailing governance model time to reorganise, this will ultimately be a losing approach if challenges and critiques keep escalating. Therefore, Sørensen and Torfing contend that strategies for ideational robustness that not only protect but also extend, alter, and enhance a governance paradigm are necessary to ensure the enduring viability of a struggling governance paradigm. Hence the introduction of System 4 management theory by Rensis Likert.

Likert's System 4 introduces a rather softer approach to the rigid bureaucracy. In the Likert governance paradigm, which Likert calls participative group, is more team-oriented. There is a high level of trust and confidence in the superior; communication flows freely in all directions; decision making occurs throughout the organization; cooperative teamwork is encouraged and leaders actively seek high performance goals (Lunenburg, 2017:24).

1.4 Problem statement

The problem statement relates to where and when the problem arises, who it affects and if there are or have been any attempts to solve it; and whether those attempts yielded results or not. Lack of professionalism or understanding its application in the public sector has arguably led to the status quo of lethargy and lack of implementation of plans. There have been noticeable grand visions to elevate the country to greater heights of development. However, none of these plans have articulated the attitudes of public servants towards professionalism. Literature attests to a lack of common understanding of professionalism and thus misguided plans to professionalise the state.

A competent, moral, and developmental state underpins all seven key priorities of the 2019-2024 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). It embodies a robust leadership perspective, an emphasis on individuals, and enhanced execution capacity. Transforming this vision into reality will require a shift towards a more effective and cohesive government, equipped with skilled, professional and merit-based public servants to enhance relationships and efficiency. To maintain the ongoing collaborative effort towards a capable state, intergovernmental and citizen interactions are essential drivers of this objective (MTSF 2019-2024). The same is expected of the DOJCD as an important arm of government. Its performance contributes significantly to the realisation of the MTSF goals. Therefore the consistent underperformance, escalating complaints, excessive case backlogs necessitate a paradigm shift towards professionalism.

There has been a series of events (roundtable discussions, seminars, and so forth.) on professionalising the public service. However, accountability and the implementation of recommendations remain to be seen. One such event happened in December 2018, led by the PSC. The event was meant to discuss and articulate clearly what professionalisation of the state is and how to go about it. The event itself could not define professionalisation of the state and thus recommended that the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) should take it up and craft the definition thereof. By implication, without a clear definition for the South African government, no clear programs can be planned. The DPSA vision alludes to ‘A professional, productive, and responsive public service and administration’ (DPSA Annual Report 2018/19:1). This mandate gives impetus to the department to determine the organisational culture of the public service. However, thus far the clarity on the character of the public servant remains on paper only, as articulated in the Code of Conduct for public servants.

While the debate within government and academia on the professionalisation of the public service continues, the government has not yet clearly articulated what professionalism is, and there the recently developed professionalisation framework is yet to be clearly disseminated, implemented and evaluated on the impact and changes it will bring. Thus far, it is still in its very early stages of dissemination. This study therefore will contribute to the further investigation of the professionalisation phenomenon and additionally to suggest a framework to professionalise the South African Public Service. This framework will augment the one recently developed with implementation driven by the National School of Government.

In the case study department, the DOJCD, there is no guiding policy for professionalisation. Its problem statement centers on the need to move beyond mere compliance to foster a deeply ingrained culture of ethics, integrity, and accountability, amid challenges of potential, or perceived, unprofessional conduct, inadequate accountability systems, and the need for continuous professional development. There are inconsistent ethical standards and accountability. There is a gap between the expected, high-standard professional behavior and the actual, often inconsistent, conduct of officials to the outcomes and achievement of goals set at each strategic cycle. This shows itself in often missed targets and deadlines which suggest weak or lack of accountability without consequences.

In a presentation made at the Strategic Session Review in 2021, the Human Resource Development Directorate presented a way forward to professionalisation of the department by

stating the need for the top management to lead by example in terms of ethical behaviour, thus setting the tone. The Directorate emphasised the need to communicate clear expectations of organizational code of ethics; raise continuous awareness on ethics and conduct ethics training; reinforce wanted behaviours and not to reinforce undesirable behaviours; provide protection for employees who report wrongdoing that they witness in the department; and using technology to support creating an ethical organizational culture (create an online platform for diligent discussions on ethics in the organisation and for information sharing).

However, there has not been a follow-through with strategies to achieve the stated steps to professionalisation. Neither is there an adopted policy for professionalisation in the department. The compounding factor is in the continuous inability to fill positions at Executive level (Deputy Director General) and at Senior level (Chief Directors). At any material time, there are several vacancies on which there are Actors filling the space indefinitely. This creates instabilities that affect accountability and ethics, as the Acting officials are usually reluctant to make major decisions where they are placed.

This would necessarily mean there is still a gap for addressing professionalisation elements such as cultural transformation, resource and capacity constraints especially in the subject of ethics, oversight mechanisms to overcome lack of accountability and general but important operational disparities in a big department such as the DOJCD.

A prominent conundrum for a professional and values-driven public sector is a consequential lack of stability. A report on the outcomes of the SA-EU Dialogue held in September 2019, on ‘A values-driven public sector: building state capacity through professional ethics and integrity,’ asserts that with the end of apartheid there was a need to transform the public service. This change gave the Executive Authorities (EAs) the right to make appointments to leadership administrative positions. This unfortunately has led to instability in government and the implementation of its programs geared towards professionalising the state or growing the economy (PSC 2019:13).

A study conducted by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) on the previous President Jacob Zuma’s presidency agrees with Public Service Commission (PSC) by stating that ‘In total, since 10 May 2009, (President) Zuma has made 126 changes to the national executive: 62 changes to ministerial positions, 63 changes to deputy ministerial positions, and one change to the deputy presidency.’ Van Onselen (2017:4).

The study therefore wants to suggest a professionalisation framework, from which policies can be developed, that will work towards stability regardless of who is in charge.

1.5 Research Questions

The main research question of this study is

- Can the South African Public Service be professionalised?

Secondary specific research questions of this study are

- 1.5.1 What would be the best framework to professionalise the South African public service?
- 1.5.2 Are public servants interested in the process of professionalisation of the public service?
- 1.5.3 What is the role of Academia in the professionalisation question?
- 1.5.4 How are other countries dealing with the professionalisation conundrum?

1.6 Research objectives

The main objective of the study is:

- To determine if the South African Public Service can be professionalised.

The secondary objectives of this study are:

- 1.6.1 To investigate the best framework to professionalise the South African Public Service
- 1.6.2 To ascertain whether public servants are actually interested in the process of professionalisation of the public service
- 1.6.3 To explore the role of Academia in the professionalisation question; and
- 1.6.4 To recommend lessons the South African public service can draw from other countries on professionalisation of public service.

1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing public discourse on professionalisation of the public service and suggest a direction that can be followed in the task of professionalisation. The available literature criticizes the state in its current formation, stating that it is not geared towards professionalisation and its occupations cannot be regarded as professions. The literature also shows a fragmented approach wherein only certain occupations are suggested for professionalisation, while others are omitted. This research is intended to assist those who are tasked with the function of professionalising the state with a body of knowledge to inform its investigations, by suggesting a framework to professionalise the state

holistically, rather than in a fragmented manner. Although the study is not commissioned, the government will benefit from its outcomes in terms of the betterment of its running, corporate image and ultimately improved service delivery.

The study also seeks to define a different kind of a public servant who is aware of their obligations and purpose of office and is willing to put in the work to maintain a good image of government while serving the people. It is envisaged that the findings will be a reference point for other entities in the public and private sectors, as well as other countries, especially those with similar socio-economic conditions as South Africa. It is also anticipated that the study will spark further studies to find different frameworks or approaches in the continuing dialogues of professionalisation. The study is therefore essential and timely, as it will significantly contribute to the endeavours of government to meet the international standards of professional bureaucrats.

1.8 Limitations of the study

Although the discourse on professionalisation is not a new phenomenon, there is a marked gap in direct suggestions to professionalise the public service holistically. Since the DOJCD is a chosen case study, it must be understood that the study has been undertaken in an environment with many legally qualified individuals where one must always explain their actions according to a particular piece of legislation. The researcher undertook to inform herself on all relevant legislation that could possibly hinder the study.

The environment is also politically driven, as the department implements the policies of a political party, and therefore political-administration lines are sometimes blurred. The researcher already operates in this environment and is fully aware of the possible challenges. Therefore, the study has been conducted without violating the parameters of policies and procedures of the department or public service at large.

1.9 Research Design and Methodology

Kumar (2014:39) considers the conceptualisation of a research design as a very important part of a research study because it involves systematic, controlled, valid, and rigorous exploration and description of what is not known and allows establishment of associations and actions that document an accurate prediction of outcomes.

There are two main research designs: qualitative and quantitative. A researcher might adopt a mixed-method design and use both qualitative and quantitative designs. Qualitative research is an inductive method of exploring the experiences of human behaviours towards a particular

social phenomenon to discover the essence of such occurrences (Creswell, 2013:4). In contrast, Bryman, (2012:715) defines quantitative research as a ‘deductivist, objectivist, and positivist’ method of research that involves numbers and quantification in collecting and analysing data.

Qualitative research emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry, thereby creating an intimate and living relationship between the researcher and the participants (Bishwakarma 2017:57-60). He further advances that a substantial amount of literature highlights the impact of a researcher’s position on their research. Their background, beliefs, academic credentials, and values can influence the results of a study. The researcher of this study has 19 years in the public service at management level. This gives a good position to conduct the study as she has good knowledge of the public sector. This position, however, necessitates reflexivity to ensure that the researcher’s personal experiences do not unduly influence the research.

The study adopted the qualitative method because it deals with a social construct which can hardly be measured in a laboratory setting or in quantities. The study took the form of the case study. Gillham (2000:1) describes a case as an individual, or a group - such as a family, an office, or it can be an institution - such as a school, a government department, a factory; or it can be a large-scale community - a town, an industry, or a profession. All of these are single cases, but multiple cases can be studied, for example, several single parents, several schools, or two different professions. Therefore, a case study involves an investigation of the above to answer specific research questions. In the case of this research, the chosen institution, the DOJCD, has been used to derive realities and dynamics of professionalism and professionalisation in the public service.

1.10 Sampling

Ahmad et al. (2017:1) state that most surveys involve sampling from finite populations and that there are two parts to any sampling strategy. First, there is the selection procedure, the manner in which sampling units are to be selected from a finite population. Second, there is an estimation procedure, which prescribes how inferences are to be made from sample to population. The DOJCD employs about 15,000 officials in various capacities; some are deemed professionals (lawyers), and others are administrative. No research can cover the entire population of the department.

In terms of administrative officials, the research targeted senior managers. The DOJCD employs about 150 Senior Managers (Directors, Chief Directors and Deputy Directors

General). The study sampled 10% of that population, i.e. 15 Senior Managers. Since the department has a footprint throughout the country in terms of service points and provincial head offices, all provinces were included in the 10% sample. The study was extended to the National Batho Pele Forum (NBPF), a forum of government departments at provincial and national levels that puts together a team of about 200 middle and senior managers of government departments who are responsible for overseeing matters of service delivery at the coalface. From this population, 10% was targeted, i.e., about 20 officials.

The significance of including the NBPF helped diversify the population group to represent a wider range of public service officials at the management level. Other relevant structures, such as The Law Society of South Africa, Legal Aid South Africa, South African Women in Law, and so forth, were also consulted for purposes of gathering information on professionalisation, since they are organised professional formations. Therefore, the total number of targeted participants was 35.

1.11 Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data collection methods. The following primary data collection method was employed:

1.11.1 Interviews: the purpose of qualitative research interviews in this study was to gain the perspective of the interviewee on the subject of professionalism and gain an understanding of what informs that perspective. Cassell and Symon (2004:11) refer to various types of interviews, such as depth, exploratory, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. One research study can use more than one type. The researcher used the semi-structured interview approach, which gives a degree of control on the part of the interviewer as well as a degree of flexibility on the part of the interviewee. Interviews were administered either face-to-face, virtually, or telephonically.

1.11.2 Secondary data: Sources of secondary data include magazines, virtual books, journals, and so forth. These may be either published or unpublished data. This research largely considered published data. Published data are available in various resources, including Government publications, public records, historical and statistical documents, business documents, technical and trade journals.

1.12 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of organising the data collected into deeper, more insightful, trustworthy, and meaningful information (Liamputtong, 2009:133). She further outlines different types of data analysis in qualitative research, which I have briefly explained below:

1.12.1 Thematic or interpretive thematic analysis—referred to as a method to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within the data

1.12.2 Narrative analysis—the participant's stories or responses are retold into a framework that will make sense to a reader. These are further put in a chronological order to create a sequence.

1.12.3 Discourse analysis—social interactions are best understood through making connections to the discourses that inform them.

1.12.4 Semiotic analysis—the study of signs, sign systems, and their meaning. It entails the process of making meaning and 'how signs are designed to have an effect upon actual and prospective consumers of those signs.'

Having explored different types of data analysis methods, the researcher selected interpretive thematic analysis for both primary and secondary data collected. Data was read through, making notes in order to find common themes, and then organised into themes, which were subsequently coded into short phrases describing each data set.

Themes were examined to connect the meaning and repeated data from all codes. At this stage, the researcher generated an index of terms that would be useful in interpretation and theorization of themes and subsequent formulation of the framework. Next, the researcher gathered a thematic map of analysis, which is a process of defining and naming themes for purposes of refining the themes that would be presented for analysis, and further analyse the data within them. Defining and refining means identifying the essence of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. The last phase of data analysis was to produce a written account of the merit and validity of analysed data. The analysis provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, non-biased, and true account of the story the data tells within and across themes.

1.13 Data validity and reliability

To verify the quality of the research design, the consistency and stability of the results, and to assess the impact of measurement errors on the test results, the reliability of the data must be

analysed first (Zhang et al., 2021:2). Golafshani (2003:601) presents the views espoused by various scholars on the issue of validity and reliability in qualitative research. Stenbacka, (2001), as quoted in Golafshani (2003:601) states that ‘reliability is a concept to evaluate quality in quantitative study with a ‘purpose of explaining’ while quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of ‘generating understanding’. The difference in purposes of evaluating the quality of studies in qualitative and quantitative research is one of the reasons that the concept of reliability is irrelevant in qualitative research.

Conversely, Patton (2001), as quoted in Golafshani (2003:601), states that a qualitative researcher should concern themselves with validity and reliability while designing a study, analysing results and judging the quality of the study. This would persuade the reader to believe that the research findings are worth paying attention to. Healy and Perry (2000:9) state that the quality of a study should be judged by its own paradigm's terms. For example, while the terms reliability and validity are essential criteria for quality in quantitative settings; however, in qualitative settings the terms credibility, neutrality or objectivity, consistency or dependability and applicability or transferability are the essential criteria for quality.

To ensure validity on secondary data, the researcher used reputable sources from recognised journals, published books, university websites and relevant institutions websites, with proper referencing. For primary data, the researcher administered questionnaires with senior and middle managers in the employ of government in order to satisfy the requirement of credibility, neutrality, confirmability and dependability in the reliability and validity criterion.

A two-pronged approach was utilised in collecting data in order to fortify the reliability of the research findings, in that, the researcher sought to find commonalities in the scholarly thoughts and writings from previous researches on the subject of professionalism. Furthermore, the researcher utilised comparative methods and data synthesis to systematically test for differences and draw conclusions.

1.14 Ethical considerations

According to Oliver (2010:4), because social sciences research collects data from people, this inevitably raises questions about the way in which the researcher treats the people who provide such data. Such questions are ethical in nature. He further indicates that the growing concern within the research community is with the ethical dimension from the planning phase of research to the implementation phase. Comstock (2013:229-235) requires of all researchers to ‘honour all interests.’ This is inclusive of the minorities in a society, homosexuals, orphans,

the disabled, and animals, and so forth. Favareto et al. (2020:7) mention the principles of ethics in research such as, avoiding harm, beneficence, respect, informed consent, awareness, right to withdraw, transparency and privacy/anonymity

Since this research involved human participants, the researcher sought clearance from her employer, DOJCD, to conduct the research and the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities at the Northwest University, which provides operational management of the research ethics process in the faculty.

Application for ethical clearance to conduct the research was submitted to the (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities. The research is low risk according to ethical risk level descriptors. Human participants are involved at the level of providing opinions through answering questionnaires that have been approved by the committee. No scientific human tissue samples or vulnerable groups are involved (e.g., children, abused people in shelters, and so forth). The human participants are currently in the employ of the public service.

Collected data in the form of questionnaires and other relevant materials was handed over to the research promoter, Professor MT Lukamba, for storage, for a period of at least five years, after which it will be discarded accordingly.

In line with the ethics principles above, the researcher undertook to ensure respect for all participants. The participants signed informed consent forms to indicate their voluntary participation. The form assured participants of anonymity to protect them from any reputational harm that could arise as a result of their answers to questionnaires. They were also informed of their right to withdraw their participation should they wish to do so. They were further assured that their personal information would not be disclosed.

The researcher was transparent to participants by informing them in writing of the purpose of the research and what it seeks to contribute to the public service. Furthermore, the research outcomes will be distributed to all participants who shall indicate their interest in such, but only after endorsement by the North West University.

Overall, it was the intention of the researcher to respect the rights and dignities of all respondents and any other party involved in the research (for example, the promoters, Professor M.T. Lukamba and colleagues in the faculty, management of DOJCD, and so forth). Since the researcher is the employee of the DOJCD, it was prudent of her to especially take careful heed of the fellow colleagues who will agree to participate in the study. The added advantage of the

researcher employed at the site of the case study at middle manager then senior manager level is that she has been part of many planning sessions, projects, turnaround strategies and so forth. The insights gained through the years puts her on the lead of understanding the historic fundamental problems and successes of the department. However, in order not to compromise the quality of the study, no undue prejudice was applied due to prior knowledge of the case site.

The researcher underwent ethics training to ensure that there was no conflict of interest with her as a researcher and the her as an employee of the DOJCD. This ensured the integrity of the study.

1.15 Chapter Layout

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of professionalism in its broadest terms. The aim is to orient the reader on the focus of the study, the methodology to be utilized, the problem statement, research questions, and objectives. It also deals with the question of significance in the greater body of knowledge on professionalism as well as its contribution to the objectives of the NDP.

Chapter Two: Literature review

The chapter will broadly discuss the concepts of professions, professionalism, professionalisation and professionals in the wider contexts of public and private sectors. The historic overview of the South African public service and the attempts at professionalisation will be discussed. The aim is to eventually propose an acceptable definition of professionalism for the public sector. The applicable theories will be discussed in the quest to find the foundation of professionalism.

It will also explore the different formalised professions, e.g., medicine, law, accounting, nursing and so forth. Secondary data will be explored widely, using local and international sources. The objective is to glean lessons in terms of benefits and pitfalls experienced by these formations, so as to inform the framework that can be adopted by the South African public service.

Chapter Three: Research design and methodology

This chapter will focus on the research design and research methodology employed in gathering, analysing and interpreting data to answer the research questions in the study. It will

encompass the research approach, research design, sample size and sampling methods, methods of data collection, methods of analysing data, validity and reliability measures and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Empirical findings

This chapter will provide the findings of the study from both primary and secondary data. Recommendations of possible solutions to the identified problems will also be tabled in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Suggested Framework to professionalise the public service

Based on the empirical evidence, the researcher will suggest a framework for professionalising the public service and anticipated challenges of implementation. Risks and mitigation factors on the anticipated challenges will therefore be suggested in this chapter.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Policy Implications

Chapter six is the final chapter of the thesis, summarising the study; drawing important conclusions and suggesting areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter expands on the brief literature review conducted in Chapter one. The researcher intends to search through secondary sources such as Journals, Books, Reports, Conference papers and so forth. The main intention is to widely extract the scholarly pronouncements, assertions, debates and discourses on the phenomenon of professionalisation of the public service; with the view arrive at some conclusions and decisions that will influence the framework to be proposed.

The buzzword in the South African Public Service in the past few years has been ‘professionalisation’. This chapter will critically examine, as widely as possible, the literature that covers the definitions and the concepts of professionalism and professionalisation in the context of changing the face of public service as it is known currently. The chapter will examine the discussions and postulations on the subject of professionalism in general and particularly in the public service. The chapter will also examine the theoretical framework that underpins the professionalism phenomenon. Lastly the chapter will look at international standards of professionalism in the public service in comparison with other countries regardless of socio-economic circumstances.

The Constitution of South Africa of 1996, through section 195 (1) envisions public service and administration that must respond to people’s needs, promote effective and efficient use of economic resources, and maintain high standard of professional ethics (Makole, 2022:26). Mudau (2022:149) expands on the constitution to indicate that public service and administration must prioritize good governance. Good governance entails ‘having stable administrative structures, the best possible service delivery, high standards of ethics and professionalism, increased public trust and satisfaction, and the management of public affairs in an efficient, open, accountable, participatory, and economic manner.’ His emphasis is on all of these requirements being subject to existing national laws and regulations.

But how did South Africa and Africa at large get here? Sebola (2019:2) traces the root causes of the inefficiencies of the governments of the African states back to colonialism. He states that colonialism did not leave with the coloniser when he left his office. The coloniser left something permanent in his colonial office, which is now occupied by an African democrat and that is, for the most part, the legalised art of looting and oppressing the poor. He left his identity in the character of a new democrat, culture, norms, and values of the office, which in

South Africa is called ‘the politics of the stomach.’ Politics of the stomach refer to public officials and politicians who are only concerned with their immediate gains from the government system, with little or no regard for the people they are serving.

Richard (2018:13) agrees by stating that further analysis of the impact of colonialism on development can be conducted in terms of the divisive policies, which were pursued under the colonial era. These policies, he maintains, continue to create instabilities in post-colonial societies. For example, racial subordinations, divide-and-rule systems, and outright partition of states have been a contributing factor in post-independence struggles of many formerly colonised countries. The result thereof is seen in unequal and fractured societies, produced mistrust and hatred amongst communities, and exacerbated ethnic rivalries; the Hutu-Tutsi conflict of Rwanda is a case in point. The culture of colonialism, therefore, does not seem to lay a good foundation for professionalism in the democratic public service.

The root cause identified (colonialism) runs very far back in time (centuries) and very deep in consequences. The fact that the Apartheid regime that took over from the colonialists cemented the same views and notions also does not help the current South African public service. The NDP (2012: Annexure 14) terms this situation well by referring to it as the ‘inherited psyche’. This is the psyche of ‘racial, gender and sexual orientation prejudices and stereotypes, breakdown in values, inequality of opportunity and massive poverty, as well as competition for scarce resources, which helps fuel racism, xenophobia and gender-based violence. Part of the psyche inherited from apartheid is a tendency for the populace to abdicate responsibility for their wellbeing to the government.’

The view of the researcher is that the same psyche extends to the behaviours in the bureaucratic boardrooms wherein someone else is to blame for the non-performance, unsavoury audit outcomes and so on.

The psyche of professionalism which leads to accountability and high performance is almost non-existent. Busieka (2018:48) quotes The Stellenbosch Declaration of 2003 which states that ‘there is a general acceptance that in rehabilitating the role of the state, particular attention needs to be given to the revival of professional values and the establishment of particular standards for public service.’

2.2 Definitions: Profession, Professionalism, Professional and Professionalisation

2.2.1 Profession

The Australian Council of Professions, a national organisation of professional associations in Australia, defines a profession as:

‘A disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as, possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education, and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others. It is inherent in the definition of a profession that a code of ethics governs the activities of each profession. Such codes require behaviour and practice beyond the personal moral obligations of an individual. They define and demand high standards of behaviour in respect to the services provided to the public and in dealing with professional colleagues. Further, these codes are enforced by the profession and are acknowledged and accepted by the community’ (online source).

The Professional Standards Council in the same country, Australia, expands on the definition to indicate that the word ‘profession’ may mean different things to different people, but at its core, there should be an indicator of trust and expertise in the holder of the title. This means traditionally, a ‘professional’ is known to possess expertise or specific talents, as opposed to a hobbyist or amateur. Menzel (2012:55) adds integrity as an essential characteristic of a professional. He suggests that demonstrating personal integrity requires: ‘(1) taking personal responsibility for errors one may commit, (2) recognizing and crediting others for their work and contributions to the organisation’s mission, (3) guarding against any conflict of interest or its appearance, and (4) being respectful of staff, colleagues, and the public’. This description gives a perspective of what a professional is deemed to be like, whether they are traditional professionals or traditional bureaucrats. Evetts (2003:5) states that professions and occupations are supposed to guide their societies on how they should be viewed and approached and also determine the ways of thinking about problems in their spaces.

However, it seems there is a common denominator in both phenomena, and that is professionalism. This is to say, there is professionalism in occupations as well as in professions. She later clarifies that professions are self-regulating occupations wherein professional institutions monitor education and training requirements, accredit institutional provision of training, award and renew professional licenses, control aspects of professional practice, and

discipline disobedient members (Evetts 2012:3). These aspects of internal or self-regulation are and continue to be zealously guarded by professional bodies working to prevent intervention by state governments. Over the years, this form of regulation has earned professional bodies trust and confidence in relations between professionals and their clients.

One of the characteristics of a profession is autonomy. Through autonomy, a profession is entrusted with safeguarding the public from those who lack, for any reason, the necessary competence to work within the relevant profession (Sigridur Halldorsdottir 2011). The midwife's professionalism encompasses the midwife's professional wisdom (a concept entailing the intertwining of knowledge and experience), as well as the theoretical knowledge, skills and techniques required of the midwife in the woman's situation. The midwife has developed personally and professionally, and succeeds in making the woman feel cared for, communicates with her in an empowering manner, and has a positive partnership with her.

These five principal factors: professional caring, competence and wisdom, empowering interaction, and partnership, together with the midwife's personal and professional development combine into a complete picture of a professional.

2.2.2. Professional

Origins of the word 'Profess'

Lee (2011:881) quotes a very old description of a professional in the context of the Victorian era perceptions of professionals:

'Based on the first professions of the church, law and medicine, a traditional image of the professional evolved. He was a 'gentleman,' an independent practitioner dispensing a necessary public service of a fiduciary nature. His competence was determined by examination and license. His integrity was ensured by observance of a strict ethical code. Unprofessional conduct could lead to complete deprivation from further practice. His training and education was institutionalised. Here was the model for all professions.' In this statement, a perception is created as to the nature of a professional, his qualification towards the profession, authorization to practice and, most importantly, for whom the services were rendered: the public.

Lee further argues that the nineteenth-century phase of a professional was embedded in several pre-capitalist remains—firstly, a work ethic expressed as a calling, for example, nurses (i.e., professional services had inherent value beyond conventional means of economic gain and wealth accumulation); Secondly, overall service was meant to protect the social fabric within

an unequal society, as social workers would do (i.e., enhancing professional service as a duty to the community) and thirdly, the old-fashioned notion of ‘noblesse oblige,’ that is, an ideological dislike of providing professional services solely for economic reward. It may have been such reasoning that brought Cruess (1997:1674) to later say professionalism cannot be an inherent right because it is granted by society. Its continued upkeep depends on the public’s belief that professionals are trustworthy.

To remain trustworthy, professionals must meet the obligations that are expected by society. There is an inherent expectation for professionals to be answerable to society. It is important to notice that the term ‘professional’ is used differently by various scholars. To some, it is attached to a set of standards defining a particular profession, but to others as a set of behaviours and attitudes towards one’s work. To support this, Mantzaris et al. (2022:113) describe how human thought drives human action, as argued by historical philosophers and thinkers.

These philosophers and thinkers say that in reality, diverse aspects such as family relationships, education, state and society, economy, and market forces shape human ideas, relationships, behaviour, attitudes, and actions at all societal levels. Therefore, the end result of this societal phenomenon determines whether a person will be honest, corrupt, good, or bad. The outcomes of these actions are rooted in the everyday realities of relationships, interactions, and existing circumstances. The aforementioned can be described as the determinants of human conduct and the ethics that direct it.

Professionals are defined by four characteristics outlined by Brandsen and Honingh (2013:876) as 1) they possess knowledge and expertise to perform specialised tasks; (2) they are members of a community with shared belief systems and practices; (3) society perceives it as legitimate that this community is closed, and (4) being professional provides the incumbent with a degree of autonomy.

2.2.3 Professionalism

Gutierrez et al. (2019:3) sponsor a historic view of professionalism in that contemporary conceptions of professionalism can be contextualised in long-held ideas about the nature and purpose of a profession. Historically, they say, sociological definitions of the term profession were used to distinguish professions from non-professions by creating occupational classification categories. The generally known conventional, true, or learned professions counted divinity, law, and medicine. Members professed and applied a specific knowledge base under a written-down moral obligation to work for the benefit of others. Over time, this

categorisation developed in two ways; firstly, additional disciplinary areas of learning that are applied in service to others sought recognition as a profession; and secondly, professions and aspiring professions formed associations to self-regulate for entry into and quality practice of the profession to protect the community and the standing of the profession. It is in the context of such developments and more in the teaching space that the public service must explore to establish itself as a profession.

Evetts (2013:779), a prominent and prolific scholar on professionalism, emphasises the developing landscape of professionalism in that, as the world of work changes, there are necessary changes that are visible towards professionalisation of occupations across not only public and private sectors but also in the non-governmental organisations. It seems that wherever the terms ‘trust, transparency, and accountability’ need to be demonstrated, there is increased regulation, audit, and performance assessment, and those are some of the attributes of professionalism. For public service in particular, Mantzaris et al. (2022:110) explain that professionalism, especially in the public sector, is determined and measured by ‘honesty, common trust, knowledge, ethical behaviour, competence, commitment, collaboration, collegiality, contribution, conscience, and continuity.’

Furthermore, knowledge, as well as ethical conscience and behaviour, forms the foundation of moral thinking and the social basis of a corruption-free public sector. Therefore, professionalism cannot exist without a clear moral path. Public servants must have the ability to separate right from wrong to facilitate ethical, efficient state organisations. Public sector professionalism is directly related to general and specialised knowledge of corrupt acts.

Tully (2022:66) states that professionalism is an important issue for policymakers because of its established links to competence, morale and staff continuity. He argues that it is the pursuit of professionalism that ensures high quality teaching and learning, satisfied students and stakeholders, and the ongoing esteem of the public. However, despite its importance, professionalism, because of its ambiguity, has been largely missing as a topic from policy narratives. It is deemed as complex, opaque and difficult to operationalise.

Wong and Purdy (2021:1) define professionalism as the ‘judicious use of communication, technical, and clinical reasoning skills, knowledge, emotions, values, ethics and reflection on one’s attitude, character and practice.’ Professionalism guides workers in how to deliver high quality services while maintaining a positive work environment. However, there are factors such as a highly stressful work situation that can cause professionalism lapses which then lead

to decreased workplace psychological stability. This is where decisive programmes aimed at support, guidance and training come in, preferably quite early in the education of professionals.

2.2.4 Professionalisation

Professionalisation can be a little lenient in definition as opposed to the complexities presented in the many definitions of professionalism, because it deals with a degree of success in the claim to an exclusive dominion for a particular occupational domain, which varies across occupations (Jeong and Liblebici, 2019:300). They further describe professionalisation as a key situational mechanism that influences the construction of careers because its central aim is to establish exclusive control of work in a particular occupation. In their review on the study of professional work, they pointed out that ‘interest is no longer confined to the traditional professions, nor are researchers particularly concerned with policing the boundaries of the concept of profession and excluding occupations that do not qualify.’ Such a perspective encourages research to expand into a broad range of knowledge-based work and study how professionalisation manifests itself (Jeong and Liblebici 2019:304).

Hart (2012:58) quotes a definition from the CBE Policy Position Paper (n.d., 6) as ‘the means by which an occupation alters its socio-professional situation and becomes a profession by acquiring professional attributes’. He also quotes another definition sponsored by Evetts (1999:120) as ‘the series of diverse and variable, social and historical, processes of development, of how work sometimes becomes an occupation and how some occupations achieve various forms of occupational control of work.’ These definitions evidence that professionalisation of an occupation is a process and that there is no one definitive process to be followed. Hart also states that at the back of the process of professionalisation is a notion of gaining status, power, money, and control over the practice of work.

Egetenmeyer and K  pplinger (2011:22) looked at the professionalisation phenomenon alongside quality management. In a paper written for professionalising adult educators in Germany, they argued that the two have different logics: the logic of professionalisation and the logic of quality management. Professionalisation focuses primarily on the development of people and specific groups of people working in a particular field of action, whereas quality management focuses on the development of an organisation and its processes, often with the goal of a certain standardisation. They mention that in Europe, quality management has overridden professionalism.

The same can be said of the public service, where prominent terms are ‘performance management; monitoring and evaluation; service delivery improvements’ and so forth. In the South African public service, this is evident in the Annual Reports of all government departments which are directed by the National Treasury templates. This notion is also supported by the Batho Pele review conducted in 2003 by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) which states that Batho Pele prescribes how actors in the policy environment should relate to one another and the public, in which performance management and accountability can also be read (Mokgoro 2003:23).

Egetenmeyer and K  pplinger further clarify the differences between professionalism and quality management in table 2.1 below:

Table 2. 1. Differences between professionalism and quality management

	Professionalisation as a process towards professionalism	Quality management as a process towards standards
Roots	Humanities/universities	Economy
Focus	People	Organisations
Basis of action	Patterns of personal interpretation, based on unique cases	Defined organisational processes, based on defined standards
Field of acting	Social fields	Technical fields
Perspective	Holistically oriented	Oriented towards individual parts

Source: K  pplinger 2011:28

Table 2.1 outlines the differences in the two processes of professionalisation and quality management in terms of where they are rooted and what they focus on. However, these processes complement rather than contradict each other. This means one cannot function without the other.

2.3 Teaching Professionalism

Noordegraaf (2015:187) says that the modern study of professionalism is lively, because much is at stake. Professional services such as health care, higher education, law and accountancy experience transitions all the time, including the rise and spread of budgetary control, managerial supervision, and organisational reform. The emergence of good governance necessitates these reforms. Therefore, these transitions shake the very foundations of what it

means to render ‘professional’ services and the act of being ‘professionals’. Traditional images of professionalism generally stress the importance of the protected treatment of people such as patients, students, clients, and so on, by presumably autonomous and hopefully committed professionals. Bimray and Jooste (2014:200) when examining professionalism in nursing agree that professional knowledge, skills and values are developed during theoretical and practical training of the nurse in the ambit of the legal framework and standards of practice. They quote The Strategic Plan for Nursing Education and Training of 2012 which included professionalism and ethics as core compulsory modules at all levels of nursing and midwifery training. This is done with the hope to develop professionalism in the practice.

The Health Practitioners Council of South Africa (HPCSA) accepts no less in defining who must practice in the medical field. In defining their scope of practice, each registered practitioner is defined in terms of ethical rule 21 of the HPCSA, which states that: ‘A practitioner shall perform, except in an emergency, only a professional act - (a) for which he or she is adequately educated, trained and sufficiently experienced; and (b) under proper conditions and in appropriate surroundings.’. Education and training are key to the practitioner’s performance (online source).

It is often taken for granted how people should articulate themselves in a professional manner. However, Mbatha (2017:54) contends that professional expertise develops within a given domain of knowledge only as a result of contextualised training and practice. This means that to attain professional status one must be well taught in the field they want to qualify and operate in. The qualification is not only on the expertise of the field but also on standards and behaviours, which can only be attained through teaching. Some of the rules of conduct as listed by the HPCSA include professional competency; professional relations; privacy, confidentiality and records; fees and financial arrangements; assessment activities.

Bessant (2019:3) agrees that professional training should cultivate the balance between self-interest and the needs of society that are vital to society. This balance must be attained by professionals’ ongoing interaction within their professional community. Bessant quotes Parsons (1951) and Merton (1967) who emphasized the specific moral norms and traits that distinguished the ‘authentic’ professions such as medicine and law from ‘vocational’ occupations or semi-professions such as social work, teaching or nursing. Parsons emphasized the ways that professions established massive access to a common core body of knowledge shaped by the intellectual practices’ disposition that were said to characterize the movement

towards professionalisation. Parsons then added primary ideals like altruism, self-sacrifice and autonomy enforced by clearly identified ethical codes of practice. However, this brings one to the conclusion that according to this traditional account, other non-traditional professions are relegated to having para-professional status.

Be that as it may, Makole (2022:36) adds his voice to this debate by stating that the South African government should capitalize on professional training and development of officials in the public service and administration, especially on leaders, to become new knowledge workers who can improve the quality of service delivery. The body of literature in teaching professionalism thus require that the distinct values and moral obligations and professional socialization must be developed when the aspirant professional starts with formal education and training.

Over and above formal learning at institutions of higher learning, Lowther and McMillan (2014:4) advance the notion of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through work-based learning as part of learning practical professionalism. They postulate that professional development occurs within the context and challenges of daily professional life, and that many professions already recognise the need for work-based learning at the intern stage, because learning is a normal part of working.

Work-based learning is the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes that enhance individual and organisational performance as a function of completing organisational tasks and roles, while interacting with other people. In promoting CPD, they found a mixture of self-directed learning, formal courses and organisational strategies, with the most effective learning taking place as a result of work-based teaching, preparation and supervision. Some of these organisational strategies include seminars, conferences and professional committees.

Budding et al. (2022:565) agree on the importance of acquiring the correct skills, abilities and talents to adequately fulfil their roles. In this context, they define skills as context-dependent knowledge, meaning that knowledge must be relevant to that field. Emotional, motivational and normative characteristics and ethics can also not be discounted.

In a study aimed at investigating if teaching professionalism to Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) students in an undergraduate bachelor's program at the University of Alberta in Canada through written or video case-studies impacted a student's behaviour, Wong et al. (2021:1) determined that professionalism is not taught as such, but most often learned through the hidden curriculum. It is a multidimensional construct that is difficult for educators to accurately assess,

especially in the traditional assessment approaches that encourage students to memorize material, likely resulting in poor performance outcomes and reduced knowledge retention. To teach professionalism, the best approach is ‘case-based learning’ (CBL). This methodology uses real-life situations to encourage students to engage in the practice of problem-solving skills. Wong et al. (2021) write about CBL as a well-documented approach to teach professionalism to health care students. It provides the ability to increase students’ understanding and ability to link psychosocial and humanistic variables to professionalism.

There is a counter-thought to teaching professionalism. Slabbert (2011:216) when assessing the requirements of being a ‘fit and proper’ person for the legal profession argues that a successful practitioner, an attorney or an advocate, does not need to be trained on qualities such as integrity and impeccable honesty, meaning nothing should ever be done for personal gain. Other qualities are objectivity in dealing with matters, dignity in how they conduct themselves in and outside the practice and respect for the legal order and a sense of equity or fairness.

However, these sound like personal values, which cannot be transferred from person to person.

2.4 Professionalisation in the South African Public Service

Available literature indicates a vastly fragmented approach to suggestions on professionalisation. Hart (2012) explored the professionalisation of ‘community development work’ in South Africa, indicating that steps had been taken in the accreditation process for creating the new professional legal framework and an organising body for establishing both the practice of community development and community development practitioners as professionals into an independent community development professional council.

Gamble and Hewlet (2022) suggested professionalisation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) educators. Their review of international literature indicated that improvement of teacher quality through professionalisation is generally promoted to solve some concerns about the quality of education. The South African policy leaders in the education space started with credentialing in the form of minimum formal qualification requirements for TVET educators. This is meant to improve the quality of TVET colleges’ outputs.

Kroukamp and Cloete (2018) and Mafunisa (2003) also explored improving professionalism in South African local government. This exploration suggests that there is professionalism in the local government, albeit not at acceptable levels to improve service delivery. The reasoning for targeting local government is because of continuous financial irregularities,

maladministration, corruption, mismanagement, service delivery protests, and lack of trust by citizens, whereas the expectation of citizens is available, efficient, professional, and dignified manner when they access services. So, to improve this situation, Kroukamp and Cloete (2018:16) propose that particular competencies and capabilities be acquired by employees through training to promote more professional conduct. This should be coupled with creating an environment that is more responsive high performance and clear accountability be created. Levin (2017:136-149) tables a formidable discussion on how monitoring and evaluation in government can be professionalised. He noticed how M&E has now taken shape as a discipline and a requirement in all government spheres, especially parliament and the executive, and how academia has responded with various courses in the field (Levin 2017:136).

All the occupations alluded to earlier in this section are occupations that are also found in government. The question that can be asked is why there has been so much fragmentation in seeking professionalisation of the public service. The result of this fragmentation has meant the establishment of several regulatory bodies to manage these occupations as professions, although they are all part of the same government. So far, perhaps until every occupation attains 'professional' status, there will always be ambiguities in terms of both professionalism and managerialism.

Giacomelli (2020:1625) explains that managerialism might be a matter of meaningful management intertwined with professionalism in daily practices. This brings about hybrid professionalism. In a hybrid situation, services, for example, might still meet classic quality standards, including professional attention, time and humanity, but also meet quality standards like timeliness, speed and efficiency.

In the history of the Republic of South Africa, it is common knowledge that the public service was largely fashioned by its coloniser, the United Kingdom. Even to this day, the footprints of the coloniser remain (Sebola 2019:5). In the table below, the researcher makes a comparison of the Nolan principles in the United Kingdom government versus the African infused Batho Pele principles guiding the public servants of the two countries. The logical conclusion is that the Nolan principles talk to the character of the public servant whereas the Batho Pele principles talk to the comfort and dignity of recipients of public services, presumably without training or sensitizing the public servant about his behavioural responsibilities, as Nolan Principles would have it.

Table 2.2. Comparison of the Nolan Principles and the Batho Pele Principles

Nolan Principles – UK	Batho Pele Principles – SA
The principles are: 1. Selflessness Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest.	BP1: Consultation Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.
2. Integrity Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.	BP2: Service Standards Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.
3. Objectivity Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.	BP3: Access All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.
4. Accountability Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.	BP4: Courtesy Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.
5. Openness Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.	BP5: Information Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
6. Honesty Holders of public office should be truthful.	BP6: Openness and transparency Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.
7. Leadership Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.	BP7: Redress If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.
	BP8: Value for money

	Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money
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Source for Batho Pele Principles:
<https://www.dpsa.gov.za/dpsa2g/documents/sdi/2022/Batho%20Pele%20Revitalisation%20Strategy%202021.pdf>

Source for Nolan Principles: <https://www.isi.net/about/governance-and-management/the-nolan-principles>

Table 2.2 indicates a clear colonial relationship between two countries which use similar values to run government. Both these sets of principles intend to shape the image of government to the people they serve.

2.5 Discussions and Postulations on the Subject of Professionalism and Professionalisation

The phenomenon of professionalism in already professionalised sectors (law, medicine, accounting, and so forth) and professionalisation of others (public service, information technology (IT), education, and so forth) has long been under discussion by numerous scholars around the world. Therefore, there is vast literature on the subjects, albeit mostly specialised rather than generalized. It pertains to professionalisation of various sectors and occupations such as the restaurant industry, the defence sector, public service, monitoring and evaluation, education, IT, and so forth.

A significant volume of the literature pertains to professions discussing changes and advances within specific professions. For example, Bronelli et al. (2022:567) explored professionalism in the defence sector in Brazil and approached the subject as an occupational value and a discourse, an ideology that perhaps helps an occupation advance in its professional recognition. They argue that it justifies privileged positions of occupation to perform duties to society expertly.

Furthermore, professionalisation is seen to be referring to occupations trying to achieve exclusivity by protecting their market. Also, it is used to think about new careers seeking status and recognition of the importance of their work through the standardization of education, training, and qualification of practice. Arena and Jeppesen (2016:3-4) discuss the changes in the Internal Audit profession. They state that the change in the ‘mission’ of internal audit has exposed internal auditors to multiple factors that may be sources of practice variation. As a result, the professional body – the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) – now emphasises the

need to strengthen the identity of the internal audit profession. This can be done by developing the typical structures for professionalism (an altruistic service ideal, formal education, examination and certification of practitioners, common standards of conduct) as well as leveraging the extended Internal Audit role to redefine the contents of the profession. They further present a strong argument for interprofessionalism in which internal auditors come into contact with and become an unavoidable influence on different professional communities that are active in neighbouring fields, such as external audit, risk management, and project management, which may lead to the development of divergent professional identities.

Furthermore, they conclude by saying the internal audit development in the public sector is complicated by the existence of internal performance review units that are separate from internal audit and by the influence of specific public service regulations in relation to accountability and internal controls in the wake of New Public Management (NPM) reforms.

In these diverse sectors (Defence and Internal Audit), the question of professionalisation is regarded as ongoing, to safeguard the professions themselves and ensure continuous development. Tully (2022:67-68) states some historical facts that from the 1930s to the 1960s, sociologists saw professionalism as a special form of occupational work (a ‘profession’) which differentiated professionals from non-professionals by their expertise, dedication and public service.

Therefore, because of their specialised skill and training, professions were expected to be autonomous and possess attributes of trustworthiness. This came with professional bodies emerging to represent and protect the interests of such professions, producing codes of ethics and entry criteria to regulate the professions’ work. In addition, expertise, autonomy, a service ethic and a community orientation became the archetypal attributes of the ‘professional model’.

Though the effectiveness of this model has been debated (Evetts 2013), the term ‘professional’ continues to be linked to high performance and status in the public’s eyes.

Feather (2014: 108) stresses that professionalism is no longer exclusive to professions by stating: ‘people may use professionalism to mean anything they perceive identifies them as being at the top of their field, offering the opportunity for these individuals to be viewed as the guardians of high quality and ethical standards.’. Feather’s postulation is important for this study whose end result is the framework for professionalising the public service. Whilst at this stage of the research it is not clear what that looks like, it is important to note that the framework

may not need to look anything like the traditional professional bodies that are already in existence.

Spano, et al. (2021:51) whilst exploring the shifting identities of Italian public sector managers, because they offer revealing examples of contrasting discourses, found that the initial aspirations of the new public manager (NPM) were designed to develop discourses of professionalisation, managerialism, autonomy, responsibility, value creation and quality. Instead, the prevalent dissertations tended to focus on issues of financial control, efficacy, efficiency, standardisation and measurement. They deemed it important to reflect upon the intricate sphere of people's interests, which are challenged and re-shaped by discourses. This means that conflicting and contrasting aspects of the discourse may have implications for the organisation.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand a particular phenomenon. They are also formulated to challenge and extend existing knowledge, within the limits of the critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is therefore the structure that supports a theory or theories of a study or research. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory which explains the research problem under study (Miller and Pate; 2019:1211). Adom et al. (2018:438-439) describe it as a phenomenon that explains the path of a research study and anchors it firmly in theoretical constructs. They further explain that findings become more meaningful, acceptable and can be generalised. It further ties up with the conceptual framework that the researcher believes can best explain the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied.

Thus, Sovik (2022:6) postulates that many problems in both philosophy and science come from incoherent theoretical frameworks, and that such problems can be solved by being translated into a more coherent theoretical framework. He therefore suggests that any phenomenon should at least have the lowest number of basic constituents needed to explain it. For any theoretic framework, he deduces 4 basic constituencies as follows: '(1) An area (or a field), (2) values that can be actualized at different places in the field, (3) something that actualizes the values, and (4) some rules that the actualizing follows.'

In the case of this study, the area or field is 'professionalisation', particularly within the public service of South Africa. The second constituency deals with the values that can be actualised;

namely basic values and principles governing public administration articulated in the Constitution of South Africa, as follows:

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. (The Constitution, 1996: ss195)

The third basic constituency is something that actualises the theory. In this case the values are actualised by chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. These values and principles apply to all organisations of state, administration in every sphere of government and public enterprises. Lastly, the fourth basic constituency speaks to the rules that the actualising follow. In this case, subsequent to the Constitution, several policies have been established by public service to realise enliven the values and principles outlined above, for example the Public Service Act, as amended and so forth. It is noted that despite the charge from the Constitution and many other pieces of legislation and policies, the question of professionalisation has not yet taken root in the South African public service.

Given the understanding of the theoretic framework above, this section focuses on the selected theories for the study. Professionalisation is a social construct as it deals with human behaviour within a set space. There are quite a number of theories that deal with this phenomenon.

However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher selected two, namely; 1) theory of modern professionalisation and 2) Habermas's theory of communicative action and 3) The Weberian bureaucratic model of management, used together with the Likert's System 4 management.

2.6.1 Theory of Modern Professionalisation

Lauder and Neary (2019:477) believe that theory holds a two-part meaning when understanding its relationship with practice and professionalisation. For career practice, theory offers guiding strategies and techniques to ensure that exchanges and interrelations with clients are purposeful and move towards identifiable results. They identify two dominant strategies for theoretical extemporisation; 'technical eclecticism (variety) and theoretical integration.' Since theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge, Tully (2022:68-69) begins the theory of professionalisation from a historical view as far back in 1964 where Wilensky (1964) described professionalisation as a process where an occupation seeks formal recognition from the state.

A supporting view later came from Larson (1977) where professionalisation was labelled as an occupation's 'professional project' because it aimed to secure state legislation to protect its markets and elite status, a goal that was often difficult for occupations to achieve. Halliday (1987) later argued that successful professionalisation depended on an occupation's ability to project an extraordinary image. In respect of expertise, he argued that 'the more a profession can represent an area or issue as technical, the more influence it is likely to have. A profession will have influence insofar as it can cultivate the appearance of technicality, whatever the reality (Halliday 1987: 45).'

This conceptual positioning suggested professionalisation could be viewed as a 'cultural and political struggle' (Krejsler 2005, 335). It is a struggle constituted within the complex philosophical spaces that professional actors occupy, where different traditions, epistemologies and values compete for formal recognition and dominance. In the application of the professionalisation theory, Heyen and Salloch (2021:1-5) discuss and analyse the applicability of the theory in the clinical decision-making setting, from which the researcher will draw parallels for the public service. They postulate that professionalisation theory is a distinct sociological framework which provides an elaborated account of what constitutes client-related professional action, such as medical action, at its core and why it is more than pure expertise-

based action. The theory basically deals with structural features of a professional action in general.

In essence, where there is a need for a professional, there is a 'client' in need or in crisis, which they cannot solve autonomously. In their study, they state that there are five features of the professionalisation theory in a professionalised medical field; namely i) a patient with a concern; ii) a physician with expertise to deal with the patient's concern; iii) a physician to help the patient without patronizing them; iv) a physician to give absolute care without being personal and v) a physician who applies expertise to the particularities of the patient.

The parallels drawn for public service in integrating the perspectives of the professionalisation theory features mean that: i) there is a citizen with a concern; ii) there is a public service professional with expertise to deal with the citizen's concern; iii) the public service professional should help the citizen without patronizing the patient; iv) the public service professional should not become personal with the citizen but should give absolute care and v) the public service professional should apply expertise to the particularities of the citizen.

The analysis above revealed that professionalism goes beyond having extraordinary mastery over knowledge and skills of a subject matter. It extends to character, attitude, striving for excellence, competence, behavioural integrity and ethical conduct (Olorunfemi & Oladele 2021:124).

2.6.2 Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action

Jürgen Habermas was a German philosopher who drew his theoretical foundations heavily on the Marxist theories and writings. One of his works between 1973 and 1983 could be seen to be primarily concerned with unravelling the implications of the 'Legitimation Crisis'. Legitimation crisis refers to a decline in confidence in administrative functions, institutions, or leadership, brought about by the crisis tendencies of the capitalist world. Such implications entail the development of a theoretical rebuilding of the competences that people use in everyday communication. This is where the basis of the Theory of Communicative Action came from (Edgar, 2005: 1-3).

Edgar (2005: 38–39) explains Habermas approaches to universal pragmatics, the philosophical study of the necessary conditions for reaching an understanding through communication, as a comprehensive social theory. At one level, this is a continuation of his exploration of the tensions between instrumental and hermeneutic (theory and methodology of interpretation)

practice that had concerned him in the 1960s. While he makes a distinction between non-social instrumental action (which is to say, instrumental work on the natural world) and ‘social action’, he further divides social action into ‘strategic action’ and ‘communicative action’. Strategic action is orientated to success, meaning that the agent takes an objectifying attitude to the social world, and thus seeks to manipulate social ‘objects’. In contrast, communicative action is orientated to mutual understanding. With universal pragmatics (study of how context contributes to meaning), there is a seeking of social actors to produce and sustain everyday social life as stable, ordered and meaningful.

The essence of professionalism, as can be deduced in the literature reviewed, is based on meaningful interaction that is beneficial to both the professional and the client. Professionalisation, therefore, can find its expression and basis on Habermas’s theory of communicative action. This is supported by Kihlström (2020:1-2) who believes that in order to succeed, professionals need to develop capacity to meet new communicative requirements of the globalized and individualized service users.

Links (2019:91) explains that theories can occur at different levels and overarching theoretical constructs (meta-theories) or assumptions that underlie lower-level theories are particularly important (Nestel and Bearman 2015). One critical assumption underlying variation in discourse is epistemological assumptions made about knowledge. For example, two scholars of the same field will differ in ideologies and interpretation based on what they believe. Links believes epistemology matters in theory. However, he also recognises that discourses on professionalism differ beyond epistemology. Each discourse has a different focal point, from personal, interpersonal, to a whole of society perspective, hence the use of a theory framework that combines an awareness of epistemology with the role of the individual in society.

The theory of communicative action befits the profile because it deals with many of the critical issues in modern society; for example, but not limited to; how truth-claims are validated; the relationship between communication, action and social change; a systems perspective; a goal of coordinating action to improve society, professionalism and so forth.

2.6.3 The Weberian Bureaucratic Model of Management and Likert’s System 4 Model of Management

Lunenburg (2017:21) in his work ‘Organisational Structure and Design’ examined several organisational structural frameworks: Weber’s model of bureaucracy, Likert’s system 4 organization, Bolman and Deal’s four-frame model, Mintzberg’s strategy-structure typology,

Scott's open-systems perspective, Senge's learning organization, and Bass's transformational leadership. However, for the purposes of this research, this section will only briefly consider Weber's model of bureaucracy as fundamental and Likert's System 4 organisation as a progressive model from bureaucracy. Max Weber, a German sociologist and author of the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, known for his social action theory, was the first to employ and define the term bureaucracy, a management style he developed through his bureaucratic management theory. He believed that bureaucracy was the most efficient organisational structure. Due to its facilitation of effective structuring of both administrative entities and other organisations. Max Weber's classic analysis of bureaucracy is the theoretical basis of most contemporary organisational structures in organisations.

Lunenburg (2017:22) however indicates that new viewpoints are leading to a decline in the use of bureaucratic structure in modern organisations (Etzioni-Halevy, 2010; Rowan, 1990; Senge et al., 2012). Leaders in the twenty-first century are experiencing a change in some of their duties. One change is a shift away from simply supervising the work of others to that of contributing directly to the organisation's goals. Instead of shuffling papers and writing reports, the modern professional is rather practicing their profession. A bureaucracy consists of the following fundamental elements; which are still largely found in large organisations:

Division of Labour and Specialization; where all tasks are divided into highly specialized jobs, and each jobholder is given the authority necessary to perform these duties.

Rules and Regulations; where each task is performed according to a consistent system of abstract rules. This practice helps ensure that task performance is undeviating.

Hierarchy of Authority; where all positions are arranged according to the principle of hierarchy. Each lower office is under the control of a higher one, and there is a clear chain of command from the top of the organisation to the bottom. Instructions largely come from the top management.

Impersonality in Interpersonal Relations; where impersonal attitude is maintained towards subordinates. This social distance between management and staff helps ensure that rational considerations are the basis for decision making, rather than favouritism or prejudices.

Career Orientation; where employment is based on qualifications and promotions are based on job-related performance. As a consequence, this is perceived to protect employees from random dismissal, which should result in a high level of loyalty.

Igbokwe-Ibeto (2019:3) postulate that civil bureaucracy is created to assist the government via its appointed institutions in executing its tasks and responsibilities, thereby fulfilling its obligations to the public. Bureaucracy as a framework for managing governmental administrative systems has achieved global recognition, which accounts for its prevalence in governmental institutions worldwide. A key reason bureaucracy has gained recognition in political systems is its perceived function in enhancing efficiency in administration. Government resources, whether personnel or materials, are consistently limited compared to the demand for them. Consequently, they must be handled wisely to guarantee that they are allocated justly and evenly among the population.

However, Lunenburg argues that because of the extreme rigidity and intrinsic impersonal nature of the bureaucratic method sparked interest in participatory management. Participatory management signifies different approaches for the organisation design. Support, collaborative leadership, adaptability, and the growth and development of members are essential elements of participatory management. He then introduces the Likert's System 4 approach to management for public administration.

Likert (1981:674) examined System 4 regarding enhancements in public administration in one of his last published writings. Likert characterized a System 4 leader as supportive, accessible, pleasant, easy to converse with, develops the team members into a unified group connected by individuals who share overlapping roles, assists subordinates in their tasks by ensuring they receive all essential resources and sets ambitious, straightforward performance objectives.

Wilson (2010:35) discussed that Likert discovered that, with the application of this management theory, managers may be afraid of employees who will seize power, leading to a loss of control for the manager. However, there was also assurance through research employees respond positively and with enhanced collaboration and higher productivity when their managers if an organisation adopted System 4.

With these theories of management, the researcher believes that the study is anchored firmly from the historic to the modern era.

2.7 Professionalisation in the International Arena

The Republic of South Africa is a member of various international and development organisations such as SADC (Southern African Development Community), SACU (Southern African Customs Union), and a signatory to various international treaties. Afegbua (2021:105) notes that the issue of professionalisation has been a subject of debate since the beginning of

the 20th century; however, the intensified global move of professionalising the public service has gained momentum over the past few decades. This, they say, is due to democratic governments seeking partnerships in governance to achieve social-economic development through progressive social development policies. This therefore necessitates a change and improvement in behaviour and culture.

The desired result is transformation and elimination of prevalent characteristics such as ‘corruption, low productivity, inefficiency, lack of transparency and accountability’. Governments are seen to be putting in some efforts to reach effectiveness and efficiencies in the public service. For example, agriculturists in the European countries have, over the years, introduced several reforms into the service delivery systems approaches, models and methods as part of attempts to overcome the challenges of poorly trained personnel, poor linkages in the innovation system and poor work ethics in general without the desired impact.

However, as clearly explained by Olurunfemi and Oladele (2021:124), it is necessary to develop and institutionalise proper policy frameworks that outline a set of values, beliefs, or philosophies that serve as a foundation for service delivery and professionalisation. Such frameworks should consider involving accreditation, registration and certification. This, according to these authors, remains an indispensable way to enhance capabilities, work ethics, integrity, accountability, and efficiencies in service delivery. Ullrich, et al. (2023:749) documented the journey of social work professionalisation in Germany and Singapore. They outlined the most important aspects that were installed in the process, thus qualifying social work occupation to be a profession as follows:

(1) An occupation must enjoy ‘Public recognition’

Public recognition entails the establishment of formal licensing procedures. Singapore and Germany established such licensing procedures, which made it a requirement for licenses to apply for social work positions. Germany adopted state-recognised licensing to ensure standards of practice for the title of Social Worker. This entails a separate qualification over and above the degree, plus a practical experience of at least one year after studying.

(2) An occupation must exercise ‘Monopoly over social care’

Monopoly in this case means exclusivity of certain rights to perform specified tasks and functions. For example, in Germany certain areas of social work practice (child protection work or mental health social work) hold a legal monopoly over their field and are based on specific

legislation that outlines tasks that may only be performed by social workers. In Singapore, non-social-work-trained personnel working in social work settings are called social work associates instead of social workers. For them to attain the title of ‘social worker’, they have to go back to university and complete a graduate diploma in social work.

(3) An occupation must exercise ‘Professional autonomy’

Professional autonomy includes decision-making based on professional and not organisational goals. Singapore and Germany exercise professional autonomy in very similar ways to social workers in Germany. The more experienced social workers can be considered an expert for a specific area.

(4) An occupation must have ‘Specific knowledge base’

The fourth key feature of a profession is its knowledge base. Both in Germany and Singapore, scientific journals, textbooks, and conferences reflect the knowledge base of social work. Funding for research is usually made available by state agencies such as the European Union, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the German Research Foundation (DFG) and several research foundations in Germany and Singaporean government and private sector. As a result, considerable theory development has occurred in both countries.

(5) ‘Educational system’ must be in place

A higher education degree with coursework for at least three years qualifies social work for a profession and licensure in both countries, Germany and Singapore. There are particular courses such as clinical psychology, law, politics, and practical techniques such as counselling and case-management that are fundamental and prescribed in this qualification.

(6) ‘Social work organisations’ for licensure

There is a variety of professional social work organisations at the local and national level both in Singapore and Germany. Such organisations are established to promote the interests of members and beneficiaries of social work and raise the skills of social workers, thereby enhancing the proficiency level of the profession. All qualified social workers are entitled to membership.

(7) There must be a ‘Code of ethics’

A code of ethics in Germany entails principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities, while Singapore issued the code of professional ethics

in the early 1990s through the National Social Work Competency Framework, which outlines the knowledge and skills required for effective service delivery.

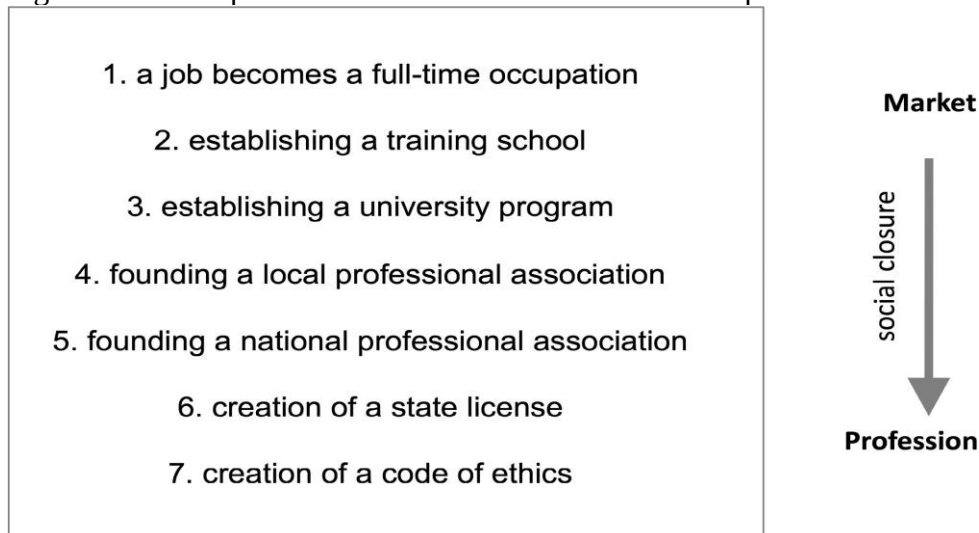
(8) The profession should bring ‘Status and prestige’

Lastly, Ulrich et al. bring in the issues of status and prestige. In Germany, social workers do not enjoy a very high status in society compared to other relieving and caring lines of work. Salaries are lower than in the teaching profession. One of the reasons may be the rather general and unspecific definition of social work, which leads to a lack of understanding of the actual work performed by social work professionals. In Singapore, the profession has been gaining more recognition with salaries quite comparable to those of many other professions such as teaching.

In terms of models of professionalisation and its implications on the Planning profession, Mieg and Oevermann (2021) emphasise that having a model for professionalisation is helpful, but they also argue that no single model can adequately explain everything.

First professionalisation model: characterized by a process that involves a step by step guide to establish a profession, which shows a path of dependency:

Figure 2. 1: First professionalisation model: The order of professionalisation



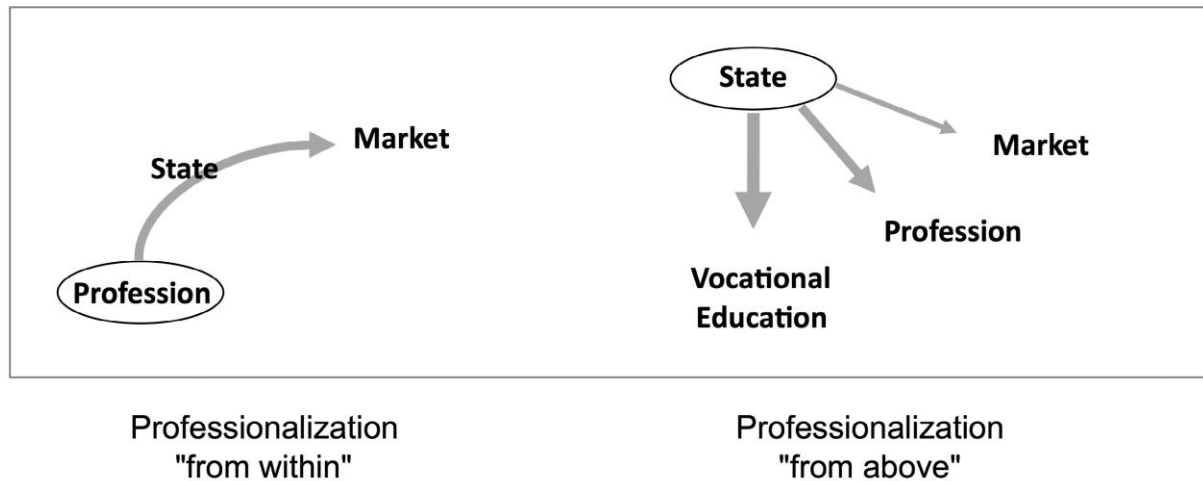
Source: (Mieg and Oevermann 2021:8)

Second professionalisation model: Anglo-American vs. Continental form

In the Anglo-American form of professionalisation (left side), a profession requires the state to provide specific market regulations and itself depends on the market. In the Continental form of professionalisation (right side), the state regulates both the market and professions.

Furthermore, the state also defines and controls occupational education that must be undertaken for recognition of an occupation.

Figure 2. 2: Second professionalisation model: profession asks the state for specific market



Source: (Mieg and Oevermann 2021:9)

Third professionalisation model: The discourse of professionalism

In this model, professions cooperate with states, companies, and universities in defining what professionalism is.

Figure 2. 3: Third professionalisation model: The discourse of professionalism



Source: (Mieg and Oevermann 2021:9)

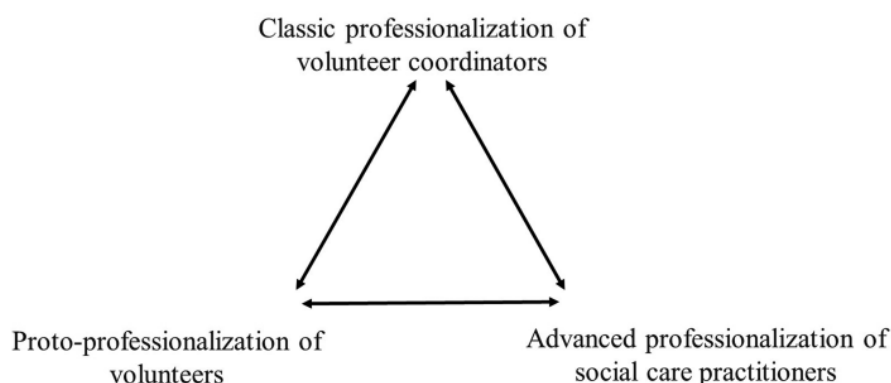
Van Bochove and Oldenhof (2020:121) further discuss three professionalisation strategies that an organisation can employ in the professionalisation process through the platform of volunteerism in social care. Similarly to Mieg, the first strategy identified by these authors is the ‘Classic’ professionalisation that mimics established professionals such as lawyers. The classic strategies follow the route of ‘building of associations and educational programs as well as the establishment of work codes and protocols that standardize technical expertise and service ethics. This is what they call professionalisation from within, when an occupation group wants to improve its status.

The second strategy is recognised by Evetts (2011) who argues that it is also important to ‘look at professionalisation strategies imposed ‘from above’ by the organisation to discipline the worker into adopting new work methods and responsibilities’. This strategy may meet with resistance if change management is not properly engaged in the process. The two strategies can both be employed to achieve the desired result. The third strategy entails proto-professionalisation.

The authors argue that lay persons may have learned to express their problems and needs in a proto-professional vocabulary that is recognizable and legitimate in the eyes of professionals. In this sense, lay persons try to gain power in a professional domain. This strategy can also be implemented ‘from above’ when public service organisations want to distribute responsibilities to non-professional and low-level staff.

The figure below illustrates the professionalisation strategies Van Bochove and Oldenhof suggested on professionalisation of voluntarism in the occupations they researched:

Figure 2. 4. Three interrelated professionalisation strategies



Source: Bochove (2020:121).

Martin et al. (2020:1-15) explored the professionalisation of early childhood development in Australia. They conducted interviews with 20 Educational Leaders in two Australian government jurisdictions. They found that there was a significant gap between government policy orientation toward quality improvement and the project of professionalisation of the field that motivates Educational Leaders. That led the researchers to conclude that the Educational Leaders were more motivated by the idea of professionalisation as a prerequisite towards raising the status and capacity for high-quality outcomes. That is to say, a focus on professionalisation considers the international policy focus on quality. This further denotes that high-quality performance is assumed already; however, the Educational Leaders were now consumed with elevating the status of their profession for better recognition.

In the continent of Africa, professionalisation has been a bone of contention for the past few decades. Afegbua (2015:104), evaluating progress in the professionalisation of the Nigerian public service, argues that the public service, by its very nature as one of the agents of development in any nation, carries the burden of transformation of its society, particularly the developing ones. Therefore, such societies depend on the effectiveness and efficiency of their Public Service. He further emphasises that professionalisation in the public service is an overarching value that determines how its activities will be carried out and no public service can meet the challenges of the twenty first century without a strong commitment to the professionalisation of its workforce. With this in mind, Afegbua says Nigeria has generally weak institutions holding government to account, and corrupt practices in public sector organisations are commonplace.

From 1985 to 2015, Nigeria has had five specific reform attempts aimed at refurbishing the professional status of the Nigerian civil servant. The reform programmes include 1) the 1985/1988 Phillips Commission, 2) the Ayida Reform of 1995, 3) the Obasanjo Renewal Programme, 4) Yar'Adua Civil Service Reform Programme and 5) the present Jonathan Transformation Agenda. All these reforms had one objective; namely 'reconstructing the personnel of the Nigerian civil servants through professionalising the Nigerian civil service and its human resource management architecture.'

With various steps taken by Nigerian government over the stipulated years, including reskilling, innovation, policies for accountability, modernizing core operations through ICT, specialization, job matching, research and other steps; the researcher concluded that despite the introduction of these many efforts towards professionalisation and innovation in Nigeria, the

public bureaucracy is plagued with numerous problems related to the politicisation of crucial offices and that has hampered its ability to fulfil an effective role in governance in the country. Several offices in the civil service were at one point or the other politicised by the military.

In the United States of America (USA), Reddick et al. (2020:207) surveyed progress of professionalisation of City Managers of the states. They indicate that professions in general, exert influence in society, but not without controversy in the field of public administration. History has it that professions arose in the Progressive Era, which was a time of reform dominated by belief in rationality, efficiency, and scientific advancement. Therefore Leonard White (1935) was among the first to introduce professionalisation ideas to the then developing field of public administration.

Since then, the professionalisation of public administration was viewed as both unlikely and problematic. However, continuous research and analysis supports arguments that public service professionalisation is possible and also clarifies the pathways toward this important goal.

In China, Ni et al. (2022) explored the professionalisation of construction workers in the built environment in 414 companies across China. The challenge was intense burnout experienced by construction workers as they were mostly migrant individuals with fewer rights in the country. Ni et al. agreed that these construction workers have greatly assisted China's urbanisation and social development. A comparison was made between the industrial workers in other developed countries and migrant construction workers in China.

In the developed countries, their counterparts enjoy a high social status, in high technical quality environment, stable positions in terms of job security and legal labour security rights; whereas migrant workers in China's construction industry have many problems. Being uneducated and lacking vocational skills, for the most part, contributed to the hindrance of sustainable development of the construction industry.

At an organizational level, the unprotected working environment, high staff turnover, and lack of safety training all pose great challenges for organization management, which may even affect construction safety. In addition, migrant workers in the Chinese construction industry suffer from low social status, difficulties in protecting their legal rights and interests, and are often without a sense of belonging. All this has a negative impact on the healthy development of the industry as well as the general well-being of the workers. Ni et al. (2022) advocated for the promotion of the migrant workers for professional transformation in the construction industry of China. Increased professionalisation will eliminate job burnout which is often

caused by excessive job demands and can create quality employment and an improvement in the job conditions for construction workers, as evidenced by a reduction in job demand and an increase in job resources. They therefore reasonably presumed that a higher level of professionalisation might better balance the relationship between job demands and resources and thus alleviate workers' job burnout. Similarly, Frelin (2013:1) analysed the issue of workload and professionalism among teachers versus the number of students they teach. It was found that a class with 20 learners is more manageable and makes a physical tangible difference compared to a class with 30 learners.

Additionally, it was found that the time that teachers spent with each learner; in terms of managing relationships doubles. Teacher time spent with students has proven to be especially valuable for the results of unprivileged learners.

Reddick et al. (2020:208) traced the history of professionalisation of the public service as a whole as far back as 1938, when scholars of the time warned of the narrow focus that professionalisation might produce, based on either personal or professional interests (or both), as opposed to the broader public interest to the current progress where the long-established International City/County Management Association (ICMA) continues to show in the professionalisation of City Managers. They state that City Manager professionalisation has progressed more rapidly than other areas of public administration.

The ICMA maintains a credentialing program for City Managers, which requires continuous training. The ICMA also offers training programs, which augment their annual conference program. They also support research in the field, online networking, and an extensive library of professional publications that can be accessed by City Managers in the course of executing their duties.

2.8 The South African Public Service

The professionalisation of the South African public service has been a debate for a long time in a quest for effective, efficient, accountable and a responsive government. Chapter 4 of this study will delve deeper into the issues plaguing the Republic. However, a high-level review of the state of affairs is prudent. The National Development Plan, Vision 2030 highlights major deficiencies in the public service that have led to stagnancy in development, resulting in less professionalism. Such deficiencies as unevenness in state capacity lead to uneven performance at local, provincial and national government; skills deficit; quick change in development policies; policies political interference in appointment of senior and executive management and

erosion of accountability and authority; poor organisational design; and many others (NDP 2012: 364).

Singo and Mafunisa (2023:386) acknowledge the efforts of The National School of Government (NSG) which in 2020 reported that ‘the 6th Administration of the South African government under President Cyril Ramaphosa is committed to inculcate a culture of professionalism in the public service. The President raised the concern that achieving a clean audit does not necessarily translate to the idea of professionalism.’ The report also highlights that setting up a professional and ethical public service was one of the President’s priorities when assuming the Office.

In October 2022, government approved a ‘National Framework towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector’. The Framework sits on five pillars; namely: Recruitment and selection; Induction and onboarding, Planning and performance management; Continuing learning and professional development and lastly; Career progression, succession planning and management of career incidence of Heads of Departments (A National Framework towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector; 2022:9). The Framework and its deliverables will be explored further in Chapter 4.

2.9 Chapter Summary

The literature review revealed how multi-faceted the professionalisation phenomenon is. This chapter sought to explore the definitions of the terms professional, professionalism and professionalisation. The literature review showed that there is not one definite definition of each of these terms. However, there are common characteristics in the majority of scholarly writings as fundamentals to ensure professionalism is in place in an organisation. From the common attributes of a professional, as stated by various authors such as discipline, integrity, caring, ethical, and so forth to the organisational level such as minimum prescribed academic qualifications; organising and certification of practitioners of an occupation (with practice numbers in some instances); codes of conduct; exercising autonomy; promotion of prestige for that occupation; and so forth.

Another important revelation from the literature was that of ‘teaching’ professionalism as a subject or module as opposed to what is commonly known as continuous professional development. Continuous professional development pertains to course work designed to enhance the occupation, whereas teaching professionalism pertains to the actual teaching of the subject as part of making one a professional.

Literature also revealed the various attempts to professionalise ‘occupations’ such as teaching, social work, community development, farming, and so forth. Many of such occupations are found within the public service, thus making it difficult to coin a one-size-fits-all approach to professionalise the public service. This has promoted a lot of fragmentation in the professionalisation of the public service. However, there are steps suggested by scholars on how best to implement the professionalisation project.

Therefore, an organisation seeking to professionalise its occupations would choose what is feasible and applicable in their space as it resonates with the organisational values, vision and mission. Strategies to professionalise also revealed varieties with none prominently dominating, as the organisation seeking professionalisation would have to employ what would yield their desired results.

The chapter also explored the theories underpinning the study; that is, modern theory of professionalisation and Habermas’s theory of communicative action. Literature on the three theories was found to be befitting to anchor the professionalisation study. Knowledge of a subject must be tested against a particular theory for validation and justification. The theory of modern professionalisation can be deemed as obvious; while Habermas’s theory of communicative action deals with the necessary aspect of change as prompted by the need to professionalise. The Weberian theory adds historic and a truer picture of the current situations in terms of organisational structures in many world governments, including the South African government. The importance of epistemology was also emphasised.

The international arena on professionalisation of occupations and public service was also explored. Examples from Europe, Asia, America, Australia and Africa were examined, wherein it was found that there are vast variations in approaches to professionalisation and there are numerous factors that must be considered in order to achieve success, for example; commitment to the cause, less interference on the political front, necessary benchmarking, correct diagnosis of the situation and employment of the correct approach and methodology to professionalise. Attempts to professionalise various professions have been and continue to be made around the globe.

Having considered the definitions from various authorities above, for the purpose of this study, a profession shall entail an exclusive occupation that is governed by some regulations which one wishing to enter would have to undergo theory-based academic qualification pathways and

subject themselves to such set norms, standards and ethics so as to uphold the pre-established values of the profession.

In line with Birmray, et al (2019), for the purpose of this study, professionalism therefore shall entail a ‘conduct, qualities, values, vision, mission and/or goals that are preset to characterise a profession and a description of behaviours that are expected from individuals who join the profession. There are significant conclusions deduced from the review of literature. These conclusions are considered in the proposed framework in Chapter five.

The next chapter will deal with the Research Methodology applied in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The lessons and conclusion from the previous chapter cement the choice of the research study. Professionalisation, as it deals with elements such as continuous professional development, exclusive occupations, professionals and so forth; these are abstract social concepts that are better studied under the qualitative design. This chapter discusses extensively the research design and methodology for the study.

When do people conduct research? Exploring deeper into the daily activities of the world, whether one is going to work, cooking and doing laundry at home, sitting at a school desk, having conversation with friends, planning and going on vacation or one is in the formal space of knowledge pursuit; it can be concluded that research occurs every day. In the simplest of definitions, Song (2021:407) quotes Booth et al., the authors of *The Craft of Research*, who define research as a conversation undertaken by the researcher to free the public from ‘ignorance, prejudice and half-baked ideas’ anybody tries to impose on other people.

Rosenstein (2019:3) postulates that there are various reasons research is conducted; whether it is ‘to advance understanding of a topic, to evaluate interventions, to predict behaviour, to understand differences between groups, and so forth.’ Kothari (2004:2) adds the following reasons for conducting research: ‘Desire to: get a research degree along with its consequential benefits; face the challenge in solving the unsolved problems; get intellectual joy of doing some creative work; be of service to society; get respectability.’ Elizabeth Kay, Editor of *Evidence-Based Dentistry* scholarly journal emphasises that there must be a very good reason to conduct research; if it doesn’t change a situation or improve lives then it is not worth carrying out (Kay, 2022: 3)

However, there is no doubt that there are many other scholars and writers who give more and different reasons for undertaking research. The main objective of this study is to examine the feasibility of professionalising the public service and to propose a framework for how this can be done effectively. Therefore, the attainment of this objective can only be done through research. It is essential then to study the scientific research methods to make an informed choice on the one this study should focus on. This chapter will seek to describe and discuss the research methods used to conduct research in general and the one chosen in the study at hand. This will include the research design (population and sampling, data collection and data analysis) and rigor (qualitative validity and reliability).

3.2 Philosophical Stance for the study

Boru (2018:4) describes the philosophical assumptions as a cluster of beliefs that dictates what should be studied, how research should be done and how the results should be interpreted. Philosophical assumptions can further be described as the general outlook of life as seen from the lens of the researcher. These include views, opinions, assumptions and so forth. The researcher has her or his definition of truth and reality (ontology) and knowledge assumptions together with how it is gathered (epistemology). Therefore, the methodological choice of a researcher is determined by the philosophical assumptions about ontology/ human nature and epistemology human knowledge.

Gillespie et al. (2024:26) believe that epistemology guides the research, though this might not always be apparent. However, every aspect of a research project, starting from the topic and the question for investigation to data gathering and ending with how these data are analysed – reflects epistemological choices. As epistemology concerns the researcher's theory of knowledge and the criteria used to validate knowledge, it always remains an integral part of a study.

This study assumes the epistemological stance, particularly interpretivism, due to its nature of exploring human behaviours in the corporate world to what is or must be professionalism. It draws on a social psychological approach in which the basic assumption is that specific psychological characteristics (primarily related to cognition and personality, as well as specific social and organisational variables such as values (individual or organisational) impact a person's beliefs and thus influence behaviour.

To further illustrate the point, the epistemological stance will explore why some people behave professionally and others do not. The researcher, therefore, has collected information about their beliefs, preferences, identities and so forth. This assumes that the respondents in the study understand and respond on the variables being examined through truthful reflections, as they write their responses to the questionnaire presented to them and that on the whole, they are not motivated to deceive the researcher. However, ontological nuances cannot be avoided, as they influence how the person views life and specifically professionalism in the workplace.

3.3 Types of research designs

As a researcher gets down to choose the design and the research process, it is imperative to consider the characteristics that must be present for a study to qualify as research. Kumar (2011:28-29) lists such characteristics as follows, but not limited to:

Controlled – In real life there are many factors that affect an outcome. Although in social sciences control is difficult to achieve, there has to be a level the researcher must have, hence they choose a sample and focus on it rather than the whole population. In quantitative studies, when exploring causality in relation to two or more variables, control can be achieved.

Rigorous – a researcher must be reliable in ensuring that the procedures followed to find answers to questions are relevant, appropriate and justified.

Systematic – The processes and procedures adopted to undertake a study must follow a certain logical sequence and these must be mapped out at the outset of the study.

Empirical – The research process must yield conclusions that are based on hard evidence gathered from data collected and analysed to answer the research question.

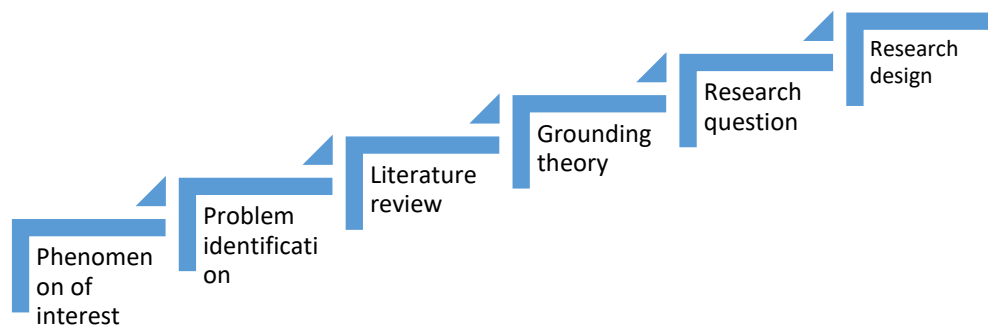
Valid and verifiable – the concept of validity and verifiability means that the study can be peer reviewed by others interested in the phenomenon.

Critical – The research field has long-standing and well-defined processes and procedures a researcher can choose from to employ in their study. Therefore, the process adopted and the procedures used must be able to withstand critical scrutiny. The process has to be full-proof and free from any drawbacks.

Therefore, as the researcher decides on a research design, the above elements must be factored in. Jaradat (2018: 36) defines a research design as a blueprint to guide the research process by laying out how a study will move from the research purpose/questions to the outcomes. A researcher is required to plan a process to use to collect and analyse data in order to increase the understanding of a given topic. He cites three primary stages of research: posing a question to be examined, collecting data to answer the question under examination and presenting an answer to the question.

Peregrine and Yanow (2011:16) have a similar definition which refers to the research design as the basic structure of a research project which includes the plan for investigating per research question at hand, central to the concerns of a particular epistemic community. They shy away from prescribing the basic structure of research to rather say it is determined by the phenomenon to be investigated and the question asked. The researcher determines whether to use interviews, surveys, experiments, participant observation, or investigate secondary or archival sources. The researcher may also combine designs. The basic structure according to Vogt, et al. (2012:12) may sequentially look like this:

Figure 3.1: Research design



Source: Vogt, et al (2012:12)

In chapter 1, the main approaches to research were discussed as qualitative and quantitative. However, further explanations on the two are prudent to note. The art of qualitative research is in exploring and describing, detailing, and interpreting facets of human social life, whereas quantitative research involves prediction and testing of a hypothesis (Durdella, 2020:4). He explains that across social contexts and settings, be it institutions or communities and families; qualitative research focuses on ‘in-depth synthesis, analysis, and interpretation of what it means to live as members of groups and in human societies.’

Berg (2001:3) differentiated the two by explaining that the concept of quality is essential to the nature of a phenomenon, whilst quantity is primarily an amount of something. Therefore, he referred to quality as the what, how, when, and where of things, that is, its essence and setting. Qualitative research thus refers to the ‘meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things’, whilst quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things.

While qualitative and quantitative (sometimes a combination of the two) used to be the main approaches to research, Kothari (2004:2-6) expands to list and explain more basic types of research approaches which a researcher can choose from as informed by the phenomenon they are investigating. Inclusive of the previously main qualitative and quantitative approaches, the list is as follows:

(i) *Descriptive vs. Analytical*: The main purpose of descriptive research is description of the phenomenon or state of affairs as it exists at present, whereas in analytical research, the researcher has to use facts or information already available and analyse it to make a critical evaluation of the issue at hand.

(ii) *Applied vs. Fundamental*: Applied research focuses on finding a solution to an immediate problem facing a society or an organisation or a practical situation with practical consequences (Song, 2021:408), whereas fundamental research mainly considers generalisations and the construction of a theory.

(iii) *Quantitative vs. Qualitative*: Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. Qualitative research, on the contrary, is concerned with qualitative phenomena, things that cannot be expressed in quantities, for example, human behaviour. However, Vogt, et al. (2012:4) posit that quantitative and qualitative are just adjectives referring to matters of coding measurements and not design. All designs can be used to generate either quantitative or qualitative data or both. The pragmatic approach as postulated by Gillespie, et al. (2024:xi) argues that these designs should always be combined because quantitative methods provide breadth, and qualitative methods provide depth. Therefore, they both add value to the study and make social science more robust, insightful, and emancipatory.

(iv) *Conceptual vs. Empirical*: Conceptual research deals with abstract or intangible ideas or theory that is generally used by philosophers and thinkers to develop new concepts or re-explain the already existing ones, whereas empirical research deals with lived experiential evidence based on observation as a direct or indirect participant in the research, often without due regard for system and theory.

(v) *Other Types of Research*: All other types of research are variations of one or more of the above stated types. They can be driven by either the purpose of research, time required to accomplish the research, the environment in which research is done, or on the basis of some other factors.

3.4 Rationale for choosing the Qualitative approach

Before discussing the rationale for choosing qualitative approach, it is imperative that its opposite or counterpart is discussed. This will give context into the rationale. Boncz (2015:22-23) states that quantitative researchers are inclined towards a deductive approach wherein the researcher collects data on a large sample in order to verify their hypotheses and their theoretical statements, using mainly a questionnaire-based survey. In quantitative research, the use of mathematical-statistical methods is requisite as the large sample and the research results are published in a numerical form taking the requirements of statistical reliability tests into account. Boncz (2015) describes qualitative research as going deeper into where quantitative

does not reach. The results of quantitative research reinforced by numerical data are suitable for verifying hypotheses in many fields but often record only information occurring on the surface and do not allow a deeper understanding of problems, processes, and human behaviour.

Qualitative research methods rescue the situation by focusing on the qualitative insight into phenomena such as collecting and analysing opinions, attitudes and beliefs. Sample selection is usually small because representativeness is not an objective. In qualitative studies, the inductive approach, flexibility and reflexivity are typical.

Tshiyoyo (2012:34) describes the word qualitative as suggesting an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that cannot be experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantities, amount, intensity or frequency. Qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality.

‘Qualitative’ is used if the data collection process followed was through means such as case studies, interviews, narrative studies, ethnography, archival retrieval, participant observation and other qualitative methods. Qualitative researchers seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. Qualitative research methods seek to describe, decode, and translate phenomena. The hallmark of qualitative research is flexibility and sensitivity to the social context in which the data are collected. It employs an approach that confronts the constraints of the everyday social world (Kriek et al. 2009:129).

Some of the characteristics of qualitative research, according to Wiid and Diggins (2009:88) entail focussing on a small sample and real-life experiences of people. Qualitative research can be subjective in its methods and analysis of data as it seeks to understand people’s behaviour, motivations, opinions and attitudes. Data collection methods are usually unstructured and data analysis does not always involve non-statistical methods.

The strengths of qualitative methodology should be emphasised by elaborating on the value of such studies for the following types of research (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:57):

Research that delves in depth into complexities and processes;

Research on little-known phenomena or innovative systems;

Research that seeks to explore where and why policy and local knowledge and practice are at odds;

Research on informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organisations;

Research on real, as opposed to stated, organisational goals;

Research that cannot be done experimentally for practical or ethical reasons; and

Research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified.

Du Plessis and Majam 2010:458 illustrate the differences between and characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in a tabular format as follows:

Table 3.1: Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
Uses mainly an inductive form of reasoning first: develops concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in the data	Uses a deductive form of reasoning: collects data to assess hypotheses and abstract theoretical concepts
Uses an emic perspective of inquiry and therefore derives meaning from the participant's viewpoint	Uses an etic perspective: the researcher determines meaning
Is idiographic: thus aims to understand the meanings people attach to everyday life	Is nomothetic: aims to objectively measure the social world, test hypotheses as well as predict and control human behaviour
Regards reality as subjective	Sees reality as objective
Captures and discovers meaning	Tests hypotheses derived from existing literature
Concepts are in the form of concrete emerging themes and categories	Concepts are in the form of abstract, distinct variables derived from literature
Aims to understand phenomena	Aims to control phenomena
Observations are information rich and are modified to enrich understanding	Observations are systematically undertaken in a standardised manner
Data is presented mainly in the form of words; excerpts from transcripts and documents	Data is presented by means of exact figures gained from precise measurements

The research design is flexible and unique and evolves throughout the research process; no fixed steps are followed and studies cannot be replicated	The research design is standardised according to a fixed procedure and can be replicated
Data is analysed by extracting themes and emerging concepts	Data analysis is undertaken by means of standardised statistical procedures
The unit of analysis is holistic and concentrates on the relationships between elements and contexts. The whole is always more than the sum	The unit of analysis is according to anatomistic variables: elements form part of the whole

Source: Adapted from the Journal of Public Administration. 5(3):456-472

3.4.1 Qualitative Strategies

Creswell (2009:29) argues that in qualitative research, the numbers and types of approaches have also become more clearly visible during the 1990s and into the 21st century. Different books have summarized the various types (such as the 19 strategies identified by Wolcott, 2001), and complete procedures which make processes easier for the researchers are now available on specific qualitative research approaches.

Creswell cites examples such as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) who constructed a picture of what narrative researchers do; Moustakas (1994) who discussed the philosophical tenets and the procedures of the phenomenological method, and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) who identified the procedures of grounded theory. Several qualitative research strategies that can be employed to design a qualitative research are discussed below. It suffices to mention that there are other approaches such as participatory action research and others not mentioned here, which are also viable ways to conduct qualitative studies.

Figure 3.1. Qualitative Research Methods



Source: <https://www.proprofssurvey.com/blog/qualitative-research/>. Accessed on 06 May 2024

Observations: observation is an important aspect of science. Observation is tightly connected to data collection, and there are different sources for this: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, and participant observations. Observational research findings are considered strong in validity because the researcher is able to collect a depth of information about a particular behaviour (Sileyew, 2019:5)

One-on-one interviews: qualitative interviews may be conducted face-to-face, via telephone and with advancement of technology through facetime. Creswell, 2009:134 alude to the fact that interviews can serve to contribute to a more wide-ranging and nuanced understanding of a subject. Even when questions are structured, the participants must be given a leeway to answer open-endedly, so as not to restrict the flow of information.

Focus groups: a researcher may engage in focus group interviews, with a small number of participants (ideally six to eight) in each group. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are largely few in number and intended to extract views and opinions from the participants in a free-flowing conversation and discussion like setting (Cresswell, 2009:169).

Case studies present an opportunity for the researcher to explore in depth a ‘program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.’ Cases are bounded by time and activity, and

researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a continuous period of time.

Phenomenology: the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). In this process, the researcher sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study.

Ethnography is a strategy in which the researcher studies a cultural group in a natural setting over an elongated period of time by collecting data through observation and interviews. The research process is generally flexible and typically develops contextually as the researcher responds to the lived realities he or she is faced with in the field setting.

Grounded theory is a strategy in which the researcher draws a general, abstract theory based on a process, action, or interaction based on the views of participants. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information. The two primary characteristics of grounded theory are the constant analogy of data with evolving categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to exploit the similarities and the differences presented by information.

Narrative research: in addition to the picture above, Creswell adds narrative research as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. This information is then often retold or re-written by the researcher into a narrative account. In the end, the narrative combines views from the participant's life with those of the researcher in a collaborative narrative (Creswell, 2009: 29-30)

Having discussed both quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches to research, the study will adopt the qualitative method because it deals with a social construct or phenomenon which can hardly be measured in a laboratory setting or in quantities. The strategies discussed above are well suited for the study and a combination is used. However, the main strategy is 'case study', whilst other strategies feature less significantly. More discussion on the choice of the case study is reflected below:

3.4.2 Case study

According to Tomaszewski et al. (2020:2-3), a case study is the 'examination of the particularity and complexity of a case, coming to understand its activities and particular circumstances.' Yin (2017:18) outlines case studies' critical features as follows:

Case studies investigate a modern phenomenon in-depth within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. For example, the study at hand investigates professionalisation of the public service through the DOJCD where there are traditional professionals (lawyers) and other managers and senior managers not belonging under a professional body. The lines of professionalism in this case are blurry; hence the researcher undertook the study.

Case studies address the full complexity of a research problem by incorporating multiple sources and types of evidence. The key criterion is the bounded system, so any research situation where the bounded system is central is a candidate for case study. Bounded in research means a case cannot be removed for independent study; it is embedded in a system (Stake, 1995). A case study can be a complete research project in itself, such as in the study of a particular organisation (DOJCD), community, or program (Tshiyoyo, 2012:42). They are also often used for evaluation purposes, for example, an implementation of a mentorship program in 10 departments during a particular period wherein the programme aimed at empowering and supporting new employees in those departments. At the end of this program, an evaluation study may be necessary to assess the effectiveness and improvements in integration of new employees.

The case study method is particularly useful for researching educational interventions because it provides a rich description of all the interrelated factors. Both single and multiple-case designs are acceptable and common. However, this particular study uses a single case design. If a single case design is chosen over a multiple-case design, five elements may apply; (i) critical, (ii) unusual, (iii) common, (iv) revelatory, or (v) longitudinal (Yin, 2017). Multiple cases are typically used for replication of an intervention and to present different contexts.

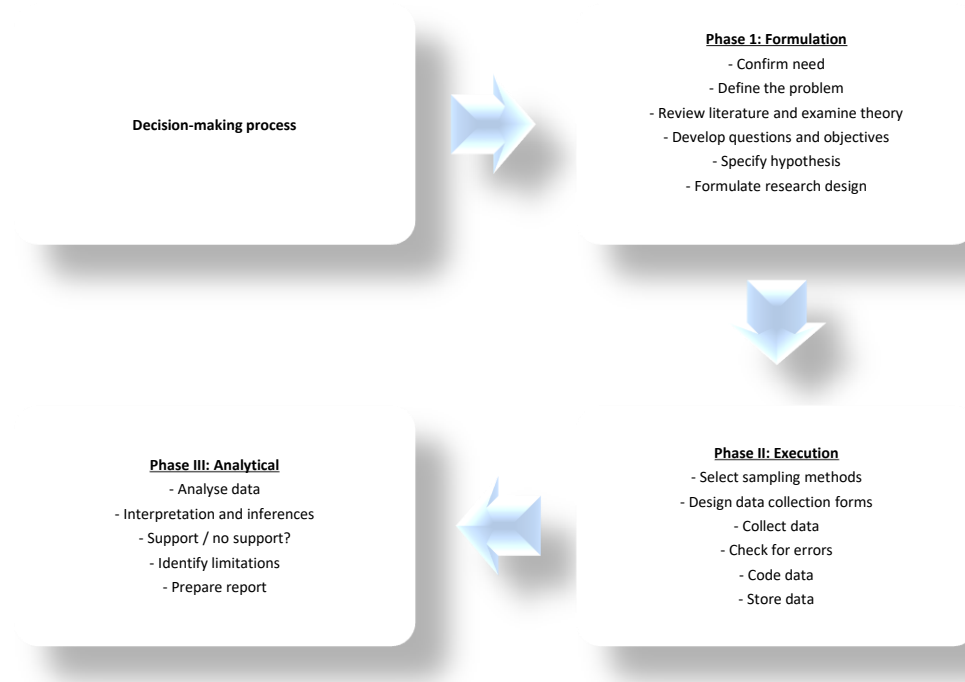
Tshiyoyo (2012:44) asserts that case study is the prevalent method used in public administration research and the findings are then published in professional journals that focus on public administration.

3.5 The Research Process

Hair Jr. et al. (2020) focused their teaching on business research. They acknowledge that research, as truth seeking, happens in all settings, not only in businesses. Furthermore, they suggest a roadmap for the business research process. However, before starting with the research process they observe that, more and more there is recognition of the importance of understanding the environment within which the research will be undertaken. A researcher or an organisation will first conduct a situation analysis or SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the business (Hair Jr. et al., 2020:30-31). The table below is what they suggest to be the basic research process:

The Basic Business Research Project

Figure 3.2 Adapted from Essentials of Business Research Methods

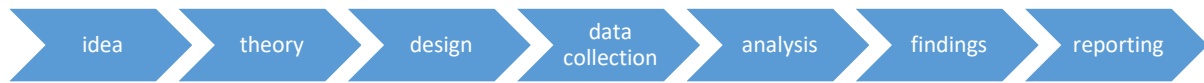


Source: Hair Jr et al, 2020:31

There are various processes a researcher can utilize to get the research done. Berg (2001:19) proposes a simple process wherein a researcher begins with an idea, then gathers theoretical information, decides on the research design, identifies means for data collection, analyses the data, and reports findings.

This may be illustrated as follows:

Figure 3.3: Flow chart process



Source: Adapted from Handbook of Research Methodology: A compendium for Scholars and Researchers. Berg (2021:19)

3.6 Research Methodology

Methodology refers to ‘how’ research is conducted; in other words, how the actual investigation about an issue is handled. Mishra and Alok (2017:1) discuss research methods versus methodology. They argue that research methods include all the techniques and methods which have been taken for conducting research, whereas research methodology is the approach in which research questions are answered meticulously. Therefore, research methodology qualifies as a science of studying how research is conducted systematically.

Research methodology is used to acquire new knowledge. Methods of acquiring knowledge can be vast. Christensen, et al. (2015:23-25) discuss four methods as follows:

Intuition

Intuition is the first approach to acquiring knowledge. This is, according to Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, ‘the act or process of coming to direct knowledge or certainty without reasoning or inferring.’ Christensen et al. (2021) make an example of physics and its predictions that are generally not based on any known reasoning or inferring process; thus making such knowledge appear intuitive in terms of what feels true or right to the thinker. However, the challenge with this method of acquiring knowledge is that there is no mechanism to separate accurate from inaccurate knowledge.

Authority

Authority in this instance refers to information acquired from a person of high social standing or academic achievements as truth without questioning. As in most African cultures, elders pass on information from generation to generation because of the respect they command in society. Because no one questions the information or the source, it becomes accepted as facts. The problem with the authority approach is that the information or facts stated by the authority might be inaccurate.

Rationalism

Rationalism uses reasoning to arrive at knowledge. It assumes that valid knowledge is acquired if the correct reasoning process is used. It incorporates cause and effect rationale to arrive at a conclusion. The challenge with this approach is that two well-meaning individuals can arrive at two different conclusions on one issue and creation of knowledge is possibly compromised.

Empiricism

The last approach discussed by Christensen et al. is empiricism. This method depends on what an individual has experienced, which he will translate as truth. Therefore, what is experienced is acceptable and anything else without proof is rejected. Though problematic as well in its raw form, it can be useful in research as a method to collect data.

These ‘unscientific’ methods briefly discussed above do generate knowledge in society on a day-to-day basis, from generation to generation. This knowledge is hard to dispute as it forms the fabric of society. However, research comes in when certain knowledge must be proved to be true, reliable, and valid and can thus be replicated in different settings. It can be used to inform and change certain traits in behaviour or develop new medication for certain diseases.

3.7 Research question

The researcher’s curiosity about a particular phenomenon leads them to ask a question or questions. This question likely becomes the basis of the research. This question must be answerable. Marczyk et al. (2005:7-8) believe it would be a frustrating and possibly a costly exercise to attempt to answer an unanswerable question through a research investigation. An example of an unanswerable question is ‘Can a human being walk to the moon’? To attempt scientific research to answer this question would soon prove futile given the vast distance of the two planets and the atmospheric conditions under which a human being exists.

One example of an answerable question would be: ‘What is the distance between the earth and the moon?’ With the current scientific tools, this question can be investigated using established research methods and answered with reasonable accuracy. The answer to this question can then lead to further research into tools and means to reach the moon. Therefore, it is imperative to ask questions that have to do with the advancement of humanity and creation of new knowledge.

Kumar (2011:22) asserts that research is ‘a way of thinking’, critically examining issues of day-to-day life in the social and professional world. Examining issues leads to asking questions.

The study at hand came as a result of such curiosity. So many questions could be asked regarding professionalism and professionalisation such as whether professionals in the public and private sector differ in any way, or why the South African public service is only now showing interest in professionalisation. More questions could be asked as to what it will take to professionalise the public service or if there is a standard, local or international, to benchmark against. Another interesting question that can be asked is if the public servants are indeed interested in professionalization.

A myriad of other questions can be asked, given the fact that professionalisation phenomenon has long been on the radar of scholars worldwide. However, an actual framework that has proven to work has been elusive in that there is little material pointing to clear successes of professionalisation in this instance. Therefore, each country or organisation implements professionalisation as they see fit, using the benchmarks set by current professional bodies for certain occupations.

The professionalism phenomenon is vast and it is applied differently in different settings. Oftentimes, the bad and unacceptable behaviour of an official in an organisation would be referred to as ‘unprofessional’. This term would be applied loosely without the organisation spelling out what is expected from officials. Unprofessional behaviour in the workplace, as observed by this researcher, has been attributed to actions or conduct that are inappropriate or unacceptable, such as, rudeness to clients, disrespect towards colleagues, tardiness in one’s work or tasks, late-coming, drunkenness during office hours, engaging in office gossip, misuse of office resources and many other actions that lead to an unhealthy work environment.

Furthermore, the Public Service of South Africa, through the DPSA, is currently implementing a recently approved framework for professionalisation of the public service. Because professionalisation is a relatively new phenomenon, the study aims to contribute immensely to the process.

The research question in this study pertains to the advancement of the South African public service and ultimately the betterment of the service delivery ethos by the public servants. As stated in Chapter 1, the main research question and sub or secondary questions are repeated here as follows:

The main research question of this study is:

Can the South African Public Service be professionalized?

Secondary research questions of this study are:

- What can be the best framework to professionalise the South African public service?
- Are public servants interested in professionalisation of the public service?
- What is the role of Academia in the professionalisation question?
- How are other countries dealing with the professionalisation conundrum?

The main objective of the study is:

- To determine if the South African Public Service can be professionalized.

The secondary objectives of this study are:

- To investigate the best framework to professionalise the South African Public Service;
- To ascertain whether public servants are actually interested in the process of professionalisation of the public service;
- To explore the role of Academia in the professionalisation question; and
- To recommend lessons the South African public service can draw from other countries internationally on professionalisation of public service.

To attempt to answer these questions, the researcher underwent a rigorous process of literature review. In the process, articles were sourced from journals, both local and international. Relevant books on the subjects 'public service' and 'professionalisation' were also sourced. Chapter two contains the literature reviewed and a summary of preliminary findings in the Conclusion heading of the chapter. The importance of the literature review is in defining and contextualising the concepts that characterise the study (Tshiyoyo, 2012:29).

Further to literature review, this chapter discusses the study design including methods of data collection. In this case, face to face, virtual interviews based on a pre-determined questionnaire were approved for use in this study. In implementing the questionnaire, the researcher interviewed the selected participants per sampling methods necessary for the study. Whilst some agreed to a face-to-face and or virtual interview, in some instances, the participants chose to complete the questionnaire by themselves. However, they indicated that the researcher could contact them for clarification and further discussions.

3.8 Research Design

Designing a research study comes after having identified the variables in a problem situation and developing the theoretical framework, which forms the basis of the study. The research must be designed in such a way that the required data can be gathered and analysed to arrive at

a solution. Sekaran (2003:118-120) in the table below, shows what the research design typically looks like, with elements such as purpose of the study, type of investigation, extent of researcher interference, study setting, unit of analysis, and the time horizon. Given these elements, the researcher must still take appropriate decisions for the study design based on the problem definition, the research objectives, extent of rigor desired, and cost considerations where cost is applicable. Sekaran (2003) acknowledges that sometimes, the study is influenced by the time and costs involved, wherein a researcher might then be forced to settle for less than the ‘ideal’ research design. For example, the researcher might have to conduct a cross-sectional instead of a longitudinal study, do a field study rather than an experimental design, choose a smaller rather than a larger sample size, and so forth. The trade-off between rigor and resources becomes a calculated and conscious decision a researcher makes based on the scope of and reasons for the study.

Table 3.2 Problem statement

PROBLEM STATEMENT	Purpose of the study	Types of investigation	Extent of Researcher interference	Study setting	Measurements and measures	Data analysis
	Exploration Description Hypothesis testing	Establishing: – Causal relationships – Correlations – Group differences, ranks, etc.	Minimal: Studying events as they normally occur Manipulation and/or control and/or simulation	Contrived Non-contrived	Operational definition Items (measure) Scaling Categorizing Coding	1. Feel for Data
	Unit of analysis (population to be studied): Individuals Dyads Groups Organisations Machines etc.	Sampling Design: Probability/ nonprobability Sample size (n)	Time Horizon: One-shot (cross-sectional) Longitudinal		Data-collection Method: Observation Interview Questionnaire Physical measurement Unobtrusive	2. Goodness of Data 3. Hypotheses testing

Source. Adapted from Research Skills for Business: A Skill-Building Approach Fourth Edition. p118

As shown in the table 3.2 above, each element of the research design suggests several critical points. The extent of scientific rigor in a research study depends on how carefully the researcher chooses the appropriate design alternatives, taking into consideration its specific purpose. For example, if millions in monetary terms are to be invested, then the researchers must be very careful of the design they choose to achieve precision and the acceptable level of confidence. It is important to note that the more sophisticated and rigorous the research design is, the greater the time, costs, and other resources spend on it will be.

3.9 Population and Sampling

Durdella (2020) describe this stage of the research as the point where the rubber meets the tar. Population and sampling happen when the design and methodology has been decided, given the nature of phenomenon that is being investigated. This part of the research foreshadows what the fieldwork will look like. It is where data is collected through various means of primary and or secondary sources.

The researcher decides the format of how to obtain data from the sources such as websites, people, animals, archives, geographic areas and so forth. This is where the researcher will spend a significant amount of time and resources getting responses to questions. In many cases in qualitative research, sites refer to physical or virtual (or both) locations where the researcher establishes and/or maintains relationships with caretakers or sponsors and work with informants to navigate the local scene and set up interviews, observations, and so on with participants.

Boncz (2015: 25) explains that because one cannot examine the entire population, a smaller group must therefore be selected, then extrapolation will be made from the findings of the smaller group. Hence, sampling involves determining and selecting the sphere of those or what to be studied. Interestingly, the sample represents all the elements, while the elements are the basic units about which information is collected and serve as the basis of the analysis. The population may consist of, for example, 1000 Attorneys and a sample of 100 may be chosen for a particular study. The findings from the hundred represent all 1000.

The population of the study at hand consists of approximately 1.1 million public servants inclusive of all three tiers of government; i.e. national, provincial and local. Within this cohort there are a number of traditional professionals with memberships in professional bodies that govern them. For example, doctors are governed by the HPCSA, nurses are governed by the South African Nursing Council (SANC), lawyers are governed by the Legal Practice Council and are under various Bars within their provinces. This could mean there are pockets of excellence and benchmarks with regards to professionalisation of the public service.

One may not need to go too far in the private sector to learn lessons, although learning from both private and public sector is desirable. The professional bodies do not govern their professionals differently according to where they operate. For example, the rules are the same for a doctor in private practice and the one employed in a public hospital. Therefore, the population for the study is not only vast but diverse as well.

However, the population to sample from as indicated in Chapter One, targets Senior Managers from the DOJCD and also any other department and in any tier of government.

3.10 Qualitative Sampling Methods

Gill (2020:579) lists and describes the common qualitative sampling methods as follows: i) convenience, also called volunteer sampling, ii) snowball, iii) purposive, and iv) theoretical sampling. She emphasises that qualitative researchers may use more than one sampling approach in their study. However, the sample size must be pre-determined in order to satisfy human subjects' review or ethics committees, grant proposals, and/or funding agencies. It is understood that there are no specific rules for determining sample size in qualitative research, but researchers must collect enough quality data to answer the research question. In the table below, Gill describes the qualitative sampling methods and their pros and cons. It must be noted that there are other sampling methods, mostly used in quantitative studies such as stratified sampling, quota sampling, and so forth. Those will not be described here.

Table 3.3. Sampling Methods with definitions

Sampling method	Pros	Cons
Convenience (volunteer) sampling: Potential participants volunteer to participate in the research study.	Easy, efficient, economical	May not provide participants who can supply the best information
Snowball (chain) sampling: Current participants recommend persons who might be willing to participate in the study.	Practical, cost-efficient, Persons appropriate for study, less time to gain trust	Quality of referrals may be problematic and/or limited.
Purposive sampling: Also called purposeful, judgmental, or selective sampling. The researcher intentionally selects participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied.	Ability to select participants most beneficial to the study, cost-efficient, variety of strategies	May be challenging to locate information-rich participants

Includes maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, typical case sampling, extreme (deviant) case sampling, and critical case sampling.		
Theoretical Sampling: Researcher samples to generate theory. Developed by Glaser & Strauss and is the hallmark of Grounded Theory (GT).	Essential to generate theory in GT studies, clarifies researcher's understanding of emerging theory	

Source: Qualitative Sampling Methods 2017, Journal of Human Lactation 36(4) p580

Table 3.3 outlines the different types of sampling methods and their pros and cons. Although a researcher can use any type of sampling, the objectives of the research can dictate the best sampling methods to be used. Therefore, it is imperative to know the types of sampling methods.

In this study, it must be understood that the researcher is a practitioner in the public service with more than 18 years of experience. Therefore, she is familiar with some fellow managers and senior managers who form the population for sampling purposes. The 'purposive' sampling makes sense in the case of a case study and familiarity of the population. The participants were selected carefully through what Creswell (2009:139) calls a 'single-stage' sampling procedure (one in which the researcher has access to names in the population and can sample the people or other elements directly); to represent the senior management in the three tiers of government. Some participants are known to the researcher and yet many others are not known.

The DOJCD has a hybrid of about 150 professionals and administrators who form part of senior management service. Some of the participants come from this cohort. Another cohort of participants comes from middle and senior management service from other departments outside of the DOJCD. A total of 35 middle and senior managers was targeted. The inclusion criteria were primarily senior management service and middle management to a lesser extent. By default, through recruitment criteria, these officials hold a tertiary qualification as they are not political appointees.

3.11 Data collection

Creswell (2009:168) suggests a two-step formula to collect data that must include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. The first step is to identify the individuals or sites that are purposefully selected for the study prior to commencement of the data collection process. Secondly, it is important to indicate the type of data to be collected to ensure relevance to the quest to answer the research question. He further suggests that there are four basic data collection methods, as shown in the following table:

Table 3.4. Qualitative research data collection methods

Data Collection Types	Options within types	Advantages	Limitations
Observations	Complete participant – researcher conceals role	Researcher has first hand experience with participant	Researcher may be seen as intrusive
	Observer participant – role as researcher is known	Researcher can record information as it occurs	Private information may be observed that researcher cannot report
	Participant as observer – observation role secondary to participant role	Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation	Researcher may not have good attending and observing skills
	Complete observer – researcher observes without participating	Useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss	Certain participants (e.g. children) may present special problems in gaining rapport
Interviews	Face to face – one on one, in person interview	Useful when participants cannot be directly observed	Provides indirect information filtered through the view of interviewees
	Telephone – researcher interviews by phone	Participants can provide historical information	Provides information in a designated place rather than the natural field setting
	Focus group – researcher interviews participants in a group	Allows researcher control over the line of questioning	Researcher's presence may bias responses as not all people are equally

	Email / Internet interview		articulate and perceptive
Documents	• Public documents such as minutes of meetings or newspapers • Private documents such as journals, diaries or letters	• Enables a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants • Can be accessed at a time convenient to researcher – an unobtrusive source of information • Both represent data which are thoughtful in that participants have given attention compiling them • As written evidence, it saves a researcher the time and expense of transcribing	• May be protected information unavailable to public or requires private access • Requires the researcher to search out the information in hard-to-find places • Requires transcribing or optically scanning for computer entry • Materials may be incomplete • The documents may not be authentic and accurate.
Audio-visual materials	• Photographs • Videotapes • Art objects • Computer software • Films	• May be an unobtrusive method of collecting data • Provide an opportunity for participants to directly share their reality • They are creative in that they capture attention visually	• May be difficult to interpret • May not be accessible publicly or privately • The presence of an observer (e.g. photographer) may be disruptive and affect responses.

Adapted from Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches p168

Table 3.4 above depicts the various tools for data collection, with advantages and limitations. It must be noted that data collection tools are not limited to these; however, they are the most commonly-used in qualitative research.

3.12 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of making sense of collected information in the quest to answer the research question. It is the process of examining, cleaning, transforming and modelling data

with the goal of discovering useful information, drawing conclusions and supporting decision making. It involves a range of techniques and methodologies to extract insights from data (Smit, 2002:67). There are different ways in which data can be analysed, depending on the type of question asked. In a seminar delivered by Professor Petra Bester for North West University Lecturers, Masters and PhD students on 2-5 May 2022, she lists the following ways to analyse data:

Generic qualitative data analysis (which breaks down content into 4-5 themes)

Continuum approach in textual data analysis (which deals with content analysis on what is said plus discourse analysis on how it is said)

Narrative analysis (which also uses themes, but adds semantic analysis based on language and content analysis based on categories and constructs)

Content analysis (which uses the themes of manifest [expressed words] and latent [patterns])

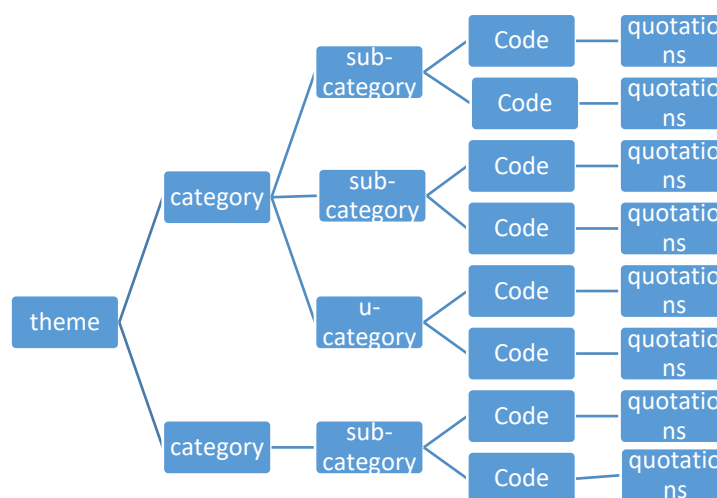
Interpretive analysis (interprets data from a position of empathic understanding)

Reflexive thematic analysis

Document analysis

Furthermore, Bester (2022) draws a pictorial diagram of how the thematic data analysis may look like:

Figure 3.4 Adapted from the Basics Qualitative Research Lecture



Source: Lecturer, Prof. Petra Bester (Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research, Author) 2-5 May 2022 NWU

Additional to the types of data analysis approaches, Putri (2023:482) adds ‘Critical Realism’ (CR). CR focuses on acknowledging the ontological depth of reality, comprising of three domains: empirical, actual, and real. The empirical domain of CR refers to behaviour, signs, and symptoms or any practical situations that can be observed. The actual domain refers to an event or a phenomenon resulting in people displaying certain behaviours or experiencing certain signs and symptoms. The real domain is the underlying reason why people decide to present behaviours, signs, and or symptoms or not.

Emara (2023:3) presents a historic view on qualitative analysis. He says it has been executed manually in the past. In the manual analysis, researchers had to utilize various tools, such as card indexes, different-coloured pens, scissors, and tapes. Besides the costs involved, the manual methods required a lot of time and effort. Furthermore, researchers experienced challenges in identifying complex relationships between data and drawing a broad picture of the participants’ responses. In comparison, conducting analysis using computer packages tends to be much easier, allowing researchers to perform functions such as searching, grouping, categorizing, and visualizing data faster, thus resulting in more effective outcomes, saving the researcher’s time, effort, and money.

It is also possible to develop a specific codebook with clear and meaningful code labels and definitions. For example, Ritchie et al. (2022) set out to develop a codebook for ‘The Integrated-Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services (i-PARIHS) framework (a framework used in the health sciences field for implementation studies). They say such codebooks are an important component of qualitative data analysis and have been developed for other widely used frameworks. Understanding the complexities of data analysis, some general guides have been developed to support researchers during this challenging intellectual process of analysing data (Casterle et al., 2021:1084). They recognise that all these guides employ a structured, rigorous, phasic approach that can help the researcher consider multiple perspectives.

The researcher can also engage with the process of continuous meaning-making and progressive focusing. The main doctrines of these guides are interconnectivity between the stages, transparency enhancement, and the use of data generated codes. Examples of these guides cited by Casterle et al. are: the Practical Guide to Collaborative Qualitative Data Analysis, which aims to capitalise on the benefits of teamwork, the Practical Iterative Framework, which emphasises the iterative processes that enable researchers to move back and

forth across the data, and the Qualitative Analysis Guide of Leuven (QUAGOL) which is a multifaceted approach that allows researchers to take advantage of various strategies.

3.12.1 Roadmap for data analysis in qualitative research

Gomes et al. (2023) discuss an important element of data analysis in qualitative research, what they refer to as missing in the landscape of contributions on the subject, and that is ‘an organising roadmap for inductive data analysis’. They consequently developed a four-stage framework to guide scholars through data analysis:

Stage one: ‘Understanding’. This stage involves collecting initial data and performing open coding. The word ‘understanding’ is important in that qualitative research deals with abstract concepts, therefore the ability to ask meaningful questions and to gather relevant data from participants rests on the researchers’ competence to face the challenge of embracing experimentations and adjustments. Therefore, how questions are formulated, and data gathered is pivotal. In this stage, researchers should prove that they can identify the main aspects concerning the phenomenon of interest.

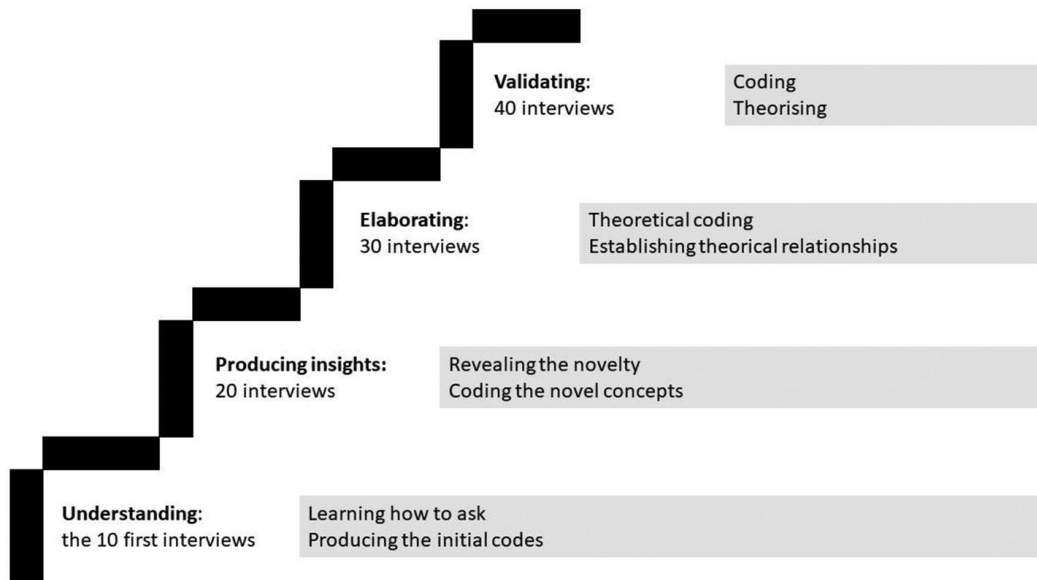
Stage two entails ‘Producing insights’. This stage often involves conducting more than ten interviews. During this stage the researcher tries to find what is new in the additional dataset. The researcher will still code to characterise different aspects of datasets according to the phenomenon of interest. Every answer is considered and nothing is taken for granted.

Stage three: ‘Elaborating’. During this stage, the researcher engages datasets with a fine-tooth comb. Insights gained lead to theoretical coding, forming categories, or engaging in case comparisons based on developed codes accordingly. The critical aspect is to enhance the originality. Elaborating may require more data to collect specific and illustrative examples of categories of information. This means the researcher might go back to the field to interview more participants or observes longer.

Stage four is ‘Validating’. Results and theoretical frameworks are revealed to participants and experts at this stage. More data can still be collected and analysed to enhance the developing theory.

Below is the diagrammatic illustration of the four stages of the data analysis roadmap:

Figure 3.5. Data Analysis Roadmap



Source: A roadmap for data analysis in qualitative research, Gomes, et al. 2023:191

O'Connor (2020:280) mentions a range of sophisticated software tools such as Hadoop and Tableau that enable secondary analysis of digital datasets. Some researchers use programming languages such as Python or R to create their own specialised analytical tools. He also mentions visualisation as another popular approach to presenting the results of secondary data analysis. Furthermore, he mentions data visualisation that was initially pioneered by Florence Nightingale over 150 years ago, that it is now being widely applied to supplement primary and secondary analysis.

Finally, de Casterlé et al. (2021:1083) conclude by saying that in general, all researchers, after a series of interviews, will be faced with vast interview data. Each interview offers a unique view and perspective. They emphasise that in data analysis, patterns and themes do not emerge on their own even in the overreliance on qualitative software packages, word overload and coding. A researcher must still put in some intellectual work. Software packages and whatever guidelines are there do not provide clear step by step instructions on how to analyse and interpret qualitative data, hence the importance of 'extensive preparatory work and intellectual craftsmanship.'

3.13 Rigor

Cypress (2017:253) argues that up until now in the 21st century, there are persistent concerns about achieving rigor in qualitative research, especially relating to the terms reliability and validity, as opposed to achievement of same in quantitative investigations. Quantitative research follows a structured and often inflexible, pre-set design with prescribed methods, whereas in qualitative or naturalistic research, planning and implementation are often simultaneous and the research design can change anytime because of circumstances. She defines rigor as ‘the quality or state of being very exact, careful, or with strict precision or the quality of being thorough and accurate’ in research. It is the application of systematic, disciplined, and stringent methods to ensure the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of research findings.

Johnson et al. (2020:145) describe the goal of rigor in qualitative research as ensuring that the research design, method, and conclusions are explicit, public, replicable, open to critique, and free of prejudice. A researcher achieves rigor in the research process only when each element of the study methodology is systematic and transparent; thorough, complete, methodical and accurate reporting when the research is completed. They quote the ‘Glassick Criteria’ developed by Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff in which six essential and critical attributes applicable to assessing the quality of any scholarly approach are identified, which also serve as a general research framework for developing research questions and designing studies. These attributes are outlined as follows:

Clear purpose – goal or research question and supporting rationale

Adequate preparation – thorough, integrated review of relevant literature and prior work

Appropriate methods – research approach and methods align to answer research question

Significant results – obtain results that advance knowledge and/or practice in the targeted field

Effective presentation – presented in a way that others can emulate and/or build upon the work

Reflective critique – regular, systematic approach to question and learn from and during the research process (Johnson et al, 2020:139). Hair Jr. (2020:44-45) supports Johnson et al. when discussing the importance of establishing trust in the findings of a research study. Such establishment of trust or confidence begins right after hypothesis is developed as the research process moves to data collection. Data is supposed to represent facts about hypothesized variables or provide answers to the research question. This data is then examined to determine

whether the findings answer the research questions or not. If the data collected answers the questions, then the hypothesis is supported, thus allowing conclusions that can inform better decision making in an organisation. Hair et al. further assert that the testing of validity is not done at the end of the research but rather forms the very fabric of the study as it continues until its conclusion. Testing is the way to get to the conclusion, and the conclusion contributes to an expansion of knowledge. For scientific research to be tested and be of sound science, they suggest the 6 points to be considered; such as whether it is empirical, meaning that it is compared against reality; whether it is replicable or objective, meaning that the results are independent of the researcher's opinion; and other researchers conducting the study would obtain the same results.

Scientific research must also be analytical, in that empirical facts are chosen, specified, and measured in a way that will address the research questions. It must be theory driven, relying on an existing body of knowledge. It must also be logical, meaning, conclusions are drawn from the results based on logic. Lastly, its rigor is checked so that every effort is made to minimize error.

A researcher can combine Johnson et al. and Hair et al. criteria to ensure rigor is achieved, depending on what is applicable. It can be safely said that there are many other rigor elements explored by other authors and scholars that a researcher can choose from to obtain rigor in their study.

3.14 Ethics in Research

The Institute of Ethics (South Africa) defines ethics in a combination of three core concepts 'the 'good', the 'self' and the 'other'. These three concepts of ethics make an inference that 'one is ethical when one does not only consider what is good for oneself, but also considers that what is 'good' for the 'self' is also good for 'others' (Rossouw and Van Vuuren, 2017:5). The Institute also describes ethics in the context of application in government that it is compelled to have visibly managed ethics committees thereby institutionalizing the concept as an integral part of the organisation.

In South Africa, for example, the Companies Act of 2008 (as amended), (supported by the King IV report for South Africa) compels a large range of organisations to have a Social and Ethics committee at board level to oversee ethics management. The King IV report, in its governance principle no.2, states that 'The governing body should govern the ethics of the organisation in a way that supports the establishment of an ethical culture.'

Mhlauli (2022:1) alludes to the widespread reports about scandals and moral lapse in South African public service, which have dominated the news. She attributes this to corrupt activities that public service officials and their leaders are involved in as evidenced in volumes of reports compiled by various commissions of inquiry such as Kampepe, Zondo, and so forth. These activities of unethical behaviour are seen to have resulted in the decline of living standards in South Africa because of the erosion of the very same resources that the communities depend on. Consequentially, the citizens have lost trust and confidence in the people they elected to run the public sector. Unethical activities such as corruption destroy the country's economic growth and development.

Whilst the basic values and principles governing public administration as contained in Schedule 195, which is in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of South Africa, demand 'a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained'; Sebola (2018:59) points out the unethical behaviour within the public service which continues as if no legislation exists. He goes on to say that despite formal training available on ethics in public administration, the plague of unethical behaviour lingers unabated.

On the research front, Correia (2023:121) suggests that ethics in research and how it is translated into practice is fundamental to rule out any potential misconduct either with the scientific method or the way results are presented to the world. Historically, Correia traces the development of regulations of ethics from the eighteenth century, when England was plagued by local epidemics for which young and less qualified physicians were hired to attend to the patients. This necessitated discussions on ethics. Ethics codes had to be developed wherein physicians had to 'unite tenderness with steadiness and condescension with authority so as to inspire the minds of their patients with gratitude, respect, and confidence'. The same words were later used by the American Medical Association code of Medical Ethics.

Further developments worldwide were to be seen, leading to the writing of the Declaration of Geneva, and then of Helsinki, in 1964. It is said that the Helsinki Declaration emphasized the importance of informed consent for volunteers in biomedical research, especially after the exploitation of mainly Jewish people, used as human experiments without their consent in the German concentration camps during the Second World War. Therefore, because of such exploitations against the rights of vulnerable people, guidelines and regulations on ethics and legal aspects of research were made necessary.

Leavy (2017:23-24) explains that the word ethics comes from the Greek word *ethos*, which means character. Character is associated with morality, integrity, fairness, and truthfulness. Morality is about knowing what is right and wrong, and integrity is about acting correctly on such knowledge. Therefore, ethics are fundamental to social research. Additionally, Leavy emphasises that ethics must be considered right from the beginning of the study, from the topic selection, which should be informed by the researcher's values, the reasoning on the choice of the study and the potential impact of the study, to data collection as the researcher works with the participants. This talks to the amount of time and contact the researcher has with the selected participants as well as the nature of that contact, which is largely based on the research design approach; through to the final phases of representing and sharing research findings.

Where people are involved, ethics must be considered. For example, the study of professionalisation of the public service involves people's behaviour as public servants and the impact it has on the people they serve. If the behaviour is not up to social norms and standards and does not reflect the values of the DOJCD, then the people tasked with such values fail to reflect the good intention of the organisation. The researcher had to consider the levels of comfort of the participants, their state of mind, willingness to voluntarily participate, and due regard for their views and opinions and so forth. It is also incumbent upon the researcher to display ethical behaviour in interacting with the participants. In short, embedded within every aspect of the research effort are ethical considerations.

Sage et al. (2019:293) postulate that when planning and conducting research, it is critical to implement rigorous ethical guidelines because guidelines help to minimize the risk of possible harm to participants, researchers, and everyone involved. Unfortunately, they say, there is a grave concern on the disparity in internationally recognized or agreed upon ethical standards and guidelines for research. For example, the World Health Organisation (WHO) applies strict ethics in the organisation.

They describe the success of the Organisation and its vision, mission and mandate as dependent on 'maintaining the respect and confidence of WHO Member States, the public we serve, and our partners and stakeholders around the world.' WHO believes that it is fundamental that the organisation execute its duties with 'independence, honesty, and integrity.' They feel and practice the obligation of doing what is right as an essential part of the character of the organisation, which underscores everything they do. This runs through decision making that

must always be guided by a culture that reinforces making the appropriate, ethical choices (WHO Code of Ethics 2023:2).

Whilst this does not define what ethics are, it certainly shows what is expected of a person or organisation when applying ethics. It is imperative for every organisation to have a code of ethics that defines its character and how it is to be known by its stakeholders, service users and whoever else is concerned. This principle is as applicable to WHO as it is to the South African public service.

De Backer (2022:712) cautions that research on a sensitive and possibly defamatory topic calls for a strong ethical framework. For example, a study conducted on people living with HIV might bring unnecessary stigma on them. Therefore, ethical arrangements issued by an institutional ethics committee are not sufficient to manage such risks. This means the organisation may need to go beyond its established ethical framework to manage the risk, in protection of the participants and the researchers.

The North-West University (NWU) requires students who are to embark on a research study to undergo a fully-fledged course on ethics as part of the study approval. The student will demonstrate knowledge and/or competence by obtaining a certificate in the prescribed courses they are required to undergo. Emphasis is put on ‘informed consent’ wherein the participants are required to sign written consent forms indicating that they are participating voluntarily, having been informed of the nature of the study and the reason they have been chosen to participate.

Furthermore, the researcher is required to inform the participants that there is no monetary compensation for their participation. However, they would be contributing to the body of knowledge created by the study. Studies are rated according to their risk levels. Risk levels are determined by the sensitivity of the subject to be studied. If for example it carries a potential to be harmful to participants or the researcher, for example, a study on whistle-blowers, the study may carry a ‘high risk’ level, as participants may fear for their lives if it becomes known that they have participated in such a study. However, if the study is about the causes of the high mortality rate amongst new-borns, it may carry a low-risk level as it does not pose any threat of life to the participant or the researcher.

The study at hand carries a low risk as assessed by the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the NWU.

3.15 Validity and Reliability

In general life, validity has to do with the legitimacy of something. Legitimacy can always be proven. For example, a DNA test will validate (or invalidate) relations between two people. In research, Marczyk et al. (2005:106) assert that the concept of validity refers to the effectiveness of the measurement strategy applied in a study. Theoretically, validity seeks to answer whether the instrument or measurement approach, measures what it is supposed to measure. Therefore, accuracy in measurement of constructs and variables in a study is a critical component of research. Marczyk et al. (2005) believe that the most well-designed study will be meaningless and a waste of time and resources if the variables cannot be 'identified, conceptualized, operationalized, and quantified.' Consequently, Kumar (2011:26) conclude that the validity of measurement is a critical aspect of the overall research design process. The concept of 'validity' can be applied to any aspect of the research process. It ensures that correct procedures have been applied to find answers to a question. 'Reliability' refers to the quality of a measurement procedure that provides repeatability and accuracy.

In this study, validity begins with the researcher being a public service practitioner (insider) through to the case chosen, which is the DOJCD (familiarity) and the participants, who are fellow public servants. Even though there is familiarity of the environment being researched, Sage et al. (2019:292) assert that qualitative research is often criticised for that very reason, as methods of data collection and analytical procedures are subject to researcher assumptions, influence, and personal opinions. That affects reliability as well.

However, the other side of the coin is that, from this researcher's point of view, familiarity could be a strength as she cannot be misled should the participant's view be false on known facts and sometimes based on legislation. In this regard, Sage (2019:297) suggests that reliability can be addressed and bias reduced by involving a second person at the stage of analytical interpretation, standardization of transcribing procedures, where one leads the actual transcription process and the other does quality assurance.

3.16 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the research methods and methodologies in general and specifically the rationale for the adoption of the qualitative approach. In summary, the approach chosen is qualitative research methodology with a structured questionnaire for data collection. The primary data collection method involved a structured face-to-face or virtual interview setting with carefully selected participants based on their expertise, seniority and experience as public service practitioners and technocrats. Some participants opted to complete

the questionnaire by themselves. The interview guide was designed to elicit in-depth insights, allowing the participants to share their personal perspectives, experiences, and understandings of the phenomenon under investigation.

The rationale for employing a qualitative approach lies in its ability to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the research problem. Qualitative methods enable the exploration of complex social and behavioural phenomena, capturing the contextual factors and subjective experiences that may be overlooked in purely quantitative research. In the case of this study, the qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the perceptions, motivations, and decision-making processes of the participants, generating valuable insights that cannot be easily quantified.

It is important to acknowledge the inherent limitations of the qualitative methodology used in this research. The small sample size and non-probabilistic sampling technique may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the subjective nature of the data collected and the potential for researcher bias in the analysis and interpretation of the data must be considered.

To address these limitations, the researcher has implemented several strategies to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative findings as discussed in the ‘Validity and Reliability’ and ‘Ethics’ topics. These strategies include the use of member checking, where participants are given the opportunity to input and enhance the researcher's interpretations of the data, as well as the adoption of a reflective approach, where the researcher critically examines her own biases and preconceptions throughout the research process. Despite the acknowledged limitations, the qualitative research methodology employed in this study is well-suited to addressing the objectives and generating in-depth insights into the professionalisation of the public service phenomenon. The rich, contextual data obtained from the participants provides a strong foundation for further exploration and analysis.

The qualitative research design dictates a methodology that forces interaction with real human beings. Therefore, the next chapter will demonstrate through the responses from the participants that there was exchange of ideas through the designed questionnaire. It will also present the key findings that have emerged from the qualitative data analysis, setting the stage for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem and the development of a conceptual framework to guide the professionalisation question in the public service.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the findings of the study mainly from primary and to a lesser extent the secondary data. 35 Respondents participated in the study. 15 are situated in the DOJCD and 20 are situated in various and diverse departments within government at National and Provincial tiers. The 20 participants are situated in departments and government entities such as National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), Presidency, Department of Public Service and administration (DPSA), Government Printing Works, Mpumalanga Provincial Government (Office of the Premier), Gauteng Provincial Government (Office of the Premier), Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Information Regulator, National Treasury, South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and Department of Trade, Industry and Competition. The sample composition is tabulated as follows:

Table 4.1: Sample composition

No of Respondents	35
No with Bachelors only	7
No with Honours	7
No with Masters degree	18
No with a Doctoral degree	1
Geographic distribution	DOJCD - 15 Other National Departments – 15 Provincial Departments – 2 Parastatals - 3 Provinces – Mpumalanga, Gauteng, KZN
Professional vs Administrative categories	Lawyers – 4 Administration – 31
Span of operation	- Strategy Planning - Monitoring and evaluation - Policy development - Human resource development - Service delivery mechanisms - Special advisory to Executives

	- CEO - Supply Chain - Participatory democracy - State law advisory - Family advocate - Communication - Statistician
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4.2 Structure of the research instrument utilized

The questionnaire was drafted by the researcher and approved by the Ethics Committee of the North-West University. It contained 4 areas of focus that delved deeper into the professionalism and professionalisation questions for the purposes of responding to the research questions. The areas of focus were as follows:

1. **Feasibility of professionalisation of the Public Service.** This part dealt with the definitions of a 'professional' and 'professionalism'. It sought to probe whether it is even possible to professionalise the public service.
2. **Professionalisation question in the Public Service.** After probing the feasibility, this part of the questionnaire sought to probe the views of the participants on the current status of the public service and whether it should be professionalised.
3. **Structural design of the professionalisation process of the public service.** This section enquired on the methodology and structural design when commencing to professionalise the public service. The questions were based on the structural design of the current professional bodies such as South African Nursing Council, South African Law Society and so forth, given that many of their members operate within the public service as professionals. The scope of this part extended to views on the role of academia in the professionalisation of the public service.
4. **Professionalisation and service delivery.** This section aimed to ascertain if there could be a link between a professional and improved service delivery. It also probed the inclusion of public views into the professionalisation process.

4.3 Data analysis key outcomes

In the data analysis conducted, there were various themes that emerged, chief of which were:

Section A

1. Examining the Character of the Public Service Profession
 - a. Adherence to Ethics and Moral Standards
 - b. Competence and Job Performance
 - c. Continuous Learning and Development
 - d. Behaviour and Attitude
2. Examining the Concept of Professionalism in Public Service
 - a. Adherence to Standards and Codes of Conduct
 - b. Integrity, Ethics, and Accountability
 - c. Commitment to High-Quality Work and Public Service
3. Existence of Professionalism in Public Institutions
 - a. Positive Presence of Professionalism
 - b. Inconsistent Levels of Professionalism
 - c. Challenges and Barriers to Professionalism
4. Role of Academia in professionalisation of the Public service
5. Designation of Professionalism in Certain Occupations
6. Professionalism Linked to Regulatory Bodies and Certification
7. Perception of Professionalism tied to Specialised Knowledge and Skills
8. Role of Ethical Standards in Defining Professionalism for Certain Occupations
9. Professionalism as a Universal Concept across Occupations

Section B

1. Viability of Professionalising the Public Service
 - a. Impact of Political Influence on Professionalism
 - b. Need for Ethical Standards and Accountability

- c. Training, Continuous Learning, and Professional Development
 - d. Challenges in Professionalising Certain Roles
 - e. Strategic Performance associated with Professionalising Public Service
 - f. Improved Decision-Making and Resource Management
 - g. Ethical Behaviour and Accountability
 - h. Alignment with Organisational Goals
 - i. Competence and Skills Development
2. Image Benefits associated with Professionalising the Public Service
 - a. Improved Public Trust and Credibility
 - b. Improved Service Delivery and Accountability
 - c. Reduction in Corruption and Ethical Misconduct

Section C

1. Key Constructs of Organisational Professionalism in Public Service
 - a. Specific Recruitment Requirements for Entry into Public Service
 - b. Ongoing Training and Special Courses
 - c. Organised Grouping and Professional Membership
 - d. Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards
 - e. Championing Best Practices and Mentorship
 - f. Policy Development and System Improvement
 - g. Commitment to Learning and Adaptation
 - h. Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity

Section D

1. Consensus on inclusion of members of the public in the professionalisation process
2. Practical Suggestions to approach the public consultation

3. Methods to reach the public for consultation

The extensive discussion below depicts the data analysis approach utilised to present respondents' views in narrative format.

4.4 Section A Findings

Feasibility of Professionalising the Public Service

The questions in this section aimed to explore whether public servants are interested in the process of professionalisation of the public service. Specifically, the questions focused on whether professionalisation of the public service is possible. Accordingly, the results are expressed in headings or themes based on the respondent's understanding of individuals referred to as 'professional' and their understanding of 'professionalism'. The direct quotes of the participants are integrated whenever they are appropriate and relevant.

Finding one. Examining the Character of the Public Service Professional

This section focused on how the respondents described the traits of a professional. The respondents were asked about their understanding of a person referred to be as a 'Professional.' The participants' reflections on their understanding of a person referred to as a 'Professional' were grouped into formal education and training, specialised skills and practical application. The subtheme of formal education and training emerged when the participants described professionals as individuals who are expected to hold formal qualifications suited to their roles. Respondent 4 (Mpumalanga Provincial Government) mentioned that professionals are 'trained, skilled, and have formal qualifications' suggesting academic preparation. According to Respondent 4, 'A professional is a person who holds a requisite qualification for a specific position in the relevant sector.' These statements demonstrate the importance of formal education and training.

Respondent 12, Respondent 8, and Respondent 1 characterized professionals based on specific expertise and skills developed through targeted training and experience. Respondent 12 (Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation - DPME) averred that 'a professional is someone who has been trained and accredited in a trade, like a Human Resource Manager'. Respondent 8 considers a professional as 'someone who presents themselves as having particular expertise and abilities' (Respondent 8, DOJCD).

These statements distinguish professionals by their ability to develop and apply expertise within their field. Experience and Practical Application were highlighted as essential for fully

embodying professionalism. Beyond formal qualifications, professionals are expected to apply their skills effectively through practical experience, which often shapes their ability to meet job demands. Respondent 17 explained that professionals acquire ‘expert capability through extensive education and training over time’ (Respondent 17, National Treasury)

Finding two. Adherence to Ethics and Moral Standards

The participants described a professional as an individual with ethical behaviour, integrity, and moral principles. The participants stressed that professionals are guided by specific ethical codes that shape their decisions and actions. Respondent 12 noted that a professional is ‘someone who applies and adheres to ethics and a code of conduct’ (Respondent 12, DPME).

This depicts the trait of formal ethical standards. Integrity and accountability are emphasized as essential traits for a professional. Respondent 15’s view was that a professional ‘upholds moral and ethical values,’ which is critical to maintaining a trustworthy reputation (Respondent 15, DPSA). Respondent 11 noted that professionals are expected to ‘adhere to ethical guidelines and to take responsibility for their actions’ (Respondent 11, National Prosecuting Authority - NPA). These statements describe professionals as individuals who uphold strong moral values and take responsibility for their actions.

The participants also expressed their expectations for professionals to treat others with respect and prioritize the well-being of clients and the public. Respondent 12 noted that professionals should ‘treat internal and external clients with dignity and courtesy’ (Respondent 12, DPME). This response captures the role of professionals in contributing positively to society through respectful interactions. These views speak against some of the behaviours found in the workplace such as workplace bullying, gaslighting, side-lining, and so forth.

Finding three. Competence and Job Performance

The participants highlighted competence and job performance in their description of a professional. The participants noted that competent professionals not only have the necessary skills but also apply them consistently to deliver high-quality results. Respondent 1 noted that a professional ‘does something to the standard or level that is actually expected’ (Respondent 1, DOJCD). Respondent 1 mentioned proficiency and skill level in his expectation that professionals possess specialised knowledge and training that enables them to perform their roles at a high standard. Respondent 5 illustrated the expectation of smooth and productive work processes by describing a professional as someone who ensures that ‘services are offered

promptly, efficiently, and effectively’ (Respondent 5, DPSA). Professionals in this context are seen as those who reliably deliver results in a well-organised manner. Respondent 11 described the importance of delivering steady, reliable outcomes by mentioning that ‘professionals meet or exceed performance standards’ (Respondent 11, NPA). These statements illustrate that competence and job performance are integral to professionalism, requiring a blend of skill, effective execution, and consistent reliability to uphold the standards of the field.

Finding four. Continuous Learning and Development

The participants cited continuous learning and development as a trait of professionals. Respondents emphasised the need for ongoing education, skill enhancement, and adaptability to remain current in their respective fields. Commitment to ongoing education was noted as essential for staying up-to-date with developments in one's field. Respondents emphasized that professionals must be dedicated to continuous learning, engaging in education and training to keep pace with emerging trends and best practices. Respondent 11 explained that professionals ‘often engage in ongoing education or training to stay current’ (Respondent 11, NPA). This commitment helps professionals maintain their expertise, ensuring they can respond to new challenges effectively.

Respondent 10 similarly noted that continual learning is ‘key to ensuring professionals stay informed and capable’ (Respondent 10, DOJCD). Respondent 12 noted that professionals are ‘always learning and enhancing their skills to meet evolving industry standards’ (Respondent 12, DPME). These statements highlight how ongoing learning enables professionals to enhance their skills and adapt to industry changes.

This approach extends beyond formal training to include self-directed learning and personal growth. Respondent 15 emphasised ‘a commitment to continuous learning reflects a professional’s dedication to their craft and desire for personal growth’ (Respondent 15, DPSA). Respondent 8 affirmed that lifelong learning is integral, showing ‘commitment to staying competent and informed’ (Respondent 8, National Treasury). These narratives reflect a commitment to excellence and adaptability that enables professionals to thrive in a dynamic environment.

Finding five. Behaviour and Attitude

The participants highlighted the importance of respectful, dependable, and disciplined conduct. Respect and professional demeanour were frequently mentioned as expectations for

professionals. Participants emphasised that respect towards colleagues, clients, and the public is a core aspect of a professional. Respondent 5 stated that professionalism involves having ‘the right attitude, conduct, and behaviour towards colleagues and the public’ (Respondent 5, DPSA). Respondent 12 added that a professional treats client ‘with dignity and courtesy’ (Respondent 12, DPME). Respondent 15 explained that a professional must be ‘self-disciplined and competent in his or her field’ (Respondent 15, DPSA).

The responses reflect an emphasis on how professionals present themselves and interact with others. Participants noted that a professional should maintain a positive outlook and be consistently reliable. Respondent 2 described professionalism as ‘maintaining a well-groomed appearance with a positive attitude’ (Respondent 2, GPW), while Respondent 8 highlighted that ‘dependability is a key trait, as professionals are those who consistently deliver’ (Respondent 8, DOJCD). This dependability fosters trust and shows commitment to responsibilities, which creates a stable and positive work culture.

Finding six. Examining the Concept of Professionalism in Public Service

In public service, Hanlon (1998) recommended two models that define the operation of professional groups. One model is founded on commercialized professionalism that focuses on the dimension of economic benefits, organisational skills and professional knowledge. The other dimension focuses on social welfare values and provides services based on the citizens’ needs rather the citizens’ ability to pay. Considering the evolving professionalism theories, this study examined public servants’ understanding of ‘Professionalism.’ The next section presents the attributes of organisational professionalism from the participants’ perspectives.

Finding seven. Adherence to Standards and Codes of Conduct

Respondents highlighted professionalism in the context of complying with specific standards, policies, and rules set within their organisation or field. These guidelines establish a foundation for consistent and ethical behaviour, ensuring that professionals operate within an agreed-upon framework. Respondent 9 noted, ‘Professionalism is the consistent performance of an individual in accordance with the code of conduct and ethics for a particular profession they belong to’ (Respondent 9, DOJCD).

This perspective demonstrates the need for consistency and adherence to ethical guidelines, as it helps maintain a high standard of conduct across the profession. Respondent 2 emphasized that professionalism means ‘following a set of rules and standards of the organisation, e.g.,

policies, frameworks, acts, and prescripts’ (Respondent 2, GPW). Such compliance with established norms fosters a predictable and trustworthy work environment.

The participants also expressed the view that professionalism entails taking responsibility for actions and commitment to maintaining a high level of integrity. Respondent 4 explained that ‘Professionalism is a set of standards expected from an individual to adhere to at work, which involves being responsible, being accountable, and being of high integrity’ (Respondent 4, Mpumalanga Provincial Government). This view suggests that adhering to standards is not merely about following rules but also about being answerable for one’s conduct and fulfilling duties with honesty and transparency. Respondent 2 stated that ‘Professionalism relates to ethical, honesty, and integrity’ (Respondent 2, GPW). This emphasis on accountability reinforces that professionals are expected to follow not only the letter of the law but also the ethical principles underlying their field.

Finally, participants highlighted that beyond just following rules, professionalism requires acting with integrity, honesty, and a strong moral compass. This aligns with the idea that ethical compliance extends beyond mere compliance to include the principles of fairness, transparency, and respect for others. Respondent 7 emphasised that ‘Professionalism is about being ethical, being honest, and having integrity’ (Respondent 7, DOJCD). This broader view of integrity within professionalism suggests that ethical behaviour is foundational to sustaining public trust and fostering ethical workplace cultures.

Finding eight. Integrity, Ethics, and Accountability

The respondents emphasised integrity, ethics and accountability as fundamental for establishing trust and responsibility in the workplace. The participants highlighted ethical behaviour and honesty as essential aspects of professionalism. Respondent 2 described professionalism as ‘ethical behaviour, honesty, and integrity’ (Respondent 2, GPW). Respondent 19 emphasized that ‘observing ethics related to a particular job’ is crucial (Respondent 19, Department of Trade and Industry - DTI). This highlights that professionals must consistently adhere to ethical guidelines to maintain public trust.

These insights indicate that honesty is more than just a personal virtue; it is a professional standard that reinforces integrity within the workplace. Respondents frequently associated professionalism with moral integrity. Respondent 6 mentioned that professionalism involves ‘competence, consistency, decisiveness, compliance, and good governance’ (Respondent 6, DOJCD). Respondent 8 emphasised that professionalism is ‘conducting yourself with integrity,

taking responsibility, and accountability’ (Respondent 8, DOJCD). Moreover, Respondent 3 highlighted that professionalism requires ‘integrity in performing duties’ (Respondent 3, DOJCD). Overall, these responses reflect that moral responsibility and integrity help professionals build relationships with those they serve and work with.

The participants recognised accountability and responsibility as core elements of professionalism. Participants emphasised that professionals should take ownership of their actions, admit mistakes, and be answerable to their clients, colleagues, and employers. This aspect of professionalism ensures reliability and fosters a sense of trust.

Respondent 4 remarked that professionalism involves ‘being responsible, being accountable, and being of high integrity’ (Respondent 4, Mpumalanga Provincial Government). Respondent 20 added that professionalism includes ‘the application of skills and experience in execution of tasks, following policies and ensuring work is done diligently’ (Respondent 20, Presidency). This statement underlines the importance of accountability in fulfilling job duties.

Finding nine. Commitment to high-quality work in the public service

The participants described professionalism as a focus on excellence and a service-oriented mindset. The key aspects of professionalism highlighted by the respondents included dedication to excellence, service orientation, and responsibility to the community. Respondent 5 explained that ‘Professionalism is about demonstrating a high level of excellence in doing your work’ (Respondent 5, DPSA). Respondent 8 echoed this sentiment, stating that professionalism ‘strives for greater expectations, more outstanding work, and stronger relationships’ (Respondent 8, DOJCD).

These perspectives highlight that excellence is not only about the work itself but also about fostering trust and respect within professional relationships. The respondents perceived professionalism as prioritising the needs of clients and the public to ensure satisfaction and building trust through service excellence. Respondent 11 noted that a professional ‘is committed to providing quality service or products’ (Respondent 11, NPA). Respondent 17 emphasised the importance of acting in the clients’ best interests, stating that ‘a professional prioritises the well-being of their clients and acts in their best interests’ (Respondent 17, National Treasury). This statement highlights the client-centred approach expected in professionalism, where professionals consider the impact of their actions on the people they serve.

The participants also described responsibility to the public and community as a critical dimension of professionalism. Participants described professionalism as extending beyond individual client interactions to include a sense of duty toward the broader community and public good. Respondent 15 stated that ‘Dedication to serving others is a defining characteristic of a professional’ (Respondent 15, DPSA). This indicates that professionalism involves not only individual actions but also a broader contribution to society.

Respondent 12 described professionalism as ‘feeling a responsibility to serve the community and uphold public trust’ (Respondent 12, DPME). Furthermore, the notion of an ‘ethical dedicated servant who is committed to the public good’ (Respondent 5, DPSA) reinforces that professionalism is fundamentally about contributing to societal well-being.

Finding 10. Positive Presence of Professionalism

Professionalism is described as being well-integrated within departments, and participants underscore the value of adhering to ethical guidelines, engaging in respectful interactions, and committing to high-quality work. Respondent 2 mentioned that officials conduct themselves according to the ‘Batho Pele principles and values of the DOJCD’ (Respondent 2, DOJCD).

Batho Pele, which means ‘People First,’ is a set of guidelines aimed at promoting quality service delivery and ethical behaviour in public service. By referencing Batho Pele, the respondent highlights the department’s commitment to putting ethical behaviour at the forefront of their operations. This aligns the department’s objectives with broader societal values, which is crucial for maintaining public trust.

Respondent 17 remarked that ‘policies and documents are implemented transparently and reasonably’ within their division (Respondent 17, National Treasury). This statement outlines the importance of transparency as an ethical principle in ensuring that procedures are not only followed but also accessible and understandable to stakeholders. Respondent 19 highlighted that the ‘Batho Pele Code of Conduct and Rea Aga values of the DTIC are intrinsic to the work we do’ (Respondent 19, DTIC).

Rea Aga, meaning ‘We are Building,’ emphasises the department’s commitment to ethical principles as foundational to its development goals. Together, these examples suggest that ethical standards and codes of conduct form the bedrock of professionalism, reinforcing trust and accountability within public service departments.

Finding eleven. Inconsistent Levels of Professionalism

All participants expressed concerns that despite efforts to uphold professionalism, inconsistencies persist due to variations in adherence to standards, gaps in leadership and accountability, and external influences, such as politics.

These issues contribute to a fragmented perception of professionalism, with some areas adhering to high standards while others fall short. Respondent 4 explained that the department requires officials to follow a code of conduct and meet specific qualifications, but noted that these standards are not consistently enforced across the board (Respondent 4, DOJCD). While this statement highlights the presence of policies aimed at promoting professionalism, it also suggests that their application is selective, leading to varying levels of adherence. This lack of consistency can erode trust in the system, as employees and stakeholders may perceive that the department's commitment to professionalism is superficial rather than foundational.

Respondent 7 noted that within the DOJCD, there are 'pockets of employees whose conduct exhibits professionalism, competence, skill, and ethics,' but they also observed that 'there is no common understanding of what professionalism means' (Respondent 7, DOJCD). This reflects a disconnect between organisational policies and employees' perceptions, which can result in differing interpretations of professional behaviour. When departments lack a clear and shared definition of professionalism, it becomes difficult to maintain uniform standards, as individuals may interpret and apply these standards based on personal views rather than organisational guidelines.

Finding 12. Challenges and Barriers to Professionalism

Participants provided insights on various obstacles that hinder the establishment and maintenance of professional standards within their departments. These barriers can contribute to inconsistencies in behaviour, affect organisational culture, and ultimately undermine efforts to foster a professional work environment. Respondent 15 highlighted that 'the absence of strong leadership erodes the level of professionalism expected,' underscoring the idea that when leaders do not set a professional example, others are less likely to uphold these standards (Respondent 15, DPSA). This observation suggests that leaders are pivotal in defining and reinforcing professional standards.

Without effective role models at the top, employees may feel less obligated to adhere to professionalism in their daily work, contributing to a fragmented organisational culture.

Respondent 4 described the DOJCD as a ‘mixed bag’ of professionalism, pointing to the lack of ‘consequence management’ and ‘unstable administrative leadership’ as key factors undermining professional standards (Respondent 4, DOJCD). This example illustrates how inconsistent leadership can prevent the establishment of a unified professional culture, as departments lack the structures necessary to hold employees accountable. Without stable leadership that consistently reinforces professional expectations, employees may not feel compelled to maintain high standards. Respondent 12 observed the lack of oversight, stating that ‘professional conduct is quite lax’ within DOJCD, with issues like poor attendance left unaddressed (Respondent 12, DOJCD). This comment indicates that accountability measures are essential for encouraging professional behaviour.

When leadership fails to enforce these measures, it signals to employees that adherence to professional standards is not a priority, allowing lax behaviour to persist. This absence of accountability contributes to a workplace environment where professionalism is inconsistently practiced, reducing overall effectiveness.

Political dynamics and external pressures also emerged as notable barriers to professionalism within departments. Respondents described how political influences can conflict with professional standards, often leading employees to prioritise political affiliations or external agendas over their professional responsibilities. Respondent 4 described how ‘political interference on administration’ can frequently lead to unprofessional conduct, as employees may prioritise loyalty to political figures or parties over professional responsibilities (Respondent 4, Mpumalanga Provincial Government).

This example illustrates how political dynamics can create conflicts of interest that make it difficult for individuals to uphold professional standards. When political allegiances take precedence over professional obligations, it can result in actions that are not aligned with departmental values or ethical guidelines, ultimately undermining professionalism. Similarly, Respondent 15 noted that some employees ‘forsake their values for political affiliation,’ which demonstrates how political pressures can diminish professional standards and lead to inconsistent behaviour (Respondent 15, DPSA). Such behaviour not only compromises the integrity of individual employees but also contributes to a culture where professionalism is selectively applied, leading to uneven standards across the department. Respondent 4 highlighted that ‘overpowering actions and behaviour of unions’ sometimes conflict with organisational standards (Respondent 4, Mpumalanga Provincial Government).

While unions play a critical role in advocating for employees' rights, this example suggests that their influence can sometimes be at odds with professional expectations, particularly when union agendas diverge from organisational goals. This tension can make it challenging to maintain a cohesive and unified professional culture within the department, as employees may feel torn between union pressures and their professional obligations.

Finding 13. Designation of Professionalism in Certain Occupations

Respondents who have qualifications traditionally designated as professional displayed a general consensus on the professionalisation of all occupations. This shows a level of respect and trust in individuals in occupations that are not under the OSD. Respondent 18 indicated that 'they are Professionals because people like in human resources management first study to specialize and when they practice in their work. Work study is a science and it is part of human resources' (Respondent 18, Information Regulator). Equally, Respondent 20 from Presidency agreed and considered themselves as a Professional in that they are Policy Analysts and provide advisory services to the top echelons of the department. That work can only be done by persons with qualifications and expertise to do so.

However, the consensus would have to take into consideration some preparation and skills audit exercise. To this effect, Respondent 1 emphasized the point of oversaturation of certain qualifications whilst there is a shortage in others 'So, those kinds of things must be looked into and be managed in order for the occupations to be prioritized. You cannot say you're prioritising occupations without carrying out an exercise that what occupations have we got out there and how many people are qualified in this' (Respondent 1, NPA).

Finding fourteen. Professionalism Linked to Regulatory Bodies and Certification

Respondents highlighted the importance of regulatory bodies in setting and maintaining standards, the role of certification in establishing credibility, and the continuous development ensured by these bodies. Regulatory bodies contribute to defining professional norms and uphold the ethical standards expected within specific occupations, which delineates these roles as professional. Respondent 13 observed that, 'The reason why these occupations are deemed 'professional' is because they have professional bodies which regulate ethical conduct, such as the Law Society of South Africa and the Health Professions Council' (Respondent 13, Presidency).

Respondent 9 mentioned that for roles like ‘lawyers, doctors and so forth, there is a professional body that regulates what candidates should comply with to be admitted in their profession’ (Respondent 9, DPSA). This consistent enforcement ensures that professionals adhere to ethical norms that validate their professional standing and guarantee a uniform understanding of professional expectations across individuals within the same occupation.

A recurring observation among participants was the role of regulatory bodies in not only certifying individuals but also providing ongoing oversight and enforcing accountability. This regulatory aspect ensures that professionals are held responsible for their actions and adhere to a code of ethics, which reinforces the perception of professionalism in these roles. Respondent 13 pointed out that ‘any misconduct or unethical behaviour that affects the professional body can lead to losing one’s license to practice’ (Respondent 13, Presidency).

Respondent 11 remarked that ‘membership to professional bodies like SAICA and the LPC ensures that lawyers and accountants maintain ethical standards and accountability’ (Respondent 11, NPA). Such oversight mechanisms foster an environment where professionals are consistently mindful of their obligations to both their profession and the public.

Some participants observed that professions with established regulatory bodies are often perceived as more exclusive or prestigious because of the added oversight, which serves to distinguish them from other occupations. This exclusivity is seen as enhancing the status of regulated professions and reflects societal views on the rigor and standards associated with these roles. Respondent 17 noted, ‘Doctors, lawyers, and accountants are seen as more professional because they have strict licensing and are held to high ethical standards by their respective bodies’ (Respondent 17, National Treasury). Such perspectives suggest that regulated professions benefit from an additional layer of prestige due to their structured certification and accountability processes.

Finding 15. Perception of Professionalism tied to Specialised Knowledge and Skills

Participants perceive professionalism as closely linked to possessing unique expertise that is honed through rigorous training, and continually applied and developed within specific occupations. Respondent 11 stated that ‘a professional is someone with specialised knowledge or skills in a particular field, usually gained through education, training, and experience’ (Respondent 11, DOJCD).

The emphasis on specialised knowledge reflects a perception that certain professions are inherently more professional because they require a deeper understanding that goes beyond general skill sets. Additionally, Respondent 12 noted that historically, professions like medicine and law are perceived as highly professional because they embody both ‘specialised knowledge and ethical standards’ (Respondent 12, DOJCD). This connection between specialised knowledge and professionalism suggests that expertise is fundamental to being viewed as a professional, as it enables individuals to perform at a level that reflects their extensive training and experience.

Participants often associated professionalism with professions that demand rigorous education and formal training. The idea that professionals invest significant time and effort to develop unique skills suggests that these individuals are committed to achieving high levels of competence in their respective fields. Respondent 3 remarked that ‘certain professions require years of specialised training, like medicine and law, which is why they are seen as more professional’ (Respondent 3 from DOJCD).

This connection between rigorous training and professionalism implies that specialised education not only builds competence but also instils a sense of dedication and discipline necessary for maintaining professional standards. Furthermore, Respondent 9 stated, ‘Professions that have structured educational paths and training are seen as more professional, as they equip people with specific skills’ (Respondent 9, DOJCD). This perspective reinforces the view that structured training is essential to achieving a level of professionalism that distinguishes certain occupations from others. The emphasis on training underscores a perception that professionalism is closely tied to the acquisition of specialised skills, which can only be attained through formal and extensive preparation.

Finding sixteen. Role of Ethical Standards in Defining Professionalism for Certain Occupations

Respondents highlighted that adherence to ethical standards not only shapes professional conduct but also upholds public trust. In occupations such as healthcare, law, and accounting, ethical principles guide professionals in making decisions that impact others’ well-being. Respondent 11 noted that, ‘Certain professions are guided by ethical codes, which define how they should act and ensure they uphold the public’s trust’ (Respondent 11, DOJCD).

This reflection demonstrates the belief that ethical behaviour is not optional but a requirement in such fields. Respondent 3 added that, ‘For occupations like healthcare and law, ethical

standards are essential because they deal with sensitive issues impacting people's lives' (Respondent 3, DOJCD). Here, ethical standards are seen as essential components that protect the public and ensure that professionals act in ways that align with moral principles.

Participants highlighted that formal codes of conduct serve as essential frameworks for professional behaviour in certain fields. These codes set clear expectations for acceptable behaviour, guiding professionals in navigating ethical dilemmas and maintaining standards. Respondent 9 observed that 'doctors and lawyers are bound by codes of conduct that regulate their behaviour and ensure they adhere to professional standards' (Respondent 9 DPSA).

Additionally, Respondent 15 emphasised, 'Professions governed by codes of conduct are perceived as more professional because they set clear ethical expectations for their members' (Respondent 15, DPSA). This perspective supports the view that ethical codes elevate certain occupations, which makes them distinctly professional through a shared commitment to ethical principles. Respondent 13 from the Presidency further noted, 'Professional bodies establish codes of conduct to ensure members act ethically, which helps define professionalism in these roles' (Respondent 13, Presidency) Professionals have a framework that reinforces ethical behaviour and underscores the importance of accountability.

Finding 17 Professionalism as a Universal Concept across Occupations

The respondents perceived professionalism as an attribute that transcends specific jobs, emphasising behaviour, attitude, and core values rather than occupational titles. Respondents conveyed the view that professionalism is not restricted to particular jobs or fields but is a broad concept relevant to any occupation. Respondent 18 stated, 'Professionalism is not just for doctors or lawyers; it should be exhibited by everyone, no matter the role' (Respondent 18, Information Regulator). This comment emphasises the idea that professionalism is an attribute that everyone can embody, regardless of their field. Similarly, Respondent 10 argued that, 'Every occupation, including cleaners, must be professional in their conduct' (Respondent 10, South African Police Service). Collectively, these responses underline the belief that professionalism is a concept that applies to all individuals in all occupations and at all levels.

4.5 Section B Findings: Viability of Professionalising the Public Service

Finding one. Impact of Political Influence on Professionalism

Respondent 5 from the DPSA stated that currently there is a framework developed to professionalise the public service which contains strategies to professionalise by 2030. They

also indicated that government is part of the African Associates for Public Administration (AAPAM), which determines best practices for public administration in the African continent.

Respondents highlighted that political appointments, such as cadre deployment, often undermine professionalism by placing individuals in roles for which they may lack the necessary qualifications. Respondent 1 remarked, 'Cadre deployment has resulted in individuals being placed in positions they are not qualified for, which affects the overall professionalism within the public service' (Respondent 1, NPA). Respondent 17 added, 'The practice of appointing individuals based on political affiliations rather than qualifications undermines the professional integrity of the public service' (Respondent 17, National Treasury).

These perspectives reveal that political hiring practices undermine the development of a skilled and competent public service. When positions are filled based on political allegiance rather than qualifications or expertise, the standards of professionalism are lowered, as political appointees may not always be equipped to fulfil their roles effectively.

Respondents frequently noted that political influence extends beyond hiring and into decision-making, where it often prioritises political agendas over professional, ethical and service delivery considerations. This interference can compromise public servants' impartiality and effectiveness in serving the public interest. Respondent 4 explained, 'Political interference can influence decisions, shifting the focus from what is professional or ethical to what aligns with political goals' (Respondent 4, Mpumalanga Provincial Government). Respondent 6 stated, 'In many cases, political considerations override professional judgment, which impacts the quality of services provided' (Respondent 6, DOJCD).

These examples demonstrate the challenge of maintaining professional standards when political agendas override objective decision-making. The influence of political goals on public service functions can lead to decisions that are less focused on public welfare and more on fulfilling partisan objectives.

Finding 2. Need for Ethical Standards and Accountability

Respondents emphasised that establishing and upholding ethical standards is essential for building and maintaining public trust in the public service. Respondent 12 noted, 'Ethical standards are essential for public service because they help ensure the public's trust and reinforce the integrity of the institution' (Respondent 12, DOJCD). Respondent 17 highlighted

the broader impact of ethical behaviour, stating that ‘adhering to ethical standards is what helps build public confidence in the public service, making people feel that their concerns are treated with respect’ (Respondent 17, National Treasury). These responses indicate that ethical standards are crucial for fostering trust between the public and public servants. Respondents noted that accountability is a key element of professionalism. Without accountability mechanisms, it is challenging to enforce ethical behaviour or hold individuals responsible for misconduct, which can compromise professional standards. Respondent 2 asserted, ‘There should be consequences for falling short of ethical standards, as accountability is necessary to reinforce professional behaviour’ (Respondent 2, DOJCD).

Respondent 4 observed, ‘Accountability measures are crucial; they ensure that public servants are held to high ethical standards and are responsible for their actions’ (Respondent 4, DOJCD). These insights demonstrate the importance of accountability in upholding professional standards.

Respondents expressed that clear ethical guidelines and codes of conduct are essential to defining and enforcing ethical standards in the public service. Respondent 12 emphasised, ‘Implementing a code of conduct with clear ethical guidelines is essential for setting expectations and reinforcing professional values’ (Respondent 12, DOJCD). Respondent 15 added, ‘Professions that are governed by codes of conduct are often seen as more professional because these codes provide a clear set of ethical expectations’ (Respondent 15, DPSA).

Furthermore, Respondent 8 noted, ‘For the public service to be professionalised, it needs ethical codes that everyone must adhere to, which set the foundation for expected behaviour’ (Respondent 8, DOJCD). These perspectives highlight that clear guidelines and codes are fundamental for defining what constitutes ethical and professional behaviour. Such frameworks not only set expectations for public servants but also provide a reference point for evaluating conduct.

Finding 3. Training, Continuous Learning, and Professional Development

Respondents pointed out that continuous training and development are pivotal for achieving professionalisation across the public service. Respondent 11 noted, ‘Professionalisation of the public service requires continuous training programs to ensure that all public servants remain competent and up-to-date’ (Respondent 11, NPA). Respondent 12 echoed this sentiment, stating that ‘without ongoing learning and professional development, it would be challenging

to maintain a consistently high level of professionalism in the public service’ (Respondent 12, DOJCD).

These perspectives reflect the notion that professionalism is not a static achievement but rather an ongoing process. The emphasis on continuous training underscores that professionalisation is intrinsically linked to the ability of public servants to keep pace with the changing demands of their roles.

Formal education and structured skills development were identified as foundational to establishing professionalism within the public service. Respondents suggested that professionalisation efforts must start with equipping public servants with necessary qualifications and competencies. Respondent 19 stated, ‘Professionalisation begins with ensuring that public servants have the formal education and training needed to carry out their roles effectively’ (Respondent 19, DTIC).

Respondent 6 noted, ‘To professionalise the public service, there should be a standardized approach to skills development and education, starting from recruitment and continuing throughout one’s career’ (Respondent 6, CSIR). The emphasis on formal education and skills development highlights a critical component of professionalisation. This approach not only raises the baseline qualifications but also helps to align public servants with the expectations and values inherent to their roles.

Finding 4. Challenges in Professionalising Certain Roles

Participants highlighted the vast diversity within the public service, which encompasses a wide range of roles from highly specialised professions to general service roles. This diversity poses a significant challenge in applying a uniform standard of professionalism across all positions. Respondent 4 observed that ‘the public service includes such a wide variety of roles that it would be difficult to apply the same standards of professionalism across the board’ (Respondent 4, DOJCD). Respondent 6 noted that there are inherent ‘challenges in professionalising roles that do not have the same requirements or expectations, such as comparing administrative support with senior management’ (Respondent 6, CSIR).

The difficulty in standardizing professionalism reflects a fundamental issue: public service roles are not monolithic. They encompass everything from high-level management to operational support functions, which do not all align with the same expectations for

professional behaviour. This diversity creates a complex environment in which a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to professionalism may not be feasible.

Finding five. Strategic Performance associated with Professionalising the Public Service

Improved Decision-Making and Resource Management

Professionalisation enhances decision-making capabilities by providing managers with the necessary expertise to navigate complex organisational challenges. According to Respondent 11 (NPA), ‘professionalisation will equip managers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and tools to make informed and data-driven decisions.’ Respondent 11 underscored that equipping managers with professional skills leads to better decision-making, grounded in data and evidence, rather than relying on intuition or outdated methods. This approach is further supported by Respondent 12 (DOJCD), who emphasizes that ‘improved decision-making positively impacts an organisation’s strategic outcomes.’ Here, it is clear that decisions made by skilled managers not only contribute to attainment of individual departmental goals but also align with broader strategic objectives of the organisation.

Respondent 12's mention of improved budget allocation further emphasises that professional managers have the foresight and capability to manage resources in a way that maximizes organisational performance.

In addition to decision-making, resource management is significantly enhanced through professionalisation. Respondent 11 (NPA) states that ‘Professionalised managers can better manage resources, including budgets, personnel, and time, leading to more efficient operations and reduced waste.’ This suggests that professionalisation enables senior managers to allocate resources optimally, improving efficiency and minimising wastage. Similarly, Respondent 12 (DOJCD) notes that ‘Strategic decisions, such as budget allocation, are better informed when made by competent professionals.’ Competent professionals, equipped with the right skills and knowledge, ensure that resource allocation is strategically aligned with the overall goals of the department.

Professionalisation also enhances decision-making by fostering innovation and deeper understanding of complex issues. Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government - Office of the Premier) highlights that ‘the management should be able to be innovative and have a deeper understanding of the respective areas so that they are able to make decisive decisions.’ This demonstrates that professionalisation goes beyond basic decision-making; it encourages

managers to think creatively and adopt innovative approaches to problem-solving, which is crucial in a dynamic and evolving public sector.

In the context of strategy formulation and execution, professionalisation ensures that decisions are aligned with the overall mission of the organisation. Respondent 20 (Presidency) explains that ‘In putting together the strategy, you need people with experience and skill to ensure that all of us are on the same page in terms of what the priorities of the administration are.’ This highlights that experienced professionals are essential in ensuring that strategic priorities are clearly defined and understood, contributing to cohesive decision-making across various levels of the organisation.

Respondent 20’s assertion that strategy development requires experienced professionals illustrates how professionalisation integrates decision-making with broader strategic goals. Resource management is also strengthened by professionalisation, as seen in the comments from Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government), who states, ‘Allocate budgets for resources for the staff in order to achieve the organisation’s strategic goals.’ This reinforces the idea that proper resource allocation, led by professional managers, is crucial to achieving the organisation’s strategic objectives.

Finding 6. Ethical Behaviour and Accountability

Professionalisation fosters ethical behaviour and accountability within organisations, particularly among senior managers in public service. It does so by promoting adherence to ethical codes of conduct, ensuring compliance with established norms and laws, and creating a sense of responsibility that enhances overall performance. Respondent 10 (SAPS) highlighted that ‘it will ensure that every employee is always ethical. However, the code of conduct can only be as good as one’s ability to put it into practice.’

Respondent 10 explained that while codes of conduct are crucial, their effectiveness hinges on individuals consistently applying these standards in their day-to-day actions. Similarly, Respondent 12 (DPME) emphasised that, ‘by ensuring that their behaviour is guided by ethics, principles, and codes of conduct, senior managers will be well-equipped to execute their duties by knowing the processes of carrying out their responsibilities.’

Here, ethics and professionalism directly influence a manager’s ability to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, especially in environments where adherence to processes and standards is key to success.

Respondent 12 (DOJCD) added that ‘ethical behaviour fosters trust among stakeholders, which is essential for successful strategy implementation.’ Respondent 12 (DOJCD) points out that ethical behaviour builds trust among stakeholders, which is essential for strategy implementation. This is particularly important in government departments, where public perception can significantly influence the success of large-scale projects. Trust fosters better engagement from both employees and citizens, as seen in sectors like healthcare or social services, where ethical lapses can have direct impacts on service recipients. The Professional Code of Conduct for South African public officials aligns closely with this perspective, requiring public servants to demonstrate integrity and respect for the law to enhance their department’s effectiveness.

Respondent 4 (DOJCD) highlighted that ‘Professionalism will increase accountability on senior managers and ensure compliance with the norms and laws regulating their functions and performance, as well as how they conduct themselves as senior managers following the code of conduct of the Department.’ This reinforces the idea that when senior managers follow professional standards, they ensure both personal and organisational accountability, which supports the department's overall mission.

Respondent 6 (CSIR) noted that ‘It will enhance service delivery, reduce corruption and enhance recourse for people who are victims of poor service and corruption. We will achieve the same standards across the board.’ This demonstrates how ethical behaviour and accountability in the South African public sector can address widespread challenges like corruption and inconsistent service delivery, benefiting the general public. The pressure to maintain professional registration can also serve as a deterrent to unethical behaviour, as Respondent 3 (DPSA) noted ‘They would stand to lose their registration should they be found wanting.’ This mechanism enforces a higher level of accountability, as professionals who deviate from ethical standards face significant consequences.

In the South African context, where historical issues of corruption and mismanagement have plagued public services, promoting ethical behaviour among senior managers is crucial to restoring trust between the public and government institutions. The recurring mention of codes of conduct and professional standards illustrates how these structures help create a culture of accountability.

Finding 7. Alignment with Organisational Goals

Participants described how professionalisation enables individuals to refine their skills and knowledge in ways that directly support the larger goals of the organisation. Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government - Office of the Premier) noted the importance of ‘continuous training for the senior managers and allocation of budgets for resources for the staff in order to achieve the organisation's strategic goals.’ This points to the necessity of providing senior managers with the tools and resources they need to continuously develop professionally. Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government) points out that resource allocation plays a critical role in this alignment. Without adequate training and resources, even the most skilled managers may struggle to align their work with organisational goals. Respondent 20 (Presidency) highlighted that ‘we have a strategy that we are implementing, and part of that strategy is ensuring that all of us are on the same page in terms of what the priorities of the administration are.’ Respondent 20 further explained how professionalisation fosters collective understanding of organisational priorities, ensuring that every employee is aligned with the administration’s goals. Moreover, as Respondent 20 (Presidency) indicates, professionalisation encourages a shared understanding of organisational priorities.

When all employees are on the same page regarding the strategic goals of the administration, it fosters a more cohesive approach to both strategy development and implementation. This collective focus is essential for ensuring that every department and employee is working toward the same objectives. Professionalisation encourages a clear, shared focus on the objectives, allowing for more cohesive development and implementation of strategies across departments.

Equally, Respondent 3 (DOJCD) emphasised that ‘Realising this predetermined aspiration would significantly contribute to the attainment of strategic goals.’ Adhering to professional standards is key to ensuring that organisational goals are met efficiently. Professionalism sets a clear framework for how tasks should be approached, which ultimately improves the organisation’s ability to achieve its strategic milestones. Respondent 9 (DPSA) mentioned that ‘Professionalisation gives a guarantee that public service employees have requisite and regulated qualifications to perform specific tasks. As such, the departments will be able to effectively perform in line with their strategy.’ Here, professionalisation is seen as a means of ensuring that employees possess the appropriate skills and qualifications to contribute to their departments’ success.

This alignment between skills and strategy ensures that employees can execute their responsibilities effectively, driving the organisation toward achieving its objectives. The recurring theme in these quotes is that professionalisation is not just about individual growth but also about creating alignment between personal ambitions and organisational goals.

Finding 8. Competence and Skills Development

Professionalisation plays a critical role in enhancing the competence and skills of employees, particularly in managerial roles. Respondent 11 (NPA) emphasised that ‘professionalisation will equip managers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and tools to make informed and data-driven decisions.’ Respondent 11 highlighted that professionalisation enhances managers’ competence by providing them with the tools needed to analyse data and make well-informed decisions. Respondent 11’s observation about data-driven decision-making illustrates how professionalisation equips managers with the ability to handle complex tasks more effectively. Respondent 12 (DOJCD) mentioned ‘enhanced competence and skills: Well-trained professionals contribute effectively to strategic planning, execution, and evaluation.’

Respondent 12 links the development of skills directly to the ability to contribute to key organisational processes such as planning and execution. When employees are well-trained, their contribution to the organisation becomes more effective and aligned with its strategic goals. This is particularly important in the public sector, where the success of long-term strategies often depends on the competence of those tasked with their implementation and evaluation.

Similarly, Respondent 2 (DOJCD) added that ‘there shall be competition to acquire higher qualifications, and as such, the officials will be more skilled.’ Respondent 2 suggested that professionalisation not only enhances existing skills but also motivates employees to pursue further qualifications. Respondent 13 (DOJCD) highlighted that ‘It would help us appoint proper and fit individuals for the professions... If you appoint a person who is properly qualified in an area, the question of performance is easier.’ Respondent 13 showed that competence is directly linked to hiring qualified individuals. This quote underlines the importance of having the right people in the right positions to enhance overall organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Respondent 2 and Respondent 13 both emphasised the importance of qualifications in fostering competence.

The former discusses how competition for higher qualifications drives skill development, while the latter focuses on how hiring qualified individuals ensures better performance. These

perspectives underscore that competence is not just about acquiring new skills but also about ensuring that the right people are placed in roles where their skills align with organisational needs.

Finding nine. Image Benefits associated with Professionalising the Public Service

Improved Public Trust and Credibility

Professionalisation plays a vital role in improving public trust and credibility within the public sector. Professionalisation promotes transparency, accountability, and fairness by ensuring that non-OSD (non-Occupational Specific Dispensation) Senior Managers adhere to high ethical standards. Respondent 11 (NPA) explained that ‘professionalising the department’s non-OSD Senior Managers can greatly enhance the department’s image, both internally and externally. Professionalisation will enhance public trust and credibility as Senior Managers are more likely to adhere to high ethical standards, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in their actions.’ Respondent 11 emphasised that senior managers who operate under professionalised standards are more likely to demonstrate ethical behaviour, which builds credibility both within the organisation and with the public. Respondent 11’s emphasis on ethical standards highlights how public perception improves when senior managers act transparently and accountably.

Trust is built on the foundation of ethical behaviour, and professionalisation reinforces these standards across the department, ensuring consistent application of ethical principles. Ethical behaviour and transparency help mitigate the risks of corruption and other misconduct, making public institutions more trustworthy and respected. Similarly, Respondent 12 (DOJCD) highlighted that ‘professionalisation can significantly enhance the department’s image in several ways: Credibility and Trust. This perception can lead to increased public confidence.’

The connection between professionalism and public confidence is clear—when a department maintains ethical and high-quality standards, the public is more inclined to trust the services provided. Professionalisation establishes clear expectations for behaviour, and when these are met, public institutions gain credibility and trust from the communities they serve.

Respondent 13 (Presidency) further elaborated that ‘professionalising non-OSD personnel could go a long way in projecting a positive image of the Department and also earning much-needed respect and bolster its credibility.’ Respondent 13 showed that professionalisation helps senior managers embody principles and values that reflect positively on the department. When these professionals adhere to rigorous standards, they enhance the department’s reputation, not only internally but also in the eyes of the public and other stakeholders.

This bolstered credibility increases respect for the department, positioning it as a trusted entity. Respondent 6 (DOJCD) notes that ‘the public we exist to serve will have confidence in the DOJ.’ Professionalisation leads to a more organised and competent workforce, which in turn increases public confidence. When the public observes that the department is managed by capable and ethical professionals, they feel more secure in the services provided and view the department as dependable.

The perspective from Respondent 6 underscores the importance of instilling public confidence, which is a direct result of professionalising the workforce. Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government) emphasised that ‘it can boost the department's credibility and build trust with external organisations, increase public trust from the public.’ Respondent 14 points to the dual benefit of professionalisation: it strengthens trust not only with the public but also with external organisations, enhancing the department's reputation in collaborative efforts. Credibility with external entities such as NGOs, private sectors, and other government bodies fosters a better working environment and more effective partnerships. The collected responses illustrate that professionalisation enhances public trust and credibility through various mechanisms.

Finding ten. Improved Service Delivery and Accountability

Professionalisation significantly enhances service delivery and accountability in public sector organisations. Respondent 4 (DOJCD) highlighted that ‘the performance and service delivery will be improved and clients, members of the public, will be satisfied. This will portray the beautiful department’s image.’

Respondent 4 expounded that professionalisation directly contributes to better service delivery, leading to higher public satisfaction. Respondent 5 (DPSA) reinforced this by noting ‘professionalisation of non-OSD SMS members will improve the way the department executes their duties in a proficient manner. This will improve the service offering request to citizens and ensure efficient turn-around by public servants.’ Professionalisation helps departments refine their processes, leading to faster and more efficient service delivery. This improved efficiency, in turn, results in quicker responses to public needs, making government services more reliable and accessible.

Likewise, Respondent 11 (NPA) explained that ‘professionalised managers can enhance Public Service Delivery by improving efficiency and quality by implementing efficient processes and upholding high standards of service delivery.’ Respondent 11 adds that professionalisation is key to maintaining high standards in public service delivery. This ensures not only that services

are delivered efficiently but also that they meet a consistent quality standard, increasing public confidence in government institutions. Professionalisation equips managers with the tools and knowledge to implement processes that improve both efficiency and service quality.

The quotes collectively illustrate how professionalisation enhances service delivery and accountability by promoting efficiency, ethical behaviour, and high performance. Respondent 4's observation about improved public satisfaction demonstrates that professionalisation goes beyond internal processes, directly benefiting the public by providing faster, more reliable services. This is reinforced by Respondent 5, who notes that professionalisation improves the proficiency of the department's operations, leading to quicker service turnaround times.

Respondent 8 (DOJCD) stated that 'Professionalisation of DOJCD will change the public perception that public servants are not working or are not professional, resulting in seamless services to the public without corruption and improving the overall quality of service delivery.' Respondent 8 underscored the importance of professionalisation in countering negative stereotypes about public servants. Respondent 9 (DPSA) emphasised that 'professionalisation enhances accountability and ethics. Cases of corruption will reduce as officials will be concerned to lose their professional registration.' This statement highlights the link between professionalisation and reduced corruption.

When public servants are held accountable to professional standards, they are less likely to engage in unethical behaviour. The role of accountability is emphasised by Respondent 9, who connects professionalisation with ethical conduct. Public servants who are accountable to professional standards are more likely to maintain high ethical standards. This is supported by Respondent 6, who points out that professionalisation provides mechanisms for addressing poor service and corruption, ensuring that issues are dealt with in a transparent and fair manner.

Professionalisation improves service delivery and accountability in public sector organisations by ensuring that managers and employees adhere to high ethical standards and maintain efficient processes.

Finding eleven. Reduction in Corruption and Ethical Misconduct

Professionalisation plays a crucial role in reducing corruption and ethical misconduct within public sector organisations. Respondent 9 (DPSA) highlighted that 'professionalisation enhances accountability and ethics. Cases of corruption will reduce as officials will be concerned to lose their professional registration.' This statement emphasises that

professionalisation creates a deterrent for unethical behaviour, as public servants are held to high standards of accountability.

The threat of losing professional registration ensures that officials think twice before engaging in corrupt practices, as their professional status and career are at risk. Respondent 9's observation about the potential loss of professional registration highlights how professionalisation creates a deterrent for misconduct. Respondent 8 (DOJCD) posited that 'professionalisation of DOJCD will change the public perception that public servants are not working or are not professional, giving seamless services to the public without corruption and improve the overall quality of service delivery.' This quote illustrates that professionalisation not only reduces corruption but also improves the public's view of the effectiveness of government employees. Respondent 8 addressed the impact of professionalisation on public perception, showing that reducing corruption can change how the public views government officials.

According to Respondent 6 (CSIR), 'It will enhance service delivery, reduce corruption, and enhance recourse for people who are victims of poor service and corruption.' This quote highlights how professionalisation not only deters corruption but also improves service delivery by creating clear pathways for addressing issues related to misconduct or poor performance. Respondent 6's point about improving service delivery and recourse mechanisms further supports the idea that professionalisation enhances accountability.

Respondent 11 (National Prosecuting Authority) noted that 'professionalisation will enhance public trust and credibility as Senior Managers are more likely to adhere to high ethical standards, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in their actions.' This statement underscores that professionalisation encourages transparency and fairness in decision-making processes, which reduces opportunities for corruption.

Senior managers who uphold ethical standards foster an environment of accountability, where public trust is earned through responsible and honest governance. The focus on ethical leadership, as described by Respondent 11, reinforces that professionalisation starts at the top. When senior managers adhere to ethical standards, they set a positive example for the rest of the organisation. This trickle-down effect helps ensure that all levels of public service are held to high ethical and performance standards, reducing opportunities for corruption and ensuring transparency. The responses demonstrate that professionalisation reduces corruption and ethical misconduct by fostering a culture of accountability and ethical behaviour.

Finding twelve. Role of Academia in professionalisation of the Public service

Qualification is one of the key elements as established in the analysed responses on the definition of a Professional. Qualifications are in general and to a large extent acquired at an institution of higher learning, which gives them a significant role to play in influencing the professionalisation discourse. Respondent 20 asserted that the role of Academia is big, it would have to be jointly defined by the professionals in the public service as well as the professionals in Academia. He determined that what can be of great benefit for the professionalisation of public service as well as the shaping of courses that are offered by the universities, is the interchange of professionals between academia and the public service. Currently what is seen are theorists without much experience in public service.

Then there are public servants, who are practicing, who are implementing policies derived from the theories. So, at times the policies that are developed using the theories from academia, the practice throws the theory out of the way as they are not applicable. And therefore, in practice, new theories emerge. But because there is lack of exchange with the academia, the theories that are emerging from practice are not fed back to academia to improve the curriculum. Respondent 20 concluded that the two need to coexist, although currently there is a disjuncture' (Respondent 20, Presidency).

The well assessed and explained view stated above is supported by Respondent 18 'The current management development programme should also be expanded to include practical programme in professional management. Doctors and other health professionals go through practical management programmes which include their professional and ethical conduct in carrying out their responsibilities' (Respondent 18, Information Regulator).

4.6 Section C Findings

Structural Design of the Professionalisation Process of the Public Service

Having ascertained and affirmed in Section A and B the feasibility of the very notion of professionalisation of the public service, this section deals with the key constructs of organisational professionalism in public service.

Finding one. Specific Recruitment Requirements for Entry into Public Service

Establishing specific recruitment requirements for entry into public service is crucial for maintaining professionalism and ensuring that public servants possess the necessary qualifications, skills, and experience to perform their roles effectively. Respondent 10 noted

that ‘Specific recruitment requirements for entry into the Public Service, the induction of public servants and ongoing education should be a norm in public sector’ (Respondent 10, SAPS). This implies the need for formal recruitment criteria and ongoing professional development.

According to respondent 11, ‘The public should make it compulsory for all recruited into the Public Service to have required educational qualification, relevant fields of study, professional experience, and should complete technical skills’ (Respondent 11, NPA). This statement advocates for recruitment policies that ensure candidates possess both the necessary academic qualifications and practical experience. Respondent 13 (DOJCD) expanded on this by stressing that ‘You look to define those requirements, you then come and meet people that you have and you do a gap analysis to say this is the set of skills and then define the requirements, the posts classification, the training required, the skills and as well as the attitudes required to deliver.’

This perspective suggests that recruitment should not only focus on qualifications but also on identifying skills gaps within the department and recruiting individuals who can fill those gaps. Respondent 8 (DOJCD) also emphasized ‘the requirements for recruitment into the public service are crucial because those working in it must possess the knowledge, abilities, and skills necessary for the work they will be doing.’ This quote reinforces the idea that recruitment should focus on bringing in candidates who are well-equipped with the knowledge and abilities needed to perform effectively.

In summary, the collective insights from the respondents highlight that specific recruitment requirements are essential for maintaining professionalism in public service. Respondent 10’s point on continuous training suggests that recruitment is not a one-time process; public servants need to be constantly trained and developed to adapt to the changing demands of their roles.

This aligns with the view that recruitment should be rigorous, as stated by Respondent 11, who emphasises the necessity of academic qualifications and professional experience to ensure that public servants are well-prepared to fulfil their duties. The need for a strategic approach to recruitment is further emphasised by Respondent 13, who points out that departments should conduct skills gap analyses to understand what qualifications and abilities are missing within their teams.

Recruitment should be targeted to address these gaps, ensuring that departments have the right mix of skills and expertise to achieve their objectives. Additionally, Respondent 8’s focus on ensuring that recruits possess the necessary knowledge and skills highlights that the recruitment process must be meticulous in selecting candidates who can perform their duties efficiently.

Respondent 15 reinforces the importance of recruitment standards, especially at senior levels of the public service.

Entry into senior roles should involve stringent qualification requirements to ensure that leaders have the experience and capabilities to guide their teams effectively. The alignment of recruitment with specific job needs and professional standards, as advocated by several respondents, ensures that public servants are not only qualified but also capable of meeting the ethical and operational demands of public service.

Finding two. Ongoing Training and Special Courses

Ongoing training and specialised courses are critical components of professionalisation in public service. Respondent 12 (DPME) stressed ‘Special training/courses one takes over and above the tertiary training.’ This quote highlights the role of ongoing training in ensuring that public servants are well-prepared to handle the complexities of their roles. Respondent 12’s focus on training beyond tertiary education illustrates that while foundational education is important, it is not sufficient for the dynamic nature of public service. Respondent 13 (DOJCD) supports this view by reiterating the need for additional training beyond formal education: ‘Special training/courses one takes over and above the tertiary training.’

Respondent 15 (DPSA) points out that ongoing professional development is essential: ‘Special training courses one takes over and above their tertiary training.’ Respondent 13 and Respondent 15 indicate that specialised training helps build competencies, a critical factor for improving the overall performance of public service employees.

Respondent 4 (DOJCD) also emphasises the need for specialised training to meet evolving needs: ‘Specialised training helps public servants enhance their skills and meet the evolving needs of their roles.’ Respondent 4 (Mpumalanga Provincial Government - Office of the Premier) added that ‘a director in the administration may not need professionalisation but will need some elements like a specific training course over and above the degree or diploma.’

According to Respondent 8 (DOJCD), ‘one should pursue specialised training in addition to tertiary education, as it concentrates on the modern skills and knowledge needed by officials to carry out their duties.’ Respondent 4 (DOJCD) and Respondent 8 both highlight how specialised training not only enhances current capabilities but also ensures public servants can adapt to future changes. Respondent 4 (Mpumalanga Provincial Government) adds a unique perspective by pointing out that even senior management needs specialised training to remain

relevant in their roles. This stresses that professional development is a continuous process, regardless of rank or experience.

Finding three. Organised Grouping and Professional Membership

Organised grouping and professional membership are essential elements in the professionalisation of public service. Respondent 15 (DPSA) noted ‘organised grouping where registration is required like your doctors or physiotherapists.’ This analogy shows how other regulated professions operate within a framework that mandates registration, and it suggests that public servants should follow a similar model. Membership in professional groups helps create a standard of professionalism that extends across various sectors of the public service. Respondent 8 (National Treasury) selected the ‘Practice number denoting membership to an organised group.’

This formal structure creates transparency in public service roles and helps ensure that public servants maintain a level of professionalism that aligns with the expectations of their professional bodies. Membership ensures that employees are not only accountable but also knowledgeable about evolving practices, legislation, and technologies. Respondent 9 (DPSA) adds that registration with professional bodies supports accountability: ‘Professionalization enhances accountability and ethics. Cases of corruption will reduce as officials will be concerned to lose their professional registration, and subsequent loss of employment.’

The quotes collectively emphasise the critical role that organised groupings and professional memberships play in the professionalisation of public service. Respondent 15’s comparison of public service to regulated professions like medicine shows how other sectors have successfully used professional membership as a tool for maintaining high standards.

Finding four. Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

A code of conduct and ethical standards are essential in the professionalisation of public service. Respondent 10 (SAPS) emphasised ‘ensure that public servants sign the code of conduct as done by SAPS on an annual basis.’ This practice reinforces ethical standards by requiring public servants to acknowledge and commit to them formally each year. Respondent 10’s mention of annual signing demonstrates how continuously reaffirming commitment to ethical standards ensures that public servants remain mindful of their obligations. Respondent 11 (DOJCD) noted that ‘where there are professional bodies, we make the noise so that those professionals start acting.’ This statement highlights the role of external oversight in

maintaining ethical standards. The role of professional bodies, as noted by Respondent 11, adds another layer of accountability by connecting public servants to external standards of conduct. Equally, Respondent 8 (DOJCD) pointed that ‘the code of conduct helps to regulate the work that public officials do, safeguards against abuse and unethical behaviour.’ This reinforces the idea that a clear set of ethical guidelines is necessary to prevent misconduct.

Respondent 8 pointed out how the code of conduct functions as a safeguard against unethical behaviour. Respondent 13 (DOJCD) suggested ‘Define the requirements, the skills, and the attitudes required to deliver.’ This shows that a code of conduct does more than outline ethical behaviour; it also defines the attitudes and approaches necessary for public servants to deliver services effectively. The various quotes emphasise that a code of conduct is crucial for ensuring ethical behaviour in the public service.

Finding five. Role of Public Servants in the Professionalisation Process

Championing Best Practices and Mentorship

Public servants who champion best practices and provide mentorship play a key role in the professionalisation process. Respondent 11 (NPA) noted that ‘the only crucial role the public servants can play in the professionalisation process is to be championing best practices, becoming the role models, sharing insights, and mentoring and supporting colleagues during the professionalisation process.’ This quote emphasises that public servants should lead by example. Mentorship also plays a significant role in promoting professionalisation, as it helps less experienced public servants navigate challenges and develop the necessary skills to excel in their roles.

Respondent 12 (DOJCD) reflected that ‘mentorship and leadership are key components, and by promoting diversity and inclusivity in these programs, they ensure that all voices are represented in the professionalisation process.’ This quote emphasises that public servants should not only focus on their own development but also advocate for the professional growth of others through mentorship.

According to Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government - Office of the Premier), ‘when new employees join the department, public servants can assist them in becoming acquainted with the culture and values of the organisation. They can offer coaching and support to new hires to ensure that they understand and accept the professionalisation goals.’ Respondent 14 underscored the importance of onboarding and mentoring new public servants. This early-stage

mentorship is critical for aligning new employees with the ethical and professional standards expected in public service.

Mentoring new employees ensures they are well-equipped to meet professional standards and contribute to the professionalisation goals of the organisation, thereby reinforcing a culture of excellence in the public sector. Mentorship plays a key role in ensuring that these standards are passed down, as mentors encourage their mentees to adopt the same level of diligence and commitment.

Finding six. Policy Development and System Improvement

Public servants are key drivers of policy development and system improvement within the public sector. Respondent 12 (DOJCD) mentioned that ‘public servants play a crucial role in the professionalisation process within government and public sector organisations. Public servants are often involved in creating and enforcing policies that promote professional standards and practices within their organisations.’ This quote highlights the central role public servants play in shaping policies that establish and maintain professional standards.

This enables them to address specific issues related to service delivery, transparency, and accountability, contributing to system improvement. Respondent 6 (DOJCD) noted that ‘active participation, identification of gaps in the system, and proposed solutions by people on the ground, i.e., those who are doing the actual work.’ This notion underscores the importance of public servants actively engaging with the system to identify weaknesses and propose practical solutions. Public servants who are directly involved in the day-to-day operations of government institutions are often best positioned to recognize inefficiencies and areas in need of improvement.

Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government - Office of the Premier) added that Professionalism, which includes competence, ethical behaviour, and a commitment to serving the public good, should be embraced by public servants. Those who demonstrate these ideals in their daily job create a good example for others. To improve their knowledge and abilities, public officials can actively participate in continuing training and development opportunities.

Respondent 14 points to the role of public servants in not only developing policies but also adapting to changes in policies and ensuring that these changes are reflected in their everyday work. Public servants help to create a more equitable and effective public service by embracing policy changes that promote inclusivity and professional standards. Respondent 4 (DOJCD)

added that ‘Public servants must embrace change. Their continuous learning will help them gain competency and help government to meet its goal that will come with professionalisation.’

This quote reflects the connection between continuous learning and system improvement. Public servants who are committed to learning and adapting to new policies are better equipped to implement system improvements and ensure that government institutions meet their professionalisation goals. Respondent 5 (DPSA) asserted that ‘Public servants need to observe and practice their operations in line with the Professionalisation Framework crafted by the NSG.’ Respondent 5 emphasised the need for public servants to align their operations with established frameworks for professionalisation. Adhering to the Professionalisation Framework is crucial for system improvement, as it ensures that public servants’ operations are aligned with best practices and contribute to the broader goals of professionalisation.

Finding seven. Commitment to Learning and Adaptation

Commitment to continuous learning and adaptation is vital for public servants to stay relevant and meet the evolving demands of professionalisation. It involves a dedication to acquiring new knowledge, skills, and behaviours that align with the professionalisation process. Public servants must embrace continuous learning and adapt to changing demands in order to stay effective, foster innovation, and contribute to the professionalisation of the public sector. Respondent 12 (DOJCD) mentioned that ‘By adhering to and promoting high ethical standards, public servants help to build a culture of integrity and professionalism. Accountability and transparency in their work help to build public trust and ensure that professional standards are met.’

Respondent 12’s emphasis on ethical standards points to the importance of learning as a tool for enhancing accountability and transparency in the public sector. Continuous learning enables them to understand the latest ethical guidelines, navigate complex situations, and uphold public trust through responsible service delivery. Respondent 4 (DOJCD) added that, ‘Public servants must embrace change. Their continuous learning will help them gain competency and help government to meet its goal that will come with professionalisation.’ Public servants, according to Respondent 4, must be willing to engage in continuous learning to remain effective.

This learning helps them gain the competencies required to adapt to new challenges and support the professionalisation goals of their respective departments. Public servants’ ability to adapt to change through continuous learning is essential to maintaining their competency and supporting the overall professionalisation goals of government institutions. Respondent 20

(Presidency) recommended ‘Upping their skill, registering for relevant courses, and improving their behaviour in implementing their function and making sure that they comply with the prescripts of their service delivery requirements.’ This statement demonstrates that skills development is a key component of learning and adaptation.

Public servants who actively seek out opportunities to upgrade their skills through courses, workshops, and certifications are better equipped to handle the increasing complexity of public service tasks. Respondent 8 (DOJCD) believes that ‘they must be qualified for the work they are doing; if not, they should apply for available bursaries in the public sector. They are expected to be knowledgeable about their fields and to be well-equipped to carry out their duties with diligence.’ Respondent 8 expressed the need for public servants to be properly qualified and well-equipped in their roles. Continuous learning, through professional development opportunities such as bursaries and training programs, ensures that public servants are knowledgeable and capable of performing their duties at a high level.

Finding eight. Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity

The role of public servants in promoting inclusivity and diversity is reflected in several respondents' comments. Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government - Office of the Premier) stated that ‘within the department, public workers can encourage inclusivity and diversity. Promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce is critical for successful professionalisation efforts because it brings new ideas and experiences to the table.’

These statements demonstrate how inclusivity and diversity are key drivers of innovation and problem-solving in the public sector. Public servants who prioritize these values contribute to a stronger, more effective public sector. According to Respondent 8 (DOJCD), ‘Public employees must participate in the process. They have to change their attitudes, actions, and results in order to better serve the public. The Constitution requires them to treat people with empathy.’ For Respondent 8, public servants must first recognize and address any biases or discriminatory practices within their organisation to promote inclusivity. Changing attitudes and behaviours is a critical step toward building a more inclusive work environment where all employees, regardless of background, feel valued and supported.

Additionally, public servants who demonstrate empathy and a commitment to serving diverse communities help to build trust between government institutions and the public. Respondent 12 (DOJCD) added that ‘Public servants should advocate for and participate in continuous professional development programs. Mentorship and leadership are key components, and by

promoting diversity and inclusivity in these programs, they ensure that all voices are represented in the professionalisation process.’ These statements demonstrate how mentorship and leadership programs are critical avenues for promoting inclusivity and diversity within the public sector. When public servants advocate for inclusivity in professional development, they help to create pathways for all employees to succeed, regardless of their background.

4.7 Section D Findings

Finding one. Professionalisation and Service Delivery Implications

Respondent 8 argues that in the last 30 years there have been no decisive interventions to professionalisation of the public service. There is a greater fixation on compliance whilst neglecting to determine how compliance impacts on matters of professionalisation, performance and improved service delivery (Respondent 8, DOJCD). Service delivery is the reason for any government’s existence. A government exists to serve the basic needs of all its people. The configuration of service delivery departments is such that it is able to provide for the well-being and prosperity of its people. It is also responsible for their safety from outside interference and many more responsibilities.

Therefore, it is a reasonable move to measure the effects of professionalisation of public service on service delivery. Such measurement must be done by government departments and also by members of the public. Respondent 5 took the narrative back to the Diagnostic Report of 2011 prior to the development of the National Development Plan. The report fundamentally indicated the erosion of the State’s role in producing skilled professionals, citing the closure of teacher and nursing colleges. That erosion also applied to the training of engineers, planners and artisans.

The past practices of engaging professional institutes in the training, selection and development of senior managers have diminished while bodies like the Institute of Municipal Finance Officers and Municipal Engineers have little influence over appointments to critical positions. Therefore, the result has been a reduction in the number of professionals available to the State and a looming crisis in the generational reproduction of professional expertise as the ageing workforce continues to leave the system (Respondent 5, DOJCD)

Respondent 14 (DOJCD) suggested conducting surveys on customer satisfaction and the use of statistics collected by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), whilst Respondent 13 (DOJCD) made a strong argument that since service delivery is ‘based on a mandate’ therefore ‘the programme to professionalise the public service must also be tailor made on the mandate and

the requirements of the state. ‘The current professionalisation document focuses on posts and for us (DOJCD) it focuses only on lawyers without looking at other occupations that support the lawyers. The issue of comparing the public service with private sector without customizing things for public sector is a problem. Because you get a lawyer from private sector and put him in public service forgetting there are things that public servants cannot do which they can do in the private sector. We need to look at where are we benchmarking and see whether those good practices fit in the public service environment or not.’

Respondent 13 added the notion of ‘nothing about us without us’, citing that public service is there to serve the people, therefore they must be included in the programme of professionalisation of the public service. However, in approaching the public, government must use the right platforms for the right public audiences (Respondent 13, DOJCD). The respondents in general agreed on the inclusion of the public by way of different kinds of consultations to glean their views on how the public service can be professionalised as they are the recipients and priority in the delivery of the services.

Finding two. Inclusion of the members of the public in the professionalisation process

There is an overwhelming consensus in the responses to the effect that the public service is essentially for the public and therefore they cannot be left behind in the professionalisation process. Respondent 2 suggested that if the public is taken as a partner in the process of professionalisation, it will act as a monitoring and feedback tool (Respondent 2, DOJCD). Respondent 4 agreed, stating ‘It is obvious that the public as the recipients of services and clients will be affected by this change and therefore must be involved and allowed to participate. Therefore, there must be awareness sessions for them to get to an understanding of what and why professionalisation of the Public Sector (Respondent 4, DOJCD).’

Finding three. Methods to include the public suggested by Respondents

Respondents cited different mechanisms that can be utilised to professionalise, particularly to achieve transparency and accountability in the consultation for improved service delivery. There are some strong suggestions on how government can professionalise for service delivery. Respondents recommended training and re-orientation of staff in departments that are notorious for poor service delivery first. The prudence of dealing decisively with issues of corruption and political interference in administration came to the fore. This talks to the existence and enforcement of policies particularly for curbing corruption. Political interference in administration has been topical for the longest time and has been deemed a hindrance to service

delivery. The professionalisation framework should eliminate this phenomenon as far as possible.

A project management approach to service delivery interventions in all public service wherein accountability reports are demanded was also suggested by respondents. This ties up with ongoing research on how to yield a more private-sector-like professional environment, with strong stakeholder management, public participation and setting of service standards. The service standards are best explained as a contract between government and citizens on how and by when a service will be rendered. They go with complaints mechanisms for when a citizen deems the service unsatisfactory. Therefore, it is important for government to have complaints mechanisms.

Respondents recommended a best practice review from global players. The discussion brought forward was that South Africa is a global player and thus cannot do things in isolation. There are new technologies to leverage on, learn through collaboration with other professional bodies, study how other countries' private sectors operate and so forth. As the professionalisation space is new to the South African government, it is imperative to learn from its counterparts, at least those that are deemed progressive such as Singapore, Germany and others.

It must be made a requirement for every professional to do community work before employment and during their time in public service. They must be assessed according to the practical lessons learnt from these deployments. Currently, policy makes provision for Senior Managers only and even there, there is no one monitoring its implementation.

Other suggestions pertained to the introduction of anonymous inputs submitted through free USSD codes or drop boxes in designated offices or service delivery points such as clinics, hospitals, schools and so forth. Consultation with the communities must be made more meaningful than just simple outreach to tick the boxes. In these consultations, special care must be taken to ensure the views of vulnerable groups are incorporated. These outreach initiatives can leverage on existing community gatherings, church gatherings and awareness campaigns.

Use of social media platforms and partnerships with the civil society must be prioritised.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Based on the extensive engagements with the respondents, some of whom had to be consulted again for further information and clarity, it can be deduced that there is interest in professionalisation of the South African Public Service. Most respondents agreed with the scholars cited in the literature review. The coherence was noticed on areas of definitions for a

professional, professionalisation and profession. There was agreement on other aspects such as the necessity for minimum qualifications for an occupation to translate to a profession as well as continuous training and development over and above the minimum required qualification. Sharpening the saw in terms of competence and job performance can only happen if there is continuous training and development.

The subject of ethics in the public service featured prominently in the professionalisation discussions with respondents. It would seem professionalisation cannot be realised in an unethical environment. Ethics mostly require absolute ethical behaviour in various aspects such as how government officials conduct themselves in the workplace and towards the citizens they serve. Furthermore, ethical behaviour extends to how government resources are utilised.

In the responses, almost all respondents believe the South African Public Service can and must be professionalised. The current status is not acceptable in the sense that only pockets of excellence are observed and there is no blanket approach to professional behaviour. Some respondents alluded to professionalisation as enhancing decision-making capabilities and improving resource management. Professionalisation provides managers with the necessary expertise to navigate complex organisational challenges through skills development, knowledge management and tools to make informed decision driven by data.

The roadmap to professionalisation was clarified to include minimum qualifications for occupations, membership in a professional organisation that governs the occupation, code of conduct to adhere to, measures to be taken if code of conduct is breached, bridging the gap between the public service practice and academia, ongoing research to keep abreast of developments, benchmarking with countries and organisations internationally and so forth. There are lessons to be learned from the current professional organisations and collaboration with such was encouraged.

Professionalisation was said to visibly enhance service delivery and accountability in the public sector. Some respondents cited departments like National Treasury and South African Revenue Services as a beacon of hope for professionalisation, thus cementing the notion that it can be done.

The respondents made valuable suggestions towards inclusion of members of the public and civil organisations in the process of professionalisation. Services are rendered to the citizens and thus their views are important in how they prefer to be served. The interaction with the

citizens should not be a once off but a continuous partnership exercise. This is envisaged to improve trust and credibility of the public service.

The input from the respondents is invaluable to ascertain the feasibility of professionalisation of the South African Public Service and the tools to get it done. This chapter presented the empirical findings from the respondents as they critically answered the questions in the research tool. The next chapter will present the proposed Framework to Professionalise the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. It will also deal with the nitty-gritties of how this can be done.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to propose a framework through which the South African public service can be professionalised. The framework can be utilised for professionalising a hybrid public institution, suitable for a politicised, developmental-state context, and transferable (with adaptation) to the wider South African public service.

The realisation of a professional public service will not transpire per happenstance on the roll of a dice or a wish. It will also not happen because there is a framework. It will be realised if there is a decisive and definite action plan at government level. However, the DOJCD can use this framework to begin the professionalisation journey. As a chosen case study, the results can be extrapolated to any other department or some elements be incorporated to the framework that is currently being implemented by the National School of Government (NSG).

The preceding chapters, literature review and findings have provided adequate material and thoughts to design a framework that will work for any government department in any sphere of government in South Africa and beyond. Discussed in this chapter is the legislation that gives impetus to establishing the professionalisation framework for the South African Public Service. The researcher zones in to the DOJCD which is the case study for this research, to describe its organisational makeup and relevant legislation that gives it existence. Furthermore, the concept of the framework and related concepts are discussed to give context to the proposed framework. The proposed framework, fashioned against Tseng's model of professionalisation, discusses the specific areas that the department must professionalise.

5.2 Legislation Authorising the Professionalisation of the South African Public Service

The legislative framework tabled below provides for sufficient grounds for the professionalisation of the Public Service. Now that there is a decisive and coordinated effort by the NSG, it is envisaged that all the provisions in these pieces of legislation will now come to fruition, resulting in tangible and measurable outcomes.

5.2.4 Public Administration Management Act (PAMA), 2014, (Act 11 of 2014)

Section 4 of the PAMA of 2014 deals with the basic values and principles governing public administration, which are fundamental to professionalising the Public Service. They require each administrative body to institutionalise these values and principles. These are principles

enshrined in Section 195 of the Constitution (or Chapter 10). The Act sets these values and principles, norms and standards in section 16 and establishes the Office of Standards and Compliance in section 17. Furthermore, sections 11, 12, and 13 of the PAMA deal with capacity development and how professionalisation in public administration can be implemented.

The NSG is mandated to deliver education and training that promotes the progressive realisation of the public administration's values and principles. It also enhances the quality, extent and impact of developing human resource capacity in institutions. This should include the professionalising of public servants and public sector institutions. Additionally, the NSG also provides education and training or causes such education and training to be provided or conducts or causes the resultant examinations or tests to be conducted.

The successful completion of specified education, training, examinations, or tests should be seen as a prerequisite for specified appointments or transfers. They are compulsory to meet the development needs of any category of employees. The NSG must interact with and foster collaboration among training institutions, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Further Education and Training Institutions (FETs), and private sector training providers to supplement education and training initiatives. From a capacity development intervention, these provisions in PAMA provide sufficient authority to institutionalise professionalisation in public administration.

5.2.5 National Framework for Professionalisation of the Public Service (2022)

The objectives of the Policy Framework, amongst others, are to:

- Entrench a dynamic system of professionalisation in the public sector;
- Strengthen and enable the legal and policy instruments to professionalise categories of occupations in the public service;
- Enhance and build partnerships and relationships with HEIs and professional bodies;
- Ensure meritocracy in public servants' recruitment, selection and career management in line with the NDP and the MTSF; and
- Implement employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past through transparent and fair career pathing practices.

The implementation of the Policy Framework proposals and recommendations will enable the implementation of key actions and systems to institutionalise the public sector as a profession of choice which will be able to ‘develop a career system based on meritocracy and ethical disposition steeped in the Batho Pele principles as found in the African philosophy of humanism (Ubuntu); establish a professional public sector, characterised by a strong commitment to the public good and agility in responding to the needs and expectations of the people; create a public sector system that upholds the Constitutional Values and Principles as outlined in Chapter 10.

These values and principles include maintaining and promoting a high standard of professional ethics; using state resources efficiently, economically, and effectively; providing public services impartially, fairly, equitably, and without bias; instilling a development-oriented public administration; responding to the people’s needs swiftly, and an accountable and transparent public administration in all its dealings.’

Furthermore, the Policy Framework proposals are expected to nurture good human resources and career development practices to maximise human potential; and be broadly representative of the South African demographics; and implement employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past through transparent and fair career pathing practices.

5.2.6 Limitations of the current National Professionalisation Framework

By its own admission in the objectives, the framework firstly seeks to professionalise some categories of occupations rather than the public service in its entirety. The selection of certain categories of occupations would necessarily still leave out other categories, which may be deemed as unimportant and not worthy of recognition as professions. The view of the researcher, given the assessments of the majority of Respondents is that all occupations must be professionalised.

Secondly, the Parliamentary Monitoring Group sitting of 11 September 2024 which discussed the progress on implementation of the national professionalisation framework noted that there are factors negatively influencing the implementation, such as; political interference and lack of autonomy where there are notably high levels of political interference in senior management appointments (DGs/HoDs), leading to instability when new ministers appoint their preferred candidates. There is also a marked weak enforcement and accountability where the framework is criticized for being developmental rather than castigatory, resulting in too many incentives

and insufficient disciplinary action for poor performance. There is lack of capacity and other resource constraints wherein the implementing agent, NSG has financial limitations, relying heavily on self-generated funds rather than public funding. Such constraints as mentioned lead to slow adoption and implementation. There is a gap between policy development and its actual implementation across the various levels of government.

Thirdly, the current Framework leans of 5 pillars namely: Recruitment and Selection; Induction and on-boarding; Planning and Performance Management; Continuing learning and Professional Development; Career Progression, Succession Planning and Management of Career Indicence of Heads of Departments

Whilst refining and redefining the elements in the pillars is necessary, there are many aspects of running a government department. The current framework concentrates on the 5 pillars which omits the operations and customers. The inference thereof may not be measurable in the long run during implementation and or when there is comfort that changes can be seen. Therefore, the proposed framework by the researcher directly includes these important elements prominently and pragmatically in order to achieve a professional state. The proposed framework also suggests an establishment of a regulatory body with elementary duties to govern any Public Servant at any level in any category of occupation (Secretaries, Office Managers, and so forth)

5.3 Knowledge on the Framework

Partelow (2023:510-512) tables a few definitions of a ‘framework’ as described by many scholars that he quotes in his article, ‘What is a framework? Understanding their purpose, value, development, and use.’ He asserts that frameworks are important research tools in almost every field of science because they play an important role in structuring practical inquiries and theoretical development, such as in governance research and practice, environmental social sciences, sustainability sciences, and social ecology, among others. Without a doubt, the field of public administration as a science is also included. The definitions thereof will fluctuate across different disciplines and thematic fields (Cox et al. 2016), thereby presenting a situation where there is no universal definition. However, a few definitions are cited as follows:

The Cambridge Dictionary: frameworks are ‘a supporting structure around which something can be built; a system of rules, ideas, or beliefs that is used to plan or decide something.’

Schlager (2007: 293): ‘Frameworks provide a foundation for inquiry.’

Binder et al. (2013, 2): 'A framework provides a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices,'

McGinnis and Ostrom (2014a:1): 'a framework is the basic vocabulary of concepts and terms that may be used to construct the kinds of causal explanations expected of a theory. Frameworks organize diagnostic, descriptive, and prescriptive inquiry.'

Partelow (2023:10) emphasises that even though there are countless frameworks in various disciplines and fields, 'it is not always clear how a framework can be developed or applied.' Therefore, development may occur through a well-researched blend of knowledge, values, and interests of different scholars. However, these varied ways to framework development result in common trends that can be followed by anyone seeking to craft a framework in their field. Therefore, the Development of the 'Framework for the Professionalisation of the DOJCD' will also follow the generalised common trends as determined and accepted by previous scholars.

In France, Zayet et al. (2023:7508), in a study that sought to propose a framework to improve student engagement, performance, and knowledge considering student behaviour, requirements, preferences, background, learning style, and ability, drew a 4-stage approach for the architectural conceptual framework. This was meant to build a personalised recommendation system for students' e-learning platform. These stages can be customised and replicated by anyone seeking to develop a framework for their field. Such platforms became a fundamental necessity when students were lured into the e-learning space because of Covid-19. The four primary stages were; student profiling, material collection, material filtering and material validation.

More than considering the specific stages of Zayet et al.'s framework, the fundamental understanding is that any framework can be developed and implemented in stages. It would seem that customisation and consideration of the needs of the field are the key elements to developing a framework.

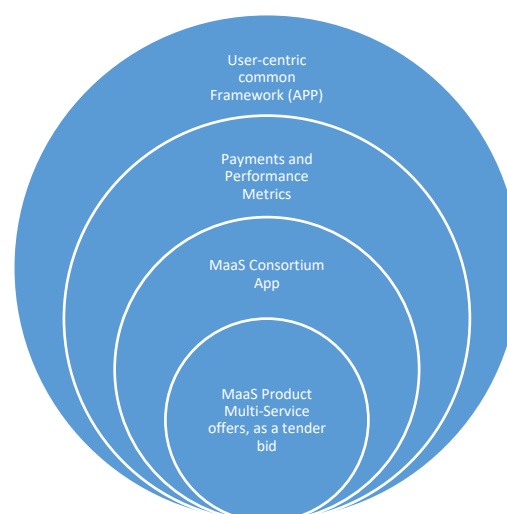
To learn more about frameworks, it is wise to consider more examples. Another example is the 'Mobility as a service' (MaaS) discussed in Hensher, et al. (2023) communication note. According to the MaaS Alliance, MaaS is a system that integrates various forms of transport and transport-related services into a single, comprehensive, and on-demand mobility service. It offers end-users the added value of accessing transportation through a single application (app) and a single payment channel (instead of multiple ticketing and payment operations) (<https://maas-alliance.eu/homepage/what-is-maas/>).

The MaaS system in Australia and Finland offers an integrated transportation or mobility system that provides many modes of transport and non-transport services. In this framework, partnerships with contractors and subcontractors are essential to ensure that the consortium is configured to cover all the key elements of a supply and value chain. The aim is to ensure ease of movement for customers and contribution to a transition to a zero emission (at the tailpipe) future. In Finland, MaaS is legislated, thus providing a clearer framework under which the partnerships, contractors and subcontractors can be formed and operate.

There is a legislative requirement to share data and to operate on a common platform, a move deemed as an attractive way to encourage MaaS providers. The ‘Transport Code’ introduced under The Act on Transport Services (2018) is critical to the Finnish National MaaS Framework and requires transport operators for all modes to provide their operational data by means of open interfaces and to make single tickets available for resale to third parties. The framework provides guidelines with regards to the manner of partnerships, requirements for vehicles, registration for incentives and a lot more benefits.

Following these guidelines, the participants in consortiums are able not only to derive value for their customers and incentives for themselves but also to reduce gas emission. The framework is designed to make it hard not to participate if mobility is the business of interest.

As in other frameworks, the MaaS framework development also follows a particular pattern: Figure 5.1: The proposed User-centric Common Framework.



Source: Adapted from Hensher, et al, p5

From the discussion above, and the attempted definitions, it can be deduced that a framework is an overarching set of principles or guidelines that provide a basis on which other structures can be built. It is similar to the rules of a game; understanding the framework gives insight into how to manoeuvre within it. Its very core lies in furnishing the base that sets limitations while also offering enough flexibility for adaptation and expansion. The main purpose of a framework is twofold:

- To provide guidance; and
- To maintain consistency.

In essence, it is less prescriptive than a model. Whether they are steered towards managing complex software developments with multiple moving parts or used for monitoring and evaluation purposes, frameworks act as safeguard for actions and decisions that fall within understood and defined parameters. They can be likened to scaffolding around which processes are fashioned, progress is measured, and goals are achieved.

5.4 Other Concepts Related to Framework

Some concepts are, to an extent, used interchangeably with the 'Framework'. They will be briefly discussed below, primarily to denote the difference. Policy, model and strategy are such terms or concepts. Below is an attempt to define these concepts.

5.4.1 Policy

Crammond and Carey (2017:404) posit that the Constitution is the founding piece of policy for many countries, because it sets out the powers of government. In other words, governments are established based on their Constitution. They further expand that Constitutions are developed under various circumstances such as; when new nations are brought into being, for example South Sudan and Kosovo; or when old governments are overthrown and replaced, for example, Guinea-Bissau (2012) and Egypt (2013). Therefore, from the premise and launchpad of the Constitution, policies are formed.

This is particularly the case with the Republic of South Africa, which is referred to as a Constitutional democracy. The meaning of constitutional democracy is that every piece of legislation (often interchangeably used with policy) stems from the Constitution and there can be no deviation from it. Examples of policies in the public service are criminal justice policies, economic policies, education policies, transport policies, environmental policies, health

policies, social welfare policies, foreign policy, and so forth. It can therefore be deduced that the Constitution becomes the ‘Framework’ from which all policies are developed.

In South Africa, the courts and administration of justice system, for example, is established according to the dictates of Chapter 8 of the Constitution. Different courts (Constitutional Court, Supreme Court of Appeal, High Courts, and Magistrates’ Courts) are established and function according to policies such as (to name just a few):

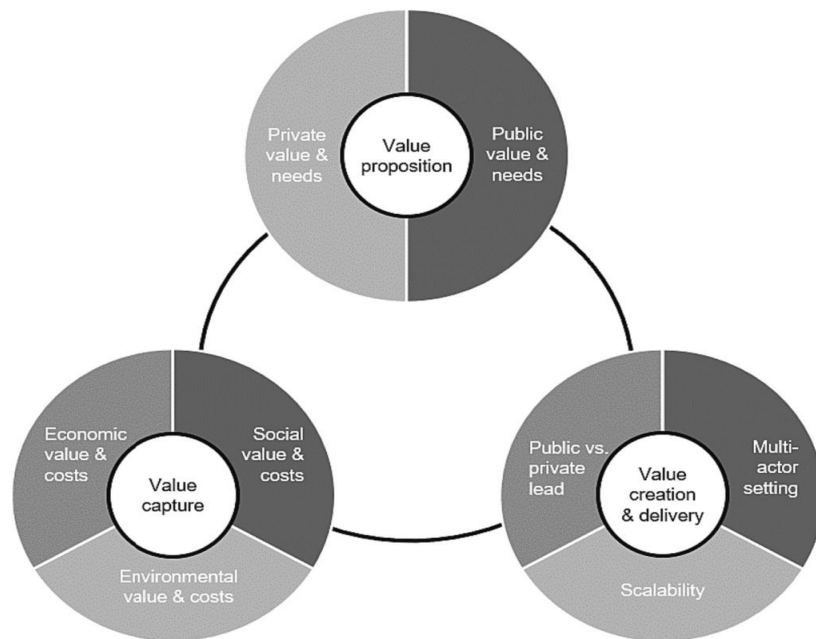
- i. *Superior Courts Act, 2013, (Act No. 10 of 2013)*
- ii. *Magistrates’ Courts Act, 1944 (Act No. 32 of 1944)*
- iii. *Small Claims Courts Act, 1984 (Act No. 61 of 1984)*
- iv. *Traditional Courts Act, 2022 (Act No. 9 of 2022)*
- v. *Land Court Act, 2023 (Act No. 6 of 2023)*

These courts sittings and execution of law are governed by various legislations as individuals and institutions come into conflict with them, for example, Criminal procedure Act (Act No. 51 of 1977), Prevention of Organised Crime Act, 1998 (Act No. 121 of 1998), Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007 (Act No. 32 of 2007), Child Justice Act, 2008 (Act No. 75 of 2008) and so forth. Crammond and Carey (2017:405) describe legislation as key tools of government policy and refer to laws passed through and approved by a legislature like a parliament or congress.

5.4.2 Model

Every organization, knowingly or unknowingly, functions on a business model; however, the model language is more prominent in the private sector than in the public management sector (Lorenz et al., 2024:1). In the private sector, Bencsik et al. (2023:2) use terms that are popular in business models, such as ‘value capture,’ which is one of the three elements of a business model, alongside ‘value proposition’ and ‘value creation and delivery’. These are the model terms being adapted to the public sector as it endeavours to professionalise for efficiency.

Figure 5.2 Integrated business model framework for the private and public sectors



Source: Adapted from: Lorenz: 2024 p. 9.

The catchword in any model is ‘value.’ The private sector captures economic value for the most part; however, the business models also extend to environmental and social value. In public service provision models, environmental as well as social value and costs resulting from public service provision have always been dominant from the beginning as the sector is non-profit making but social service oriented. Essentially, public actors should aim to capture value to benefit the broader community and reduce social inequalities. Furthermore, they should aim to provide access to essential services, resources, and opportunities for all citizens equitably, regardless of their socioeconomic status. When that is done properly, all values - social, environmental - will be captured equally by both public and private or business actors (Bencsik et al. 2023).

Models, whether they are designed for private businesses or public service, are aimed at the same or similar results. For a business, growth and profits are key, whilst fighting for space in the market. For public entities, quality and service excellence are key to please the citizens that are served. What comes out clearly is that models are fundamentally representations or constructs of reality. A model breaks down complex systems or concepts into simpler, more manageable forms. Its main purpose is to help understand, describe, predict, or simulate how particular parts of the world or phenomena work. Therefore, whether applied in economics, science, software development, or public service, models serve as tools for analysis. They allow testing of theories without directly manipulating the real-world entities involved. What also comes out clearly is that a model can be designed within a framework.

A perfectly fitting example of professionalisation is presented in Joseph Tseng's Professionalisation: In the book 'Translation Across Time and Space,' edited by Professor Wafa Abu Hatab, Annastasio Ioannidis, in which Zoi Resta sponsored a chapter on 'A Sociological Approach to the Professionalisation Process of Interpreting in Greece.' They based their proposed model for the Greece interpretation of Tseng's Model of Professionalisation. They described Tseng's model as based on the 'theory of control,' used as a sociological approach for the professionalisation concept.

Tseng used a theory from the sociology of professions to form his own model, particularly for interpreting. The theory of control asserts that the professionalisation of an occupation can be achieved when 'producers of special services seek to constitute and control a market for their expertise'. In this theory, the term 'control' encompasses both internal and external control. Internal control means a profession exercises its control over the expertise or specialised body of knowledge (schools, training institutions), the admission or entry of newcomers into the profession and its members by formulating a code of ethics.

External control, in contrast, concerns professions assuming control over the clientele by distinguishing the precise needs of the clients by offering the fitting services. External control also monopolises the market by becoming independent in performing their services for the clients and maintaining direct contact with them (Tseng 1992: 19-38). Through this framework, Tseng constructed the sociological model in order to help describe the struggle of the occupational group of interpreters to gain the sought-after professional status.

Tseng proposed a model comprising four phases. He explained that the market is divided into four sections which indicate the stages which a professionalising occupation endeavours to reach in the process. The four phases are explained below:

PHASE (1) - Market disorientation

This phase is characterised by market disorientation wherein 'the practitioners in the market cannot keep outsiders from entering the practice.' This means that the practice can be done by anyone without restrictions or quality checks in terms of standards.

Clients and the public in general are unable to determine nor do they understand or care about the nature and the quality of the services. Therefore, price becomes the determining factor to them. This leads to a situation where there is competition, malpractice and price-cutting. At this stage there is no database of quality checked practitioners, and therefore clients will call

upon anyone available to offer the services at a reasonable fee. This absence of control and possible malpractice can be broken if the trained practitioners unite and actively get involved in the market. They can do this by urging training institutions to form common curricula for the specific occupation.

That, Tseng believes, is how an occupation can gain the official training label. This will lead to a situation where, after a certain period, practitioners will be divided roughly into trained, inadequately trained, and untrained practitioners. This hierarchy will determine the quality of the market players and the fees they can charge. In the field of psychology, there are clinical psychologists (specialists), psychologists (generalists), counsellors (juniors with certificates), and so on. This distinguishing feature determines what clients can get from which practitioner and the price they can expect to pay for services.

In the case of public service, market disorientation should talk to reorganisation of operations not to introduce excellence only but also to eliminate maladministration activities such as unauthorised expenditures, corruption, performance targets not met and so forth, and all this leading to qualified audit opinions and unhappy citizens. A rethink of the culture and character of the department is imperative so as not to leave these important aspects behind as professionalisation process takes place.

PHASE (2)—Training Curriculum

When the quality of training is determined and the practitioners in the market are demarcated, the training institutions cooperate in order to produce top-notch practitioners with common competencies who possess an impenetrable body of language so that they stand out from the untrained ones. It is then expected that, in continuous collaboration with the practitioners, training institutions continue to adapt the curricula to the developments of the profession in order to offer quality services in the market. Professionalisation at this stage has not taken place as clients may still not know how to distinguish between the top-notch practitioners and others. Therefore, the next phase must take place leading to the establishment of a professional association.

PHASE (3) – Establish a Professional Association

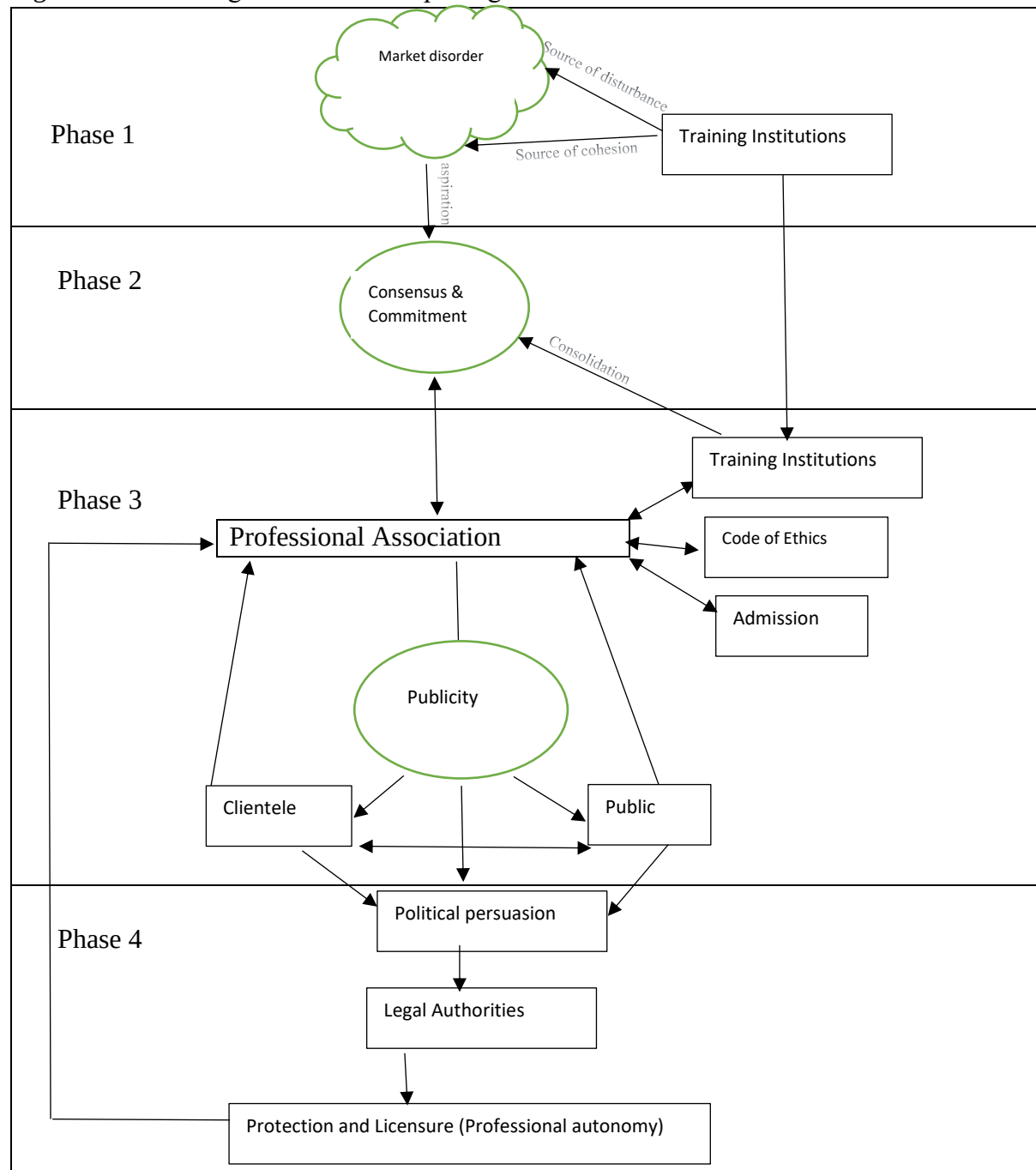
The association attempts to rally social support to validate the professional claim. At this stage the practitioners are required to register with the association to obtain a practice number that identifies them as qualified and validated. Included in the association membership pack is:

- a) the code of ethics which are regularly adaptable to the market shifts, in order for the association to keep its empowered position in the market;
- b) 'filters' that the training institutions have adapted to the established practitioners' standards to those that have not as appropriate or inappropriate, thus accepting practitioners from the appropriate institutions or conditionally accepting and/or not accepting the practitioners from inappropriate institutions;
- c) links with the government in order to promote through legislation its position in the market, so that it can be generally accepted that 'only members of the association can offer ascertained quality services'. These situations can help practitioners earn public trust and can reduce competition among them, since now quality and not price is the main criterion for undertaking a job (Tseng 51-52)

PHASE (4) the association and the trained practitioners have achieved enough to exercise market control. At this stage the association can make use of its connections with the governing authorities in order to lobby for the adoption of a bill to legally grant autonomy to the profession and exclude outsiders from practice. That way, the dominant role of the association is legally acknowledged, and the professionals gain the desired professional autonomy in the country's market.

Tseng's model of interpreting Professionalisation:

Figure 5. 3 Tseng's model of interpreting Professionalisation



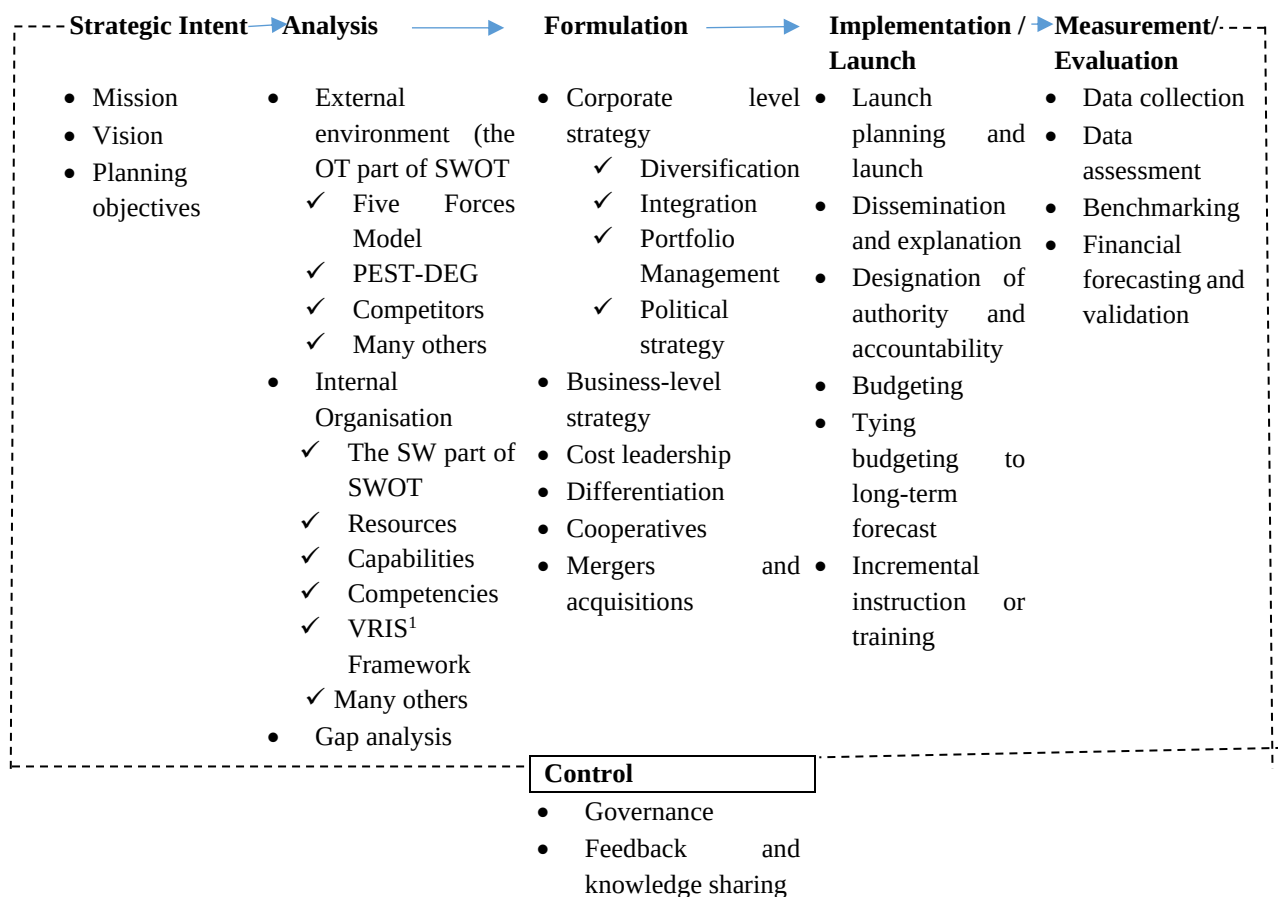
Source: Adapted from: A Revised Model for the Professionalisation of Court Interpreting in Taiwan p.144

5.4.3 Strategy

Cory (2024:1-3) posits that strategy does not have a single definition. It is a field of science and like any other, in attempting to define it, one needs to be careful and precise with terminology. In strategy, Cory contends that one of the main reasons there are so many different and dissimilar definitions is because people are actually describing at least five different concepts and calling each of them by, or generically combining them together under, the single term strategy. The five concepts are, 1) the field of Strategic Management, 2) the Strategic

Planning Process, 3) a Strategic Plan, 4) Realized Strategy, and 5) a Business Model, whilst each essentially has its own definition.

In the researcher's view, strategic planning would have failed if professionalism is left out of the conversation and activities as part of implementation. Ongoing professionalisation, as the core characteristic of an organisation, should form part of the core strategic planning process. A strategic planning process suggested by Cory (2024:4) contains the following elements (which they suggest that though various models exist, they will have at least these 6 elements):



Source: Adapted from Strategy and Leadership; Cory 2024:4

In the model above, professionalisation is assumed and not as prominent as the other elements. However, in relation to the difference between strategy and framework, the Centre for Management and Organisational Effectiveness suggests that an organisation's strategy is just one element (often out of six) of the whole strategy framework document. Organisations often write their vision, mission, and values before deciding on a strategy that could accomplish their

¹ valuable, rare, imitable and sustainable

mission. If the strategy framework were an iceberg, then vision, mission, and values would be out of sight under the water. The strategy would be the first visible part of the iceberg, expressing the wishes of the organisation underneath, and objectives and tactics would rest on top of the strategy and express it further.

It is interesting to observe in the literature that every organisation needs a ‘strategy’ in order to realise their vision. This is supported by Piwowar-Sulej et al. (2023:303), who emphasise that, many studies conducted over the decades have shown a positive relationship between formulated strategy and organizational performance. They further indicate three levels of strategy; namely

- i. corporate strategy, which is the foundation for other strategies like the differentiation or specialization strategy;
- ii. business strategy which is concerned with the positioning and competition of a specific business unit like subsidiaries; and
- iii. functional strategy which affects the functioning of specific division of a company like marketing or human resources.

The strategy could be contextualised from a particular ‘theoretical framework’ suitable for the organisation. The model above refers to ‘frameworks’ referred as well. This means both strategy and framework can exist within each other. The relationship between the two is contextualised in what the formulator wants to achieve.

5.4.4 The Interconnectedness of Terms

To further illustrate the interconnectedness of the terms elaborated above, Sabatier (2007:6) in his book ‘Theories of the Policy Process’, states ‘Elinor Ostrom has developed some very useful distinctions among three different sets of propositions. (1) In her view, a ‘conceptual framework’ identifies a set of variables and the relationships among them that presumably account for a set of phenomena. The framework can provide anything from a modest set of variables to something as extensive as a paradigm. It need not identify directions among relationships, although more developed frameworks will certainly specify some hypotheses. (2) A ‘theory’ provides a denser and more logically coherent set of relationships. It applies values to some of the variables and usually specifies how relationships may vary depending upon the values of critical variables. Numerous theories may be consistent with the same conceptual framework. (3) A ‘model’ is a representation of a specific situation. It is usually much narrower in scope, and more precise in its assumptions, than the underlying theory.

Ideally, it is mathematical. Thus, frameworks, theories, and models can be conceptualized as operating along a continuum involving increasing logical interconnectedness and specificity but decreasing scope.’ Elinor Ostrom (sponsored Chapter 2 of the said book) calls this approach of interconnectedness a ‘multiple-lens’ strategy.

It is quite evident that no one term can stand on its own without somewhat leaning on the others for explanation and better understanding. However, for the purposes of the study at hand, a ‘Framework’ is still proposed. The framework will include strategies, models and policies that can be used effectively for successful implementation of the Professionalisation of the DOJCD.

5.5 The Background of the Proposed Framework

NSG (2022:7) states that the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) for the 2019-2024 period foregrounds the government’s strategic commitment to build a capable, ethical and developmental state. To achieve this, government must implement key interventions, including:

Professional, meritocratic and ethical public administration;

Improved leadership, governance and accountability;

Functional, efficient and integrated government

Mainstreaming of gender, empowerment of youth and people with disabilities; and

Social compact and engagement with key stakeholders.

These are taken as the key areas of focus to ensure the professionalisation of the South African Public Service. The following diagram depicts the approach and pillars adopted in the Framework for professionalisation of public service by government of South Africa.

Figure 5.4: Pillars in the value chain for the professionalisation of the Public Sector



Source: National Framework for Professionalisation of the Public Sector 2022 p.9

5.5.1 The DOJCD Profile

Premised from the statement in the National Framework towards the Professionalisation of The Public Sector, which states that the Public Service is diverse, with a huge range of skills, qualifications and capabilities, many Public Servants in the DOJCD have specialised skills that are necessary for the effective provision of services. The DOJCD's mandate derived from the Constitution is two-fold. Firstly, it seeks to provide a framework for the effective and efficient administration of justice. Secondly, it seeks to promote constitutional development through the development and implementation of legislation and programmes that seek to advance and sustain constitutionalism and the rule of law. This is accomplished through the implementation of programmes to deepen and nurture the country's constitutional democracy. Following the transfer of superior courts to the Office of the Chief Justice, the Department continued to support the lower courts in line with its constitutional mandate.

Furthermore, there are specific provisions in the Bill of Rights that give rise to other pieces of legislation that form a significant part of the Minister's legislative mandate. The specific provisions are found in the following sections:

Section 9: 'Equality'

Section 12: 'Freedom and Security of the person'

Section 14: 'Privacy'

Section 28: 'Children'

Section 32: 'Access to Information'

Section 33: 'Just Administrative Action'

Section 34: 'Access to Courts'

Section 35: 'Arrested, detained and accused persons'

5.5.2 Legislative mandate of the DOJCD

The Department derives its legislative mandate from various statutes and subordinate legislation. Most of these Acts impact, in some way or other, on the daily functioning of the Department, but, in the context of the priorities of government, the following legislative instruments are particularly relevant:

Table 5.1: Legislation instruments - Adapted from The DOJCD 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan

Legislation provision	Legislation in action
Legislation providing for the establishment and functioning of the superior courts, magistrates' courts and other courts,	a) Superior Courts Act, 2013, (Act No. 10 of 2013) b) Magistrates' Courts Act, 1944 (Act No. 32 of 1944) c) Small Claims Courts Act, 1984 (Act No. 61 of 1984) d) Traditional Courts Act, 2022 (Act No. 9 of 2022) e) Land Court Act, 2023 (Act No. 6 of 2023)
Legislation providing for the appointment of judges and other judicial officers, their conditions of service, discipline and training	a) Judges' Remuneration and Conditions of Employment Act, 2001 (Act No. 47 of 2001) b) Judicial Service Commission Act, 1994 (Act No. 9 of 1994) c) South African Judicial Education Institute (SAJEI) Act, 2008 (Act No. 14 of 2008) d) Magistrates Act, 1993 (Act No. 90 of 1993)
Legislation relating to the prosecution of offenders and the combatting of crime:	a) National Prosecuting Authority Act, 1998 (Act No. 32 of 1998) b) Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act No. 51 of 1977) c) Prevention of Organised Crime Act, 1998 (Act No. 121 of 1998) d) Special Investigation Units and Special Tribunals Act, 1996 (Act No. 74 of 1996) e) Witness Protection Act, 1998 (Act No. 112 of 1998) f) Implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Act, 2002 (Act No. 27 of 2002) g) Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities Act, 2004 (Act No. 33 of 2004) h) Prevention and Combatting of Corrupt Activities Act, 2004 (Act No. 12 of 2004) i) Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007 (Act No. 32 of 2007) (Sexual Offences Act) j) Child Justice Act, 2008 (Act No. 75 of 2008) k) Prevention and Combatting of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2013 (Act No. 7 of 2013)
Legislation providing for the establishment and functioning of bodies	a) Legal Aid South Africa Act, 2014 (Act No. 39 of 2014) b) South African Law Reform Commission Act, 1973 (Act No. 19 of 1973)

responsible for legal aid, law reform and court rules	c) Rules Board for Courts of Law Act, 1985 (Act No. 107 of 1985)
Legislation providing for the administration of estates	a) Insolvency Act, 1936 (Act No. 24 of 1936) b) Administration of Estates Act, 1985 (Act No. 107 of 1985) c) Trust Property Control Act, 1988 (Act No. 57 of 1988)
Legislation on the administration of legal services to government departments	a) State Attorney Act, 1957 (Act 56 of 1957) b) State Attorney Amendment Act, 2014 (Act No. 13 of 2014) c) State Liability Act, 1957 (Act No. 20 of 1957)
Legislation relating to the promotion, protection and enforcement of human rights	a) Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No. 3 of 2000) b) Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000) c) Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (Act No. 52 of 2000) d) Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013)
Legislation relating to extraditions in relation to crime occurring beyond the border of the Republic	a) Extradition Act, 1962 (Act No. 627 of 1962)
Legislation governing the legal profession, sheriffs and debt collectors	a) Legal Practice Act, 2014 (Act No. 28 of 2014) b) Sheriffs Act, 1986 (Act No. 90 of 1986) c) Debt Collectors Act, 1998 (Act No. 114 of 1998) d) State Attorney Amendment Act, 2014 (Act No. 13 of 2014)

Source: DOJCD 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan

The pieces of legislation in Table 5.1 above give impetus to the mandatory functions of the DOJCD, without which its existence would be questionable.

Values of the department

The DOJCD 2024/25 Annual Performance Plan outlines the following values as fundamental in the manner which defines its personality and character:

Batho Pele (People First)

- We commit to put the needs of our people at the centre of service delivery.
- We respond to customer needs in a professional, speedy and timely manner.

Ubuntu

- We provide services with an attitude of compassion kindness, selflessness and humility.
- We are respectful and considerate in performing our duties.

Patriotism

- Serve our country and its people with pride, integrity and loyalty.

- We love, cherish and honour South Africa.

Social Justice

- We render services in a fair, just, honest and unbiased manner.
- Every person is served with tolerance and without discrimination.

Human Rights

- We acknowledge the dignity and worth of every individual we serve.
- We strive to make every person feel valued and respected in our daily activities.

Good Governance

- We act in an ethical and transparent manner.
- We are responsible and accountable in handling public funds and resources.

Collegiality

- We foster good and supportive working relations with each other in achieving our goals.
- We demonstrate care, cooperation, and compassion in working with each other.

Reading the values of the DOJCD, one would be convinced of professional characteristics per definitions and discussions of professionalism in the Literature Review. However, there is no empirical evidence of implementation and/or impact as a result of implementation.

5.6 The Framework

5.6.1 Phase 1 – Market Disorientation (Adapted from Tseng’s model of Professionalisation)

5.6.1.1 Professionalisation of Operations

The DOJCD is one of the largest departments in government. It has footprints all over the country, with more than 700 courts (as main seats, branch courts or periodical courts), a number of Family Services service points and a number of State Attorneys’ offices. The massiveness of the department requires a focused, customer-centric service delivery outlook which combines and collaborates with all relevant stakeholders to deliver services effectively, efficiently, economically and professionally.

The immensity of the DOJCD cannot and should not rely on the normal management arrangements that are a requirement from government only, if efficiencies are to be realised. The current arrangements are fitted into the Strategic Plan (now turned into a Development Plan) which runs for five years in tandem with the political term of the ruling party.

According to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), the purpose of the government wide planning and reporting cycle is to articulate the planning, budgeting, monitoring, reporting, evaluation and auditing process cycle in the national, provincial and local spheres of government. It ensures a formal mapping of the processes and synergy within spheres of government through intergovernmental and interdepartmental planning processes. Furthermore, the DPME indicates that the Government Wide Planning and Reporting Cycle is used by the departments at the centre of government and other policy and oversight institutions to synchronise the processes and timelines which are issued to national, provincial and local government institutions. It is also used by the three spheres of government to ensure alignment of institutional processes to the legislated processes and timelines provided by the centre of government.

Therefore, the similarity in the way things are done is inevitable since government is 'one.' However, there must be uniqueness in managing operations for professionalism and improved service delivery. The introduction of programs and technologies aimed at managing operations for improvement is what sets one department apart from others, even though they all adhere to the prescribed planning cycle with prescribed planning and reporting templates.

To professionalise operations in the DOJCD, the introduction of the Operations Management Framework (OMF) is recommended. This approach encompasses developmental programmes, processes, and procedures that ensure the department improves services holistically, with the customer at the centre.

Professional and effective service delivery improvement is a process of enhancing the quality, efficiency, and responsiveness of public services to the needs and expectations of the citizens. There are different approaches and methods to achieve this goal, depending on the context and challenges of the department. However, elements that can help improve management of operations are proposed as follows:

- i) Aligning the service delivery strategy with the organizational goals and vision. This means having a clear understanding of the purpose, objectives, and values of each service, and how they contribute to the overall mission of the department.

ii) Engaging with the beneficiaries and stakeholders to identify their needs, preferences, and feedback. This means conducting regular surveys, consultations, and evaluations to measure customer satisfaction, expectations, and perceptions of the service quality. The Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP) includes such activities at national and provincial level.

iii) Developing and implementing service standards and indicators that reflect the desired outcomes and outputs of each service. This means setting clear, measurable, and achievable targets for the service performance, and monitoring and reporting on the progress and results.

iv) Optimizing the service delivery processes (policies, business processes, etc.) and systems to eliminate waste, reduce costs, and increase efficiency. This means applying lean principles, automation, innovation, and best practices to streamline the workflows, procedures, and resources involved in delivering the service.

v) Building a culture of continuous improvement and learning within the department. This means fostering a collaborative, supportive, and accountable environment where staff are empowered, motivated, and trained to deliver high-quality service to the beneficiaries.

The ultimate goal is to have a customer-centric mindset that focuses on delivering value and satisfaction to the beneficiaries.

The intention of introducing the operations management framework is primarily to ensure that all the basic elements of continuous improvement are packaged and in place in the department.

Wolniak (2020:11) describes operations management as a process that involves planning, organizing, co-ordinating, and controlling all the resources needed to produce an organisation's goods and services. It involves managing people, equipment, technology, information, and all the other resources needed in the production of goods and services and is the central core of every organisation.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) defines the OMF as a set of principles, standards and policies that are used to guide the designs, development, deployment, operation and retirement of services delivered by a service provider with a view to offering a reliable and consistent service experience to specific users in a precise business context. In the case of public service, the specific users are all the citizens and non-citizens that are in the country at any given time who may need the services of government (DPSA, 2016: v)

The DPSA, driven by the need to improve public service delivery, led a research project that sought to unearth service delivery bottlenecks. The DPSA found that, despite the creation of an enabling environment through regulatory frameworks and support mechanisms government wide, the departments still struggle with the continuous improvement and delivery of quality services for all. The situation is attributed to a number of reasons; such as, lack of an operations management strategy and inability, in most cases, to map services provided to ensure effective and efficient delivery. It was found that there was no Service Delivery Model (SDM) that outlines how an institution should address its mandates and no institutionalisation of business processes and standard operating procedures. This was also coupled with inconsistent and, in some instances, outdated service delivery charters, which are consultative documents that clearly set out the standard of services that service beneficiaries can expect from Government. It was further observed that there was failure to improve quality through Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs) and service standards despite massive increases in successive budgets. In some areas, service quality and standards have even deteriorated.

The elements outlined above are also applicable to the DOJCD. Therefore, the objective of the OMF is to professionalise the operations environment for improving service delivery through ensuring that the department develops the necessary structures, programs, systems and processes to meet their strategic objectives, and thus impact positively in the lives of the citizens.

The OMF should take into consideration historic challenges such as dilapidating infrastructure or recent ones such as electricity load-shedding that are currently experienced by the DOJCD which directly and indirectly affect service delivery to the citizens. More challenges are cited below:

Challenges affecting ICT infrastructure of the DOJCD: there are low levels of digitization – for example; simple processes such as expungement and protection order applications require manual walk-ins and manual application forms. The network is largely slow. That affects most departmental business applications such as ICMS, MojaPay, BAS and Justice Yellow Pages (JYP). Currently in most courts, there are electricity alternatives such as the generators or solar system. There is no national policy to guide how service points should deal with load-shedding disruptions, and court management is often at a loss over how to manage staff, the public and service providers.

Challenges affecting business processes and policies: whereas different offices (geographically) of DOJCD offer same services to citizens, and thus utilise same business processes, there are inconsistent process timelines. For example, while other Master of the High Court offices issue a letter of authority for a deceased estate while citizens wait, the Pretoria Master of the High Court office takes a minimum of 10 days. There are complexities and inconsistencies across provinces – for example, for a guardian fund application, not all offices require a councillor's letter. There is a high case backlog. For example, almost every office has some sort of backlog in terms of matters handled or in data capturing.

The DOJCD deals with the high cost of Foreign Language Interpreters. The procurement policy is cumbersome to implement because it is centralised, as per policy. However, this results in goods and services suppliers declining to submit quotations. The service points are unable to procure anything outside of the approved procurement plan no matter how urgent and necessary the item is.

Challenges affecting citizens – citizens' perceptions and or experiences about access to justice have not been tested in a while. However, it is common knowledge that citizens traveling to service points sometimes use multiple transports and must always come more than once, only to experience long waiting times. The issue of distances between the service points and the places of residence is a challenge for rural areas, considering that South Africa is largely rural. For example, Garies Magistrate Court in the Northern Cape Province services citizens as far as 114 kilometres away.

Challenges affecting infrastructure: Most court buildings are dilapidated and not friendly to customers or officials. With the growth in population and crime, there is scarcity of space for court files. There is also a perceived lack of cooperation from Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) who are directly responsible for availability of adequate infrastructure for government. Additionally, there are other external factors such as shortage of water and also the perpetual threat of electricity cuts.

Challenges affecting staff: the challenges cited above put a strain on the staff morale, as they are expected to function under these conditions. The insufficient budget adds to capacity challenges in that critical posts cannot be filled and tools of trade are sometimes old and out of warranty.

Key elements of the OMF

Operations management refers to the activities, decisions and responsibilities of managing the production and delivery of products and services in line with the department's strategic objectives. It comprises four major activities and/or programmes that must be implemented as the overall service delivery improvement strategy of the department. These activities are discussed below.

i. Operations Strategy

The department needs to develop and implement a Service Delivery Model (SDM) that describes how services are currently delivered and how the department will improve e.g. current manual forms and systems to online systems.

ii. Operations Design

The department must ensure the design of operations is in accordance to the desired and approved SDM. Operations design comprises of the following elements:

Business process management: Business processes must enable management to align its business processes to the strategic plan and SDM. It includes identifying, classifying, documenting, measuring, analysing, improving, integrating and maintaining processes.

Standard Operating Procedures: From business process, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) must be developed for repetitive tasks which will ensure standardization and that all employees know exactly what is expected of them, thereby improving productivity and time management, reducing operating costs and, in turn, ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of services. SOPs also ensure data integrity.

Service standards: Service standards must be set for all services, to provide clarity to service beneficiaries on quantity, quality and time in relation to the services rendered. Service standards are based on the business processes mapped, available resources, but most importantly, the needs of the service beneficiaries.

iii. Operations Planning and Control

Forecasting, planning, controlling and adjusting of operations is an activity scarcely carried out in the DOJCD. The importance of this activity is in anticipating the future by performing exercises such as benchmarking the existing and future improvements given the projected economic and technological conditions and research. The operations analysis for improvement

entails a balance in the degree of analysis and measurement of services rendered. The department has selectively focused on certain programmes over others, e.g. SDIP, training and development, to a greater degree than measurement of productivity and Organisational Functionality Assessment (OFA). The available resources will determine the ability of the department to carry out these functions.

iv. Operations analysis and improvement

The operations analysis and improvement contains the following programmes which should be clearly visible in the department in order to realise professionalisation of operations:

Organisational Functionality Assessment (OFA) is a process used to determine whether all necessary service delivery enablers are available to ensure that services are delivered to beneficiaries in an optimal manner.

Productivity refers to how effectively and efficiently an institution's inputs are translated into outputs. Achieving a high degree of productivity is an important objective of public service institutions given that they are under increasing economic and political pressure to produce a mandated set of goods and services within the limits of ever-increasing resource constraints.

Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs) are tools used to ensure the continuous and incremental improvement of service delivery.

Learning and Knowledge Management (LKM) seeks to package institutional information and knowledge through programs such as talent management; training and development, masterclass programmes; wherein skills are harnessed in order to eliminate use of external consultants.

Table 5.2 Main Functions of Operations Management

Function	Characteristics in the Private Sector (Wolniak, 2020:11)	Characteristics in the Public Sector (Adapted by researcher)
Planning	Includes choosing a location for the business and scheduling production. Where a business is located is directly related to how successful the business will be. This fact is as true for a company	The location of a service point is supremely important for effective access to justice. Planning for service delivery starts at this point. Therefore, consideration of who the customer is, where they live, what their economic activity and status is, how best they

	that is opening its first factory or store as it is for an older business that is expanding into a new area. Among the factors to consider are proximity to markets, raw materials, labour supply, and transportation facilities.	should be served are all part of the raw materials of DOJCD in order to serve efficiently and professionally.
Scheduling	Operations involve setting beginning and ending times for each step in the production process. It includes planning and checking the use of labour, machinery, and materials so that production moves smoothly. Scheduling ensures that work will be finished on time whether it is manufacturing automobiles or books or dry cleaning a blouse or shirt.	Professionalism calls for a decisive methodology for working. Scheduling, for example, court preparation meetings at 7:45am are an integral part of daily operation. End of day task control should also be part of the daily operations, to ascertain meeting of targets for the day and productivity levels. DOJCD should maximise use of scheduling tools such as MS Teams, MS Access, Power BI and so forth. These tools are available without having to spend money purchasing.
Organising	These are the activities that establish a structure of tasks and authority. Operation managers establish a structure of roles and the flow of information within the operations subsystem. They determine the activities required to achieve the goals and assign authority and responsibility for carrying them out.	Although it can be said that the ‘organising’ is done quite well in government, there are inefficiencies and inconsistencies that need improvement. Goal setting and role clarification with expectations are usually articulated in the annual performance plans which are articulated in the performance agreements of employees. Tracking of performance is done through reporting templates on MS Word or Excel. Use of latest technologies to capture information and report generation is missed. The DOJCD should research a system that will yield valid and reliable data, from which anyone in the

		department can mine data and draw reports for their own use. One of the major challenges in the department is late submission of reports, because of reliance on officials who must submit. With this system, each user will have the data they need at their fingertips.
Purchasing	In order to do business, a company needs the raw materials to produce its goods or offer its services. It also must have machinery, office supplies, and any other supplies it uses. Obtaining raw materials, machines, and supplies is the purchasing function of the production process and involves getting the best deal for the company. The people who buy goods for a business have to decide what to buy, from whom, and at what price.	Purchasing in the public sector refers to the process of acquisition by government and public entities of goods and services necessary to fulfil the mandate in the provision of services and facilities to the general public. Unfortunately for the majority of the public, government is usually the only service provider for services offered and where there is an alternative, the masses cannot afford it, for example, private health care. For example, only at a court of law, which is a government institution, can a criminal, family or civil case be heard. Professionalism in provision of services, where people have no alternative is key.
Controlling	These are the activities that assure the actual performance in accordance with planned performance. To ensure that the plans for the operations subsystems are accomplished, the operations manager must exercise control by measuring actual outputs and comparing them to planned operations management. Controlling costs,	At the DOJCD, this is done through monitoring and evaluation reports. This includes projections of performance based on the current. As part of the proposed professionalisation, this area needs close scrutiny. M&E reports are produced quarterly, by which time a lot of irreversible damage could be done. In this instance, the data collection and reporting system mentioned in 'Organising' column above will play a significant role in the measurement of

	quality, and schedules are the important functions here.	performance and also serve as an early warning system where targets will not be met due to some challenges.
Quality control	Quality control is checking the quality of the goods produced. It involves overseeing the grade or freshness of goods, their strength or workability, the workmanship or design, harmlessness, adherence to federal or industry standards, and many other factors. Quality control systems may be as simple as testing the thousandth item produced or testing each product as it is finished.	The DOJCD needs to strengthen this part of operations. Some Provinces have a quality assurance official, while the majority do not have one. Where there is one, the scope is not well defined. These are the officials who can serve as whistle-blowers where performance is likely to be poor. A Total Quality Management (TQM) approach is imperative to ensure all quality assurance controls are in place in a holistic manner for the operations, from an end to end perspective of the business processes. According to Snongtaweeport et al. (2020:819), TQM combines several organizational improvement techniques and approaches, which include the use of quality circles, statistical process control, self-managed teams and task forces, and prioritises use of employee participation in all programmes. They further state that TQM is typically an organisation-wide effort seeking to establish and permanentize an atmosphere where employees continuously improve their ability to provide on demand products and services in which customers will find particular value. Therefore, a compulsory training on TQM for District Managers of the DOJCD should be considered. These officials are on the ground on a daily basis where services are rendered.

Inventory control	Almost all manufacturers and many service businesses need inventories, or stockpiles of the materials they use for making their products or offering their services. Manufacturers and businesses, such as supermarkets, also keep inventories of finished goods on hand for sale, but inventories are costly. The more inventory a business has, the less capital it has for other activities. In deciding how much inventory to keep on hand, those in charge of inventory control also have other costs to consider. If the price of a raw material is expected to rise, a business may stockpile it to keep future costs down. Often a supplier will discount large orders. Some businesses may decide that the discounts outweigh the other costs of maintaining a large inventory.	According to Sama and Mdemu (2024:271) one of the problems of governments in poorer countries is poor inventory management. They argue that mismanagement of inventory, both in terms of under- and over-stocking, appears to have exacerbated the situation. Delivery of goods and services is hampered by poor inventory management in Africa to a much greater extent than in other parts of the world. The goal of the procurement department in the public sector is to ensure timely, high-quality service delivery by supplying the appropriate goods and services to the various users. To ensure that everything in the buildings and on the grounds is supplied and delivered at the proper time, they have an inventory management system in good working order. True to the assertions of Sama and Mdemu, the DOJCD cannot boast of a stable and decisive inventory system wherein all service points are counted with staff members always present and working (delivering services) . This is only assumed. Professionalism does not work on assumptions but on empirical evidence. Therefore, a system of reporting functionality on a daily basis must be introduced.
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Source: Created by the Researcher

Table 5.2 outlines the functions of an operation management system. Such a system does not exist in a formal format in the DOJCD. The researcher therefore attempted to adapt this system for utilisation in the department. Its imperatives will advance the cause of professionalisation

of operations. It is envisaged that service delivery will improve significantly with the introduction of such an arrangement.

5.6.1.2 Professionalisation of Customer Experience

Customer experience refers to all customer care efforts carried out from the start till the end where service delivery is implemented. These efforts put people first above personal interest as contained in the service charter. The service charter is one of the Batho Pele Principles programmes. The service charter of the DOJCD mandates the officials to treat customers professionally, fairly and equally irrespective of race, gender, socio-economic status, disability and other social attributes. It requires officials to identify themselves by name and to wear a name badge. They must treat customers courteously and provide them with an apology and explanations if the customer is not satisfied. The DOJCD must provide mechanisms to complain when customers are not satisfied and provide safe and healthy environments and buildings that are accessible and convenient to use by all, including people with disabilities.

Therefore, the DOJCD must operationalise the commitment it has made to the customers. It is envisaged that prioritisation of the customer experience will be a norm and standard from the time they walk into a service point until they leave the premises and to leave their reviews behind. A specific program; Shop Floor Management (SFM), must be developed through a SOP wherein each service point appoints or nominates a well-versed person (e.g. Court Manager or Office Manager) who will act as the floor manager, attending to customers on agreed intervals as per SOP. According to Benyahya and Macurova (2021:268), the objectives of the SFM are to develop the leading personnel as methodical coaches; utilisation of personnel's complete potential, sustainable support of lean principles and optimisation of key performance areas (KPIs). In addition, the main areas of SFM are meant to empower every single employee and utilize their full potential in deploying leading personnel on the shop-floor. This also helps to facilitate competency development and harnessing problem-solving techniques.

5.6.1.2.1 Planning for Customer Experience

Improved customer experience is planned for, rather than leaning on the expectations that it would come as a consequence of other organisational operations and reforms. The challenges of customer experience improvements can find expression and attention for implementation in the planning for customer experience as outlined in the table below.

Table 5.3: Planning for service delivery

	Stage I: Planning for Customer experience	Stage II: Monitoring the Customer Experience	Stage III: Assessing the Experience to Improve the System
WHEN	Before the customer arrives, and while the customer is waiting for the service	During the customer's experience	After the customer's experience
WHAT	Experience expected	Experience realized	Experience remembered
WHO	Target customers	Actual customers	Past, current, and potential future customers
HOW	• Set service standards • Establish a contact centre for ease of reach by customers • Consult with customers and stakeholders • Develop blueprints • Map business processes • Manage queues • Train leading staff • Quality assure processes • Modernise and digitalise processes for ease of access • Manage risks • Put Poka-yokes for prevention of mistakes	• Monitor implementation of service Standards • Monitoring performance targets • Managerial observation of employee interaction with customers	Customer assessment: • Implement customer feedback gadgets or evaluation forms • Structure periodic surveys • Analyse critical incidents • Conduct Mystery Customer programme (unannounced visits) • Customer complaints • Employee feedback Further review: • Review organisational design • Review service standards • Review training methods

Source: Created by the Researcher

Service delivery does not happen in a vacuum. The elements or items in Table 5.3, although not exhaustive, must form part of the planning process when the department plans for service delivery and resources must be allocated to achieve the goals set out for improved customer experience. If the department fails to plan for customers, it will fail in its mandate.

5.6.1.2.2 Floor Management SOP at practical level:

Objective of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

The objective of this SOP is to provide a clear and concise description on the implementation and the application of floor management practice at the service points of the DOJCD and to ensure that the process is always carried out in the same manner by relevant officials.

Scope

This SOP seeks to introduce Floor Management at the service points of the department. Floor management is a leadership program within the phenomenon of ‘Lean management aiming to streamline and optimise daily operations on the ‘shop’ floor, and most importantly maximise customer experience.’ It ensures standardization, waste reduction on time, continuous improvement, and quality control of people movement within a service point. Ultimately, floor management ensures no customer will spend unnecessary time without being attended to, especially if their documentation is incomplete.

This SOP covers the implementation of floor management practice to enhance customer experience. All officials of the department are required to adhere to this SOP.

Floor management practice is part of the implementation of the Professionalisation of Customer Experience Project, anchored in the Batho-Pele principles.

Acts and Prescripts

This SOP derives its mandate from the following pieces of legislation and policies:

- *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Chapter 10, Section 195 (Principles governing public administration),*
- *The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho-Pele) and*
- *Public Service Regulations, 2022 (As amended).*

Responsibilities

The floor manager/help desk official is the first point of contact at the service points. Therefore, it is important that he or she display friendliness in his or her interactions with customers, as outlined in the Batho-Pele principles. He or she is responsible for receiving applications and checking completeness and correctness of applications. The floor manager will send the customer to the relevant office/section for further assistance. All these exercises will be carried out in a friendly and professional manner.

The Court /Office manager is responsible for ensuring that all people visiting the service points of the DOJCD are served with the respect and customer care they deserve without showing any signs of favouritism and bias. All people should be treated equally. The District Court Manager/Area Court Manager is responsible to ensure that people are treated with respect within his or her District /Cluster.

The Provincial Head (Director Court Operations) is responsible for ensuring that all Court officials within the Province adhere to Batho- Pele principles and the Service Charter when rendering services at the service points.

Procedure

Gemba is a Japanese word for shop-floor - the place where value is created Benyahya and Macurova (2021:268). In other words, Gemba means where the action occurs in the corridors, waiting rooms, consulting rooms, court rooms and so forth. This will be the procedure of ensuring that customer satisfaction or experience is fully implemented in all service points and it needs to be implemented by the following stakeholders:

Pre-screening of customers - This action is performed by: Court Manager / Office Manager / Section Head / Clerk:

- i. The customer is welcomed or received in a friendly, professional manner by the official wearing a name tag of the department and is addressed in a language he/she understands better or as close as possible.
- ii. The official of the Department introduces him/herself to the customer and asks the purpose of visiting the service point.
- iii. The official of the Department checks the customer's documents for completeness to transact the business they are there for.

- iv. If the official of the Department is satisfied with the documents, he/she directs the customer to the relevant section/unit/office to be assisted.
- v. The official attending to the customer listens with empathy and gives sufficient information and proper attention to the matter according to the business process of the service.
- vi. The customer leaves the section/unit/office satisfied or not satisfied.
- vii. The customer is requested to rate the office services.

Customer reporting unfair treatment by a DOJCD official about his/her request of service to Court/Office Manager's office

- viii. The customer approaches the office of the Court/Office manager to complain.
- ix. The customer makes a verbal or written complaint about the DOJCD official who assisted him/her by identifying the official through name tag.
- x. The Court/Office Manager summons the said official to answer the allegations of mistreatment in the presence of the customer or make written representation.
- xi. The matter is resolved amicably, and the Court/Office manager tenders an apology as stipulated by Batho-Pele principle, 'Redress', if the customer is not satisfied.

5.6.1.3 Professionalisation of Institutional Development

5.6.1.3.1 Knowledge of Institutional Development

The following definitions sponsored by various authors are considered:

Segura (1992:2) defines Institutional development (ID) as a key element to consolidate and ensure the sound implementation and sustainability of policy reforms over time. At one extreme, a narrow definition equates institutional development with the process of strengthening individual government organizations or entities. At the other extreme, a broader view defines institutional development to include improvements in both public and private organizations as well as in the rules, regulations, practices, values, and customs that shape and influence an entire society.

Some scholars make a distinction between ID and Institutions for Development. The difference is not apparent though. For the latter scholars, an organisation must set its development goals prior to setting up institutions to help realise those goals and institutions do not stand alone but are embedded in a local setting influenced by historical trajectories and culture. In the case of DOJCD, as a government department that is already established through the provisions of the

Constitution, the latter makes more sense. However, both schools of thought are used interchangeably in this discussion.

ID may also have a lot to do with leadership of an institution. This is discussed by Reinalda (2020:325-339) as he traces the development or non-development of the United Nations Secretariat as an institution, over 8 Secretary Generals' terms:

Trygve Lie (1946-1953)

Dag Hammarskjöld (1953-1961)

U Thant (1961-1971)

Kurt Waldheim (1972-1981)

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (1982-1991)

Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992-1996)

Kofi Annan (1997-2006) and

Ban Ki-moon (2007-2016)

Reinalda (2020:337-339) concluded that the UN Secretariat suffered poor administration effects in the hands of six out of eight former UN Secretaries-General, who showed poor administrative leadership. This was particularly regarding issues that required specific institution competences such as staffing, finances, and team coherence.

Ultimately, institutional development work should improve the way DOJCD works. The intention is to achieve a vision of the department that is agile in terms of policy implementation, better equipped in terms of the motivation, quality and productivity of staff, strengthened public outlook and interactions and more effective and efficient in delivering essential services. It should improve the DOJCD's ability to operate on a day-to-day basis, to innovate, to address changing conditions, and to deal with unexpected outcomes.

For the ID to take root in the DOJCD, one must define the character of the department, current status and the desired status. After defining the character, one must list the skills set required to attain the desired character. The development programmes and quality controls must be established in order to pursue the desired character. At this stage, policy reviews may also be necessary. The Figure below illustrates the proposed ID cycle is illustrated below:

Figure 5.5: Institutional Development Cycle. Created by the Researcher



Source: Created by the Researcher

i. **Define DOJCD Character**

The characteristics mentioned in the table below are not exhaustive; however, they are significant enough to cause bottlenecks in the running of the department, thus preventing the status of a best place to work for, with possible unhappy or indifferent customers. The top ten characteristics have been selected for the ID to prioritise in turning the department around.

The character of DOJCD is defined in the context of deficiencies preventing operational excellence and positive outlook to the public. This approach is pragmatic in the sense that it locates the exact areas to rectify when applying reforms, which will ensure service delivery and increased levels of engagement by employees. For each of the deficiencies identified, there are adverse effects.

The following tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 provide a tapestry value chain of development to define the current character and pathways to the desired character of the DOJCD. They build on each other wherein Table 5.4 outlines the shortcomings or deficiencies in the system with adverse effects they bring. Table 5.5 furthers the development by suggesting skills sets that must be a requirement and the expected outcome that is desirable. The last table, 5.6, discusses and

rationalises development programmes to implement in order to change the ‘current’ status to the desired status of the character of the DOJCD.

Table 5.4: DOJCD current status and adverse effects

Current status	Adverse effects
Strategic planning is conducted and attended by Senior Managers only.	The Strategy gets to be understood by Senior Management only. The middle, junior and lower level staff, who are the production engine in the implementation of such a strategy, are left behind.
Project Management training is afforded to Senior Managers only.	Projects take long to be concluded due to neglect of project management principles.
Values of the department are on paper. There are no programmes to ensure and monitor implementation.	There is no barometer to gauge behavioural change, despite the good customer-centric values adopted.
Applying inherited technology	It results in inefficiencies and low productivity (slow network, Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) and so forth)
Organizational controls are weak	There is ‘individual leadership’. Management follows promptings from individual leaders (as opposed to Collective leadership and planned predictable controls)
Communication is not strategic.	Customers continue to make mistakes such as paying for free services
Customer complaints are not attended to timeously.	This results in taking much longer than necessary to resolve a complaint
The department does not have a Stakeholder Management Policy, thus the relations with stakeholders are not as strong as they should be. This, notably, varies from office to office and Province to Province.	There is no barometer to gauge effectiveness of stakeholder relations. There is no stakeholder relations strategy to guide the function

Quality assurance reports show that controls are weak and not standardised.	This leads to a disproportionate assessment of quality, without following the quality assurance model
Staff morale is low. Sometimes this phenomenon is assumed when verbalised in distress at particular times by particular officials	The spread of low morale rumors takes place because there is no barometer to measure accurately the levels of staff morale. Meeting targets is not an accurate indication of staff engagement levels.

Source: Created by the Researcher

The process of defining the DOJCD character must be as honest as possible. Table 5.4 indicates the weak-points that need attention within the department and their adverse effects, which in turn affect service delivery. The following tables are meant to suggest corrective measures in order to attain the desired professional character of the department.

Table 5.5. Skills set required to attain the desired character

Current status	Skills set required to change the current status to the desired	Desired outcome
Strategic planning is conducted and attended by Senior Managers only	• Leadership • People management	They will devise a plan of how to ensure the strategy planning process is inclusive of everyone in the department. They will also devise a plan to cascade and monitor everyone's involvement
Project Management training is afforded to Senior Managers only	• Monitoring • Complex problem solving • Innovation	This characteristic will ensure project management is embedded in every aspect of work in the department. • Project Management: Segura (1992:4) mentions strong project management to overcome the inefficiency or corruption of line and regulatory agencies may enable it to get its job done as a factor to strengthen an institution.
Values of the department are on paper. There are no	• Empathy • Creativity	This characteristic will ensure that a program to implement the values is in place and approved. This program will

programmes to ensure and monitor implementation		serve as a barometer to measure how far the values are known and lived out
Applying inherited technology	• Vision • Judgement and decision making	This will ensure decisiveness in technology overhaul
Organizational controls are weak	• Shared leadership • Cognitive flexibility • Staff development	This will ensure effective decision making with immediate buy-in on change matters, since all relevant levels are consulted.
Communication is not strategic	• Critical thinking • Communication • Negotiation	Communication strategy should ensure that as teaching and information dissemination is done, there is learning on the side of the customers.
Customer complaints are not attended to timeously	• Service orientation • Emotional Intelligence • Citizenship	This results in improving customer experience and building a service-oriented cadre of officials
Relationships with stakeholders is not as strong as it should be	• Teamwork • Coordinating with others	This will ensure strategic partnerships are nurtured for optimal service delivery and smooth operations
Quality assurance controls are weak	• Enterprise • Sustainability	Quality assurance allows innovation and sustainability of services
Staff morale is low. Sometimes this phenomenon is assumed when vocalised in distress at particular times by particular officials	• People management • Motivation • Coaching • Mentoring	People, the most valuable asset in the department will be seen, heard and taken care of. A motivated workforce may increase productivity.

Source: Created by the Researcher

The corrective measures in table 5.5 above are in the suggested skills set that must either be brought in or strengthened if they already exist in the department. A specific Turnaround Strategy within this proposed professionalisation framework is necessary to achieve a different and improved outlook on each of these ten elements, totaling the character of the department. The next table builds on the previous one. It discusses and rationalises the specific development programmes and quality controls intended to change the ‘current status, per skills set already suggested.

Table 5.6: Define development programs and establish quality controls

Current status	Skills set required to change the current status to the desired	Development programmes
Strategic planning is conducted and attended by Senior Managers only.	• Leadership • People management	Since strategy must be implemented by everyone in the department, from the lowest level employees to the highest, strategy knowledge must start there. Therefore, Leadership must devise a non-hierarchical methodology to reach the lowest level, for example, make it compulsory for Directorate meetings to have a strategy session at intervals, for example, twice a year. The meeting, led by the Director must go through the strategy document to foster understanding and also where a Directorate is directly responsible, that understanding is cemented. In this manner, responsibility is raised and owned, and every employee knows the bigger picture they are working towards. It is hoped that work will cease being work but a ‘contribution’ towards the vision of the DOJCD. Each Directorate must submit a signed off certificate to indicate completion of this task.

Project Management training is afforded to Senior Managers only.	• Monitoring • Complex problem solving • Innovation	As part of instilling operational excellence, it is prudent to empower all employees with programmes that teach professionalism and work ethic. Project Management is one of those. As it is afforded Senior Managers, to achieve the maximum efficiencies envisaged, it must be cascaded to the production floor. Other programmes must be introduced as well, for example Total Quality Management and so forth.
Values of the department are on paper. There are no programmes to ensure and monitor implementation	• Empathy • Creativity	Values on paper serve no purpose except for the image of the department. Values are fundamental to the identity of an organisation and people in general and how they navigate life. They provide a sense of direction, ensure consistency in the acts of service, and contribute to overall well-being and fulfilment. By understanding and living by the values of the department, employees can serve more meaningfully, purposefully and ethically. Teaching values aims to promote broader capabilities, attitudes and skills that matter not just in the department but also in life beyond the workspace, making the world a better place not just for themselves but also for family and friends. Values must be lived by each employee. This will change the culture and personality of the department to a caring and empathetic one. Professional behaviour flows easily out of a workforce that comes with a willing heart to serve. Therefore, a decisive program to ensure

		implementation of the values amongst the employees is imperative.
Applying inherited technology	• Vision • Judgement and decision making	Advanced information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a must in the 4th Industrial Revolution. Government, particularly DOJCD, has to either adapt quickly or get left behind. Governments of the world now talk about smart governments, with data-driven, citizen-centric, and performance-focused governance. The aim is to create and foster knowledge societies that rely on emerging technologies with intelligence and automation for information and communication processes between governmental institutions, private companies and citizens to facilitate and support better planning and decision-making. The term ‘smart government’ as Teran et al. (2024:17.3) explain, encompasses using advanced technology, to optimize government operations’ effectiveness, transparency and adaptability. The ultimate goal of smart government is to establish a more sustainable, citizen-focused governance model that can adapt to the population’s changing needs in real-time. The DOJCD needs to catch-up to such technologies in its operations.
Organizational controls are weak.	• Shared leadership • Cognitive flexibility	To tighten organizational controls, these four elements must be strengthened: 1) enforce service standards, 2) measure performance, 3) compare performance to standards, and

	• Staff development	4) take corrective action as needed.
Communication is not strategic.	• Critical thinking • Communication • Negotiation	The DOJCD serves the entire population of the country and is a member in the world community. The obligation for public education is huge. Despite almost daily appearance in the media, especially radio, the department still receives customers with incomplete documents, or those who do not know about the services and some are scammed to pay for services that are free. This information is gleaned from the complaints submitted by the customers. A strategic public education program is necessary to ensure that as teaching is done, learning is also taking place. For example, short 3-minute videos can be produced and spread on social media handles of the department about the specific services offered. In those 3 minutes, the video should cover the requirements before application, processes after application, possible causes for delays in case finalisation and processes after the matter is finalised. In this way, information is out there for people to consume and when they need the service, they will know exactly how to access it.
Customer complaints are not attended to timeously.	• Service orientation • Emotional Intelligence • Citizenship	The Batho Pele Principle of ‘redress’ requires that all government departments make provision for customer complaints and customer feedback. In thinking of providing a platform for customers to complain, the ‘value for money’ principle also comes to play. The

		combination of the two principles therefore requires that customers must be reached where they are, to avoid them spending money coming to the service points just to complain. The DOJCD therefore should create a platform such as a Contact Centre with a toll-free number to enable interaction with the customers. The department should also ensure that such complaints are attended to within the set service standards and outcomes are communicated to the complainant.
Relationships with stakeholders are not as strong as they should be.	• Teamwork • Coordinating with others	The DOJCD fits in the well-established stakeholder environment of the Safety and Security cluster. However, its role can be ambiguous, needing constant and frequent stakeholder engagements. The operations of the department are part of a chain involving other entities such as the Police department, Correctional Services department, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), citizens as customers and so forth. Therefore, building trust and credibility is essential for effective stakeholder engagement. This requires transparency, honesty, and authenticity in communication and actions. Engaging with stakeholders is critical for the success of any organisation. Effective engagement can help build the necessary trust, enhance reputation and drive innovation and growth. Below are 5 key strategies to employ in the Stakeholder Management Strategy that

		the department should develop and implement: 1. Identify and prioritise key stakeholders All stakeholders are important; however, they need different approaches in engagement since some will have a greater impact on the department's success than others. By identifying and categorising stakeholders, resource allocation can be appropriated accordingly without compromising any stakeholder. 2. Assess the elements that contribute to a relationship Research and theory building contribute to the understanding of what options are there for utilisation in communication with stakeholders. An assessment through research can contribute to better implementation of informed engagements with all stakeholders in their differences, for effective delivery of services. 3. Build trust and credibility By demonstrating commitment to stakeholders' interests, the department can build stronger relationships and enhance its reputation. 4. Develop a stakeholder engagement strategy and implementation plan Effective stakeholder engagement requires a clear and consistent stakeholder engagement plan. This plan should include who to communicate with, what messages will be conveyed, what channels will be used to
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		deliver those messages and at what intervals will messages be conveyed. 5. Measure and evaluate engagement efforts To ensure that engagement efforts are effective, it is important to measure and evaluate their impact in order to ascertain whether goals have been achieved or not. This evaluation should form part of the stakeholder engagement strategy and implementation plan.
Quality assurance controls are weak	• Enterprise • Sustainability	The DOJCD does not have a quality assurance policy. As a result, the function is sporadically carried out by those employees who were once employed for quality assurance. The department therefore needs to at least perform the following in order to strengthen the quality assurance controls: • Define quality standards • Build proper processes • Develop and implement quality assurance policy • Decide on and implement quality control tools defined in the policy • Create an inspection plan The policy will stipulate the creation of permanent posts, if not, how the quality assurance function will permeate to service points and how it will be reported on.
Staff morale is low. Sometimes this phenomenon is assumed when expressed in distress	• People management • Motivation • Coaching • Mentoring	The Performance Management Development System (PMDS) exists and is implemented well on an annual basis. However, the department lacks an incentive policy. As a result, Managers and Supervisors do not know

at particular times by particular officials		what is acceptable or not to incentivise best performing employees. It is understood that staff morale is not caused by lack of incentives only, but by a number of factors emanating from the work environment. For example, heavy workload, slow ICT systems, a hostile environment, supervisor vs. supervisee relationship and so forth; all contribute to low staff morale. A professional assessment of the work environment is not a once off activity. It must be conducted at intervals to ascertain the pressure points on the employees. Appropriate measures or programmes can then be implemented to mitigate the emerging factors causing the staff morale to depreciate.
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Source: Created by the Researcher

Table 5.6 discusses and suggests the programmes that can be implemented in order to ascertain the desired professional character of the department. The researcher notes that there are many other programmes that are not documented in this study, which are used in the private sector, especially in the production companies, that can be emulated and adapted to the public sector.

5.6.1.4 Professionalisation of Officials

5.6.1.4.1 The concept of ‘The Wisdom of Practitioners’

Learning from the German Chambers of Commerce as they sought to re-establish professionalism in business, Sasse and Habisch (2021:26-30), discuss the concept of the Wisdom of Practitioners or Practical Wisdom, a philosophy of pragmatism and solidarity. They discuss the political and economic predicaments which necessitate the inclusion of Practical Wisdom in the operations of a business. In the quest for the development of the future generation of organisational leaders, practical wisdom provides the most essential environment. Practical wisdom often prevails because social partners, more than politicians, are interested in pragmatic and solution-oriented decision-making.

Wisdom of Practitioners in practical terms refers to regular and ‘wise’ decisions by professional practitioners rather than on spectacular political interventions that seek high visibility rather than service delivery. By setting and continuously improving certain institutional standards, they enable collective learning and gradual professionalisation of processes. The South African scenario of service delivery protests will attest to this phenomenon. In clearer terms, the professionalisation process depends on the public servants - practitioners rather than politicians - because they know what works and what does not.

5.6.1.4.2 The Honourable Merchant

Professionalisation of DOJCD Officials is fashioned against ‘The Honourable Merchant’ model from Germany. The model is mainly used by the Chambers of Commerce as the fundamental guiding principle for business transactions. The features of an Honourable Merchant are well suited to the DOJCD environment to produce Honourable Public Servants. In a book, *The German Chambers of Commerce and Industry: Practical Wisdom for Sustainable Organizations*, Sasse and Habisch (2021: 323-328) included an interview with Ms Gerti Oswals, (Chief Executive of the Association of Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and responsible for CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) at the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria) at the time. Her reflections on the Honourable Merchant provide the basis for modelling this individual as the DOJCD professional.

Sasse and Habisch (2021:70) discuss the nature of a merchant. Unlike a military commander or official, a merchant does not have the power of coercion. He or she cannot oblige anyone to sell them goods or buy goods from them. Therefore, a merchant is dependent on voluntary action alone. The strength of the concept behind practical wisdom as a guiding factor of business ethics lies in the fact that it has not only normative but also positive references. The deductive pointer therefore is that it is not so much about pointing the moral index finger and setting standards, but acting in an influential way and managing relationships. In other words, only those who methodically consider the legitimate expectations of their stakeholders can hope for lasting success.

For this reason, a wise businessman (public servant in this case) will, for example, respect the property rights of his business partners unconditionally, without being forced to do so by the court system. This is because if he does not, others will lose trust and confidence in him or her and the very basis of his or her business is then threatened. The uprightness of the merchant also considers his or her legal status as a private entrepreneur. The extent to which the merchant

is respected is therefore not only an expression of his or her firm moral convictions but also of good stakeholder relations. This is interpreted as practical wisdom. Therefore, as the majority of the respondents of this research would agree, a merchant must be trustworthy. They can be taken on the basis of their word.

5.6.1.4.3 Getting to know the original German Honourable Merchant

According to Sasse and Habisch (2021:323), the honourable merchant stands for fair, sustainable and responsible business. She/he has always been the ethical point of reference for the work of the Chambers of Commerce and Industries (CCIs) in Germany. Originating from the Middle Ages, the honourable merchant began as a generally unwritten agreement among businessmen to treat each other fairly. His/her integrity is at a level where a deal is sealed with a handshake. His/her honesty and reliability are unmistakable and unmatched. In Germany, this went on for centuries as the guiding principle serving as the only guarantee for orderly trade as opposed to robbery. It was expected of the honourable merchant to always treat his employees fairly. He also did a great deal for society.

5.6.1.4.4 How the honourable merchant is translated into the present day

The modern honourable merchant, DOJCD Official in this case, acts sustainably and responsibly in a comprehensive economic, social and ecological sense. She/he wants to grow and the department in general to grow, but not at the expense of others, his/her fellow professionals (even lower levels than him/her) or partners, society or the environment. She/he is cognisant of the fact that such behaviour represents a developmental opportunity to strengthen his/her directorate's competitiveness, innovation and sustainability. His management approach to work is that of service and corporate social responsibility which resonates with the values of the department. The department should strive to establish this character in its day-to-day operations.

The question can be asked if the handshake of the honourable merchant would still be enough for respectable public servants and public transactions today. The answer to that lies in if two officials who are guided by the honourable merchant and departmental values transact with each other and the public, the transaction should be essentially sealed. It is also understood that there are factors that make the transactions complex, especially those that have to do with implementation of legislation. It is not always the case that the customer is satisfied when the outcome of the law does not favour them. It would therefore be negligent to forego well-

structured legal responses that seek to cover the department in the course of implementing the law as mandated by the government.

Developments in the public service in the world necessitate the guiding principles of the honourable merchant. Public service continues to face complex global economic upheavals such as climate change, continuous shrinking budgets affected by economic challenges, poverty levels, and inequality. Governments can, must and want to contribute to making things better, locally and globally. An Honourable Merchant, DOJCD Professional, must take responsibility in this sense to secure the future and ultimately the democratic foundations of the society for now and for future generations. This is only possible with ‘honourable merchants’.

The South African government already has had the policy of Batho Pele from as early as 1997. The enhancement, enactment, entrenchment and enforcement of this policy is imperative. The Honourable Merchant thrives in ‘self-governance’. Whilst there are prescripts and policies governing employees and operations, the self-sustainability of the Honourable Merchant brings stability that is not only beneficial to the department, but to the society as a whole.

The values of the Honourable Merchant must run through all activities of the department. The tasks and mandate assigned by the government and stakeholders to the DOJCD necessitate a clear vision and mission as the foundation and guideline for all operations. They should always be present to provide impetus in all areas of operations. The impetus to make the vision and mission statements more visible came from the public or customers. The number of service delivery protests, though not directed at the DOJCD, cannot be ignored any longer. The public must know the intentions of the department to improve and the steps taken to get there. In this instance, the Honourable Merchant, DOJCD professional, asks him/herself some introspective questions:

How responsible am I really, in my department and directorate?

How do I deal with fellow professionals, customers, partners and stakeholders?

Can I be trusted with duties beyond my job description and performance agreement? And so forth.

The DOJCD should work towards making the Honourable Merchant the blueprint for all operations and decisions. Special programmes must be undertaken and instruments created to deeply root the concept of the Honourable Merchant as an anchor in day-to-day practice. It will

create responsible office practices with the implementation of the vision, mission and values statements as mainly based on a person's own attitude and values. The gains to committing to the vision, mission and values statements do not just do something for their good conscience or for their image; they lead to an empathetic and customer-centric outlook to performance. It is believed that the Honourable Merchant posture will contribute significantly to the reduction or eradication of corruption. Day et al. (2021:250) argue that society is increasingly demanding more accountability from government.

5.6.1.4.5 The characteristics of an Honourable Merchant Model: Designing a DOJCD Professional

The Honourable Merchant has always been the ethical point of reference for the work of the CCIs. Based on the nature of the Honourable Merchant described above, the following characteristics should grace the nature of the DOJCD Official as they assume the 'professional' status:

Concerned about potential or future customers

The Honourable Merchant is not only concerned about those who are already in business but those who shall establish their businesses in the future. Likewise, with the DOJCD Professional, they should not be concerned about those who are already customers, but those who will be customers, even though they do not know it yet. They will become customers when they get into kind of trouble that needs solving as per the mandate of the DOJCD. Therefore, the initial assistance to the potential customers must be planned for. The DOJCD Professional should package the most important current and fundamental 'must know' information, and summarise it as briefly, comprehensibly and catchy as possible. This information must be published on various platforms that can be easily accessed by everyone, for example TikTok, Instagram and so forth.

Promotes good governance, excellence, organisational culture

The DOJCD must create an environment in which employees see themselves as professional service providers with a focus on service quality. The fact that a good percentage of employees in the department come from the legal background is a great help. They are familiar with matters of ethics, code of conduct and consequences of neglecting quality of services. All officials are aware of delivering services through measurable service standards, which in turn is a prerequisite for their control and continuous improvement. However, the enforcement of

such standards is not very strong. Customer feedback on DOJCD services is also not prioritised, wherein the measurement of service standards would be complete.

Concerned about fellow professionals

Those at managerial level are the key to a healthy working environment. They must encourage, enable, and support employees below them to develop professionally and personally so that the service excellence on offer can be further enhanced. Their success must be measured by the success of their teams. As much as there are prescripts governing employee wellness and progress in the department, the attention of the manager to such prescripts cannot be overemphasised. Professionals at the same level are considerate to one another, affording each other the respect each needs and deserves without one thinking their qualification is better than the other. This goes for those doing professional work with law degrees and accounting degrees as well as those with administration qualifications doing support work. One cannot succeed without the other and they are ready to learn from each other's best practices.

Concerned about quality of service he/she provides

Each professional should have their own quality assurance system, or at least strictly adhere to quality assurance systems existing in the department. They should be able to participate in, for example, mystery-client programmes (amongst other quality assurance programmes) and not be anxious when one is conducted on their work. The mystery client programme is when the head of office commissions a member of the public or civil society to pose as a customer to check how the employees behave professionally and in their personal service orientation during the consultation. At the same time, the professional should welcome customer feedback when it is time for evaluations on services rendered. In this way, the department gradually develops parameters and quality measurement systems that serve as a basis for continuous improvement.

5.6.2 Phase 2: The Role of Academia in Developing Professionalism in Public Administration Course Content

Most Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa, from TVET colleges to Universities, offer Public Administration and/or Management at various National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels, certificates, diplomas, junior degrees up to doctorate. The learning outcomes are generally outlined in each module offered. This becomes an emerging matter of further research to examine how the curriculum is decided and if the learning outcomes flow in tandem with the practice in the field.

De Clercq (2023:366) asserts that in order for South Africa to achieve its developmental objectives, there is a need to determine the organisational culture and the kind of leaders required for a developmental state. She further states that the introduction and implementation of the national framework to professionalise the public service presents a unique opportunity to review how it assesses whether public servants are competent and are performing in line with specific expected behaviours linked to their roles and functions. This is said in the context of core competencies that the public service needs to achieve the NDP developmental goals.

The Directive on Human Resources Management and Development for Public Service Professionalisation, Volume 1, issued by the DPSA Minister, took effect from 01 April 2024. The directive 'aims to create an agile, public-oriented professional public service underpinned by a steadfast dedication to public welfare.' This directive gives clear instruction with regards to entry qualifications and number of years' experience into all levels. It also stipulates the advertisement, suitability checks, recruitment and selection process that must be followed to ensure implementation of the government professionalisation programme. Therefore, this study will not dwell on that part of professionalisation.

However, the interface between academia and practice needs exploration. The skills and key competencies necessary to perform public service duties must be learnt in class and enhanced through experience. This is where curriculum set up should interface with practice. According to Jarbandhan (2022:39), this is important in view of the fact that although many senior managers in the public service have a degree or a postgraduate qualification, there seems to be a misalignment between the qualification held and the competency required for their current post, even though there are ongoing professional development programmes.

Therefore, infused in the curriculum for any public administration and or management at any NQF level should be the core competencies to perform the job, skills set to perform the job, code of conduct orientation, code of ethics orientation and the compulsory induction programme into the public service.

A person should not encounter the public administration code of conduct for the first time when they start employment in the public service. That may be too late to indoctrinate the individual. The necessary drill should happen at school level in order to produce a complete public servant in the true sense of the word 'servant.' The University of Michigan (USA) has, as part of its public administration curriculum a module on Administrative Organisation and 'Behaviour' (PUB 501 - Administrative Organization and Behaviour) with a description that reads

‘Organizational structure and its impact on behaviour in an administrative environment; role of individuals in organizations; individual goals and organizational goals; selected facets of organizational life, including decision making, leadership, innovation and motivation.’ (online source).

While teaching core competencies such as public administration, public policy, supply chain management, management, public finance, human resource management and so forth; it is imperative to note that it is necessary to teach soft skills as well. These are, for example, ethics, servant leadership, accountability, integrity, values, Batho Pele (in the context of South African Public Service), efficiency and effectiveness, and so forth. This approach will release an all-rounded professional who is skilled but also sensitive to the calling as a Public Servant.

The University of South Africa (UNISA) in its NQF Level 5 Diploma offers a semester module Public Service Delivery I - PUB1508 whose purpose is to introduce students to the public service delivery environment, public service delivery and ethical conduct which is expected of a public servant; as well as politics, government and governance. Another relevant semester module offered by UNISA at NQF level 7 (degree) is the Ethics in Public Administration and Administrative Justice - PUB3707. Its purpose is to empower the students to understand the ‘norms and values that promote democratic public administration in order to enable them to identify and analyse ethical issues in public administration, develop solutions to these, and act with professionalism. Students will have the ability to engage with scholarly literature and case studies relevant to the principles underlying administrative justice such as fairness, reasonableness and lawfulness and to interpret the contribution of these principles to transparency, accountability and active participation in public administration.’

This is the beginning of the interface necessary for students to interact with hard-core public administration before they become practitioners. Since universities have the freedom to develop their curriculums and courses, this presents an opportunity for planned direct interface wherein public service practitioners, as part of the curriculum and a standing rule, are invited to present lectures for undergraduate to post graduate studies. This presents practice-oriented tasks and situations, based on real-life, that fulfil the technical needs of the job market, academic success and the development of social skills worthy of a professional.

5.6.3 Phase 3: Establishment of a Regulatory Body for Professionalisation of the South African Public Service

5.6.3.1 Overview

South Africa is not new to establishing new oversight or regulatory bodies either for a profession, development or efficient running of government. Although most of these were inherited by the democratic government from the previous colonialists, the United Kingdom, South Africa has modified and customised them to a greater or lesser extent to suit the local circumstances as many of them were developed for a minority group of people. For example, the development of the South African Parliament's Oversight and Accountability Model was informed by Parliament's strategic vision of building an effective people's Parliament that would be responsive to the needs of all people and that would be driven by a desire for a better quality of life for all the people of South Africa.

Given the injustices of the past apartheid regime, Parliament had to remodel all processes to speak to the needs of the masses. The Model is one of the tools Parliament uses to strengthen its oversight over the executive and organs of state (Nhleko and Setona, 2009:7).

This study suggests the establishment of a statutory professional body to oversee and manage Public Servants. This professional body can, just like the Public Service Commission and the National School of Government, be a subsidiary of the DPSA as an overarching managing department. The current arrangement, as suggested by the National Framework for Professionalisation of the Public Service (2022), does not place the drive to professionalise in one entity. The NSG is tasked to drive the implementation of the framework, whilst the PSC does other related work from the framework. That fragmentation could see the emerging challenges of coordination and measurement of implementation; hence this study suggests the establishment of a new legal body to carry out the function.

To quote Respondent 13 (Presidency) on the equalisation of Public Servants with traditional professionals, 'True professionalisation could only come about when the State takes the lead and partner with private sector and civil society in incentivising the staff to join professionals' regulatory bodies.' The majority of respondents equally supported the notion of a regulatory body for various reasons such as placing people in the right positions which they are trained and have relevant experience for (Respondent 12, DPME); establishment and enforcement of codes of conducts, governance prescripts and also observation in management of existing codes

in the public sector such as the King Code of Corporate Governance, Sustainability Reporting, Balanced Score card Performance Management and so forth (Respondent 19, DTIC).

The establishment of the professional body will be fashioned against the Oversight and Accountability Model of the South African Parliament, the South African Association for Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) and the Professional Governance Act of the British Columbia a province of Canada, implemented by the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance. The latter was established in 2021 to oversee a number of professional bodies such as the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia (ASTTBC), British Columbia Institute of Agrologists (BCIA), College of Applied Biologists (CAB), Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC), Forest Professionals British Columbia (FPBC) and so forth. The three Institutions are selected for localization and benchmarking respectively.

SAAPAM is an independent organisation that exists mainly to contribute towards the development of good governance and effective service delivery. Its mission is to encourage and promote good governance and effective service delivery through the advancement of professionalism, scholarship and practice in public administration and management (SAAPAM Constitution: 2007). It is unattached to government as an entity of any national department and membership is voluntary.

5.6.3.2 Functions of the Public Servants Professionals Association (PSPA)

It is the normal duty of any regulatory body to serve and protect the public interest with respect to the exercise of a profession, professional governance and the conduct of its members. The PSPA regulatory body shall, amongst others, have the following functions:

- 1) to preserve and protect reserved titles and reserved practices, as applicable, in the public interest;
- 2) to define, design and administer mechanisms for oversight and accountability;
- 3) to establish the conditions or requirements for registration with the association;
- 4) to govern the members of the association according to the regulations and the set prescripts and standards;
- 5) to establish, monitor and enforce standards of practice to enhance the quality of practice so that members avoid aspects like professional misconduct, irregularities of qualifications and incompetent performance of duties;

- 6) to establish and maintain a continuous competency program to promote high quality practice standards for members;
- 7) to establish, monitor and enforce standards of professional ethics amongst members;
- 8) to establish and employ registration, investigation and discipline procedures that are transparent, impartial, objective and fair;
- 9) to administer the affairs of the association and exercise its powers and perform its duties under the Public Service Act and other applicable legislations;
- 10) to promote and enhance collaborative relations with other regulatory bodies, education institutions, especially those of higher learning and the government entities;
- 11) to promote interprofessional collaborative practice between its members and persons practising other professions;
- 12) to promote the ability of its members to respond and adapt to changes in practice environments, advances in technology and other emerging issues;
- 13) to promote excellence in the theory and practice of public administration and management;
- 14) to collaborate with the NSG in design and development of training interventions for entry into the public service and entry into promotion levels;
- 15) to promote ethical conduct and accountability within the profession of Public Administration;
- 16) to cooperate with other associations and institutions in the advancement of the Public Administration profession;
- 17) to protect and promote career interests of its members.

Furthermore, it is imperative to regulate entry into the profession. The PSPA will

- 18) have clear and accessible guidance on academic entrance standards and competency requirements for registration;
- 19) set a process and timeline for regular review of credentialing pathways of individuals to the profession;
- 20) work with accreditation entities such as SAQA and institutions of education to review and update academic entrance standards to the profession;
- 21) work with educational institutions to enhance student awareness of requirements for professional registration;
- 22) have a clearly defined process and rationale for membership standards and the evaluation of curriculum programs against the standards.

5.6.3.3 Membership into the Public Servants Professionals Association

The membership to the association shall be limited to practitioners within the public service; namely all government employees employed under the Public Service Act and other applicable pieces of legislation. The employees already subscribing to other professional associations, such as Lawyers, Doctors, Accountants and so forth, shall not assume dual membership with PSPA and their applicable associations. All members should subscribe through paid annual membership deducted from the salary number in a particular chosen month, preferably at the beginning of a financial year. Proper benchmarking can be done with the SANC wherein all nurses practicing in the country assume compulsory paid membership, renewable on an annual basis. The membership of SANC is compulsory to every nurse and is renewed annually. The membership should have categories, in line with the SAAPAM categorization; for example:

Public Service Executive Professional – a member with NQF level 9 and 10 in Public Administration / Management / Affairs or related field

Public Service Senior Professional – a member with a postgraduate qualification at NQF level 7 in Public Administration / Management / Affairs or related field

Public Service Professional – a member with an undergraduate qualification at NQF level 7 in Public Administration / Management / Affairs or related field

Associate Professionals – any member with NQF lower levels or no formal qualification at all (SAAPAM Constitution, 2018:9)

Membership should also take into consideration the number of years a member has served in the Public Service and the salary level they currently hold. It should be compulsory to all permanently employed public servants. All other hierarchical arrangements in the formation of this professional entity will follow the normal route as in the formation of PSC, Information Regulator South Africa and other subsidiaries of government.

5.6.4 Phase 4: Development of Direct Legislation to Establish the Association

Phase 4, according to Tseng's model of professionalisation, sets in when the first three are established. This is when the association and the trained practitioners have achieved enough to exercise market control. As much as there are pieces of legislation and policies giving impetus to the professionalisation of the public service, it is imperative to adopt a bill to legally grant

autonomy to the profession and exclude outsiders from practice of public administration. All entry into the Public Service should be guided by the provisions of the association

5.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter outlined the proposed framework focussing on areas for professionalisation. In tandem with the findings in Chapter four, enhancing decision making capabilities would need a total overhaul of operations. Tools and management approaches such as TQM and many others have been suggested to be in the process of professionalisation. The second area to professionalise is institutional development. This is the least understood area of management and/or development; however, done right, it can revolutionise the department. This is where decisive improvement programmes must be housed, both in policy reforms and operations.

Monitoring and evaluation of these programmes is imperative to ascertain if real improvements and entrenchment of excellence is taking place. The third area for consideration is customer interface. The importance of professionalising this area cannot be overemphasised. Findings indicated that the government exists to serve the citizens as customers. Therefore, planning for them should not be per accident. The framework emphasises that planning for service delivery is important. The comfort of the citizen will be achieved by delivering the services DOJCD and government at large has promised and within the service standards and turnaround times.

The last area to professionalise is Officials. The framework suggests DOJCD officials must assume a different posture. The posture is fashioned against a German Honourable Merchant. The framework describes the characteristics of the Honourable Merchant and how this concept can be adapted to the Officials of the department.

Over and above these areas of professionalisation the framework suggests the establishment of a regulatory organisation to regulate the functioning of government professionals. It specifies duties or areas that the regulatory organisation must cover in ensuring that the Public Administration profession is entrenched and respected. With the establishment of the regulator in the field of public administration would oversee aspects of continuous professional development, code of conduct, bridging the gap between practice and academia, ongoing research and international interface with other organisations and governments in order to keep abreast of developments and many other functions.

Lastly, the framework also suggests the establishment of specific legislation to govern the whole operation. The next and last chapter will conclude with recommendations and policy considerations.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this research work was to suggest a framework to professionalise the public service, using the DOJCD as a case study. The roadmap to the framework in Chapter Five started with sizeable literature review on various angles, definitions and concepts on and related to professionalisation. Furthermore, a connection between all concepts was examined to determine how they relate to one another in order to arrive at either a model or a framework. The international arena was also researched in terms of governments and professionalisation of different occupations. From the findings, a conclusion can be made whether the South African Public Service can be professionalised or not. It can also be determined whether the legal framework is adequate to make an impact in the professionalisation question.

6.2 Research methodology applied

The research approach applied in this study is ‘Qualitative’ on the basis that the concepts it dealt with cannot be measured in a laboratory setting, nor can they be quantified numerically in order to arrive at a conclusion. However, they are social constructs that are measured through observation. To this effect, vast local and international literature from journals and books was explored, to gauge professionalisation elsewhere in the globe. A total number of 35 government officials were also interviewed on a predetermined set of questions which probed the knowledge, understanding and wishes of public servants on the process of professionalisation. Valuable insights were gained from both platforms.

Mostly, there was consensus in most aspects such as the description of a Professional, what professionalism is and the feasibility of professionalisation of the public service. The questionnaire used to gather views was quite comprehensive, as articulated by some of the respondents. However, its mission was accomplished as respondents took their valuable time to complete the questionnaire and or speak to the researcher. In analysing the data collected, themes were extracted and discussed mainly in Chapter four, and in-part Chapters five and six.

6.3 Research Questions and Objectives Considered

The following were the research questions and objectives the study sought to answer:

The main research question of this study was:

- **Can the South African Public Service be professionalised?**

Secondary-specific research questions of this study are:

What would be the best framework to professionalise the South African public service?
 Are public servants interested in the process of professionalisation of the public service?
 What is the role of Academia in the professionalisation question?
 How are other countries dealing with the professionalisation issue?

Research objectives

The main objective of the study is:

- To determine if the South African Public Service can be professionalised.

Secondary objectives of this study are:

To investigate the best framework to professionalise the South African Public Service;
 To ascertain whether public servants are actually interested in the process of professionalisation of the public service;
 To explore the role of Academia in the professionalisation question; and
 To recommend lessons the South African public service can draw from other countries internationally on professionalisation of public service.

It is imperative to explicitly show how the objectives were met in the study. The table below seeks to point out how and where in the research these were met:

Objective	Where	How was the Objective achieved
To determine if the South African Public Service can be professionalised	Chapter two and Chapter four	The literature review broadly explored the landscape of professionalisation from a global perspective. It looked at governments spread across the continents and their attempts to professionalise or their ways of doing things that make them to look professional, Germany, United States, Singapore, Nigeria and others. In Chapter 4 the Respondents themselves unanimously agreed that the public service can be professionalised
To investigate the best framework to professionalise the	Chapter 5 deals with the framework from the background of	What is deemed the 'best' framework is juxtaposed against the current existing framework

South African Public Service	what currently exists by the NSG to the proposed framework developed by the researcher	led and implemented by the NSG. The NSG Framework leans of 5 pillars namely: 1. Recruitment and Selection 2. Induction and on-boarding 3. Planning and Performance Management 4. Continuing learning and Professional Development 5. Career Progression, Succession Planning and Management of Career Indicence of Heads of Departments The difference with the ‘best’ framework developed by the researcher is in its holistic approach to running a government department as seen in practical suggestions of: 1. Professionalising Operations: The researcher dedicated much time on this phenomenon because of its unlikely relations to professionalisation as it often is associated with ‘people’. People must manage operations. Therefore, fixing operations and ensuring that they are geared for excellence is a major factor of this research. 2. Professionalising Customer Experience: This is who any public service exists for. Therefore, the professionalisation process should not omit to prioritise the customer. 3. Professionalising and prioritising Institutional Development: This goes in tandem with continuous development of officials, there should be continuous development of the Institution in order to keep it on the cutting edge.
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		4. Professionalising Officials: The research bases a Public Service Professional on the premises and teachings of a German Honorable Merchant, a Gentleman/woman of honour and his/her word.
To ascertain whether public servants are actually interested in the process of professionalisation of the public service	Chapter 4	There were explicit questions poking at whether the current professionals (Lawyers) and practitioners (Administrators) see themselves as professionals and whether the public service can be professionalised. The Respondents were overwhelmingly positive on who they are as professionals and that the public service can and must be professionalised. The research tool further explored involvement of the public in the professionalisation process
To explore the role of Academia in the professionalisation question;	Chapter four Chapter five, 5.6.3	The research tool also dealt with the role of Academia in the professionalisation question. The Respondents opined that the relationship between academics and practitioners need to be strengthened and distance reduced. As part of the Framework in Chapter 5 section 5.6.2 spells out the role of academia in developing Professionalism in the Public Administration course content
To recommend lessons the South African public service can draw from other countries internationally on professionalisation of public service	Chapter five, 5.6.1.3	The proposed framework dedicates a section to professionalise the public service practitioners by modelling these individuals on the concept of the Wisdom of Practitioners who become the Honorable Public Servant. The concept is derived from the German Honourable Merchant concept. The proposed framework implements a notion by Ullrich, et al. (2023:749) who documented the journey of social work professionalisation in

		Germany and Singapore. In this journey they identified that an occupation must enjoy ‘Public recognition’ which entails the establishment of formal licensing procedures. The framework also proposes an establishment of a Regulatory body from which licencing of professionals will emanate.
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6.4 Terms explored

The starting point was to engage in definitions and/or description of terms, from which certain understandings emanated. Professionalism proved to be very diverse in utilisation by various different scholars, organisations and people. The respondents alluded, at some level, to any unbecoming behaviour as unprofessional in a workplace. Conversely, professionalisation was consistently understood by all as an exercise of getting an occupation exclusive in the market by putting some barriers, controls and regulations to entry and practice.

It is the methodology of getting to the ‘professionalised’ status that drew some differences. Some scholars and governments preferred to borrow from the oldest professions of medicine and religion to suggest the process of professionalisation, whilst others used more modern models. Profession as a term also drew different views from various scholars as well as the respondents. However, the fundamental consensus was that professions have followed a particular model to get to where they are today. All, so far, sought exclusivity by establishing a governing organisation to control the occupation or profession.

6.5 Key Conclusions, Deductions and Generalisations

6.5.1 Public Administration is a Profession

The main question that the study aimed to answer was whether there is a possibility to professionalise the South African Public Service. The sub-questions flowed from the main question to expand on the notion of professionalisation. The respondents of the study already saw themselves as professionals, those in the traditional professions (Lawyers) and those in management and administration. Therefore, all respondents deemed it possible to say the South African Public Service can and should be professionalised. However, there was overwhelming agreement in that professionalism in government department was only partial. Each government department seems to have the values they subscribe to; for example, Batho Pele (People First), good governance, respect, collegiality and so forth. However, there seems to be

no decisive measurable programs to drive implementation or entrenchment of such values. The vision and mission generally talk to the constitutional and legal mandate of a department. That is obligation. But the values drive the organisational culture, differentiating a cutting edge, professional and customer-centric department to any other.

The DTIC for example, has the ‘Rea Aga’ (We are building) values such as promotion of decent work, operational excellence, intellectual excellence, ethical conduct, social inclusion, quality relationships anchored in honesty, respect, integrity, transparency, professionalism, ownership, leadership and teamwork. The expectation thereof would be that, getting to the DTIC building, one must walk into such an environment as described by their values. Therefore, the question whether the South African Public Service be professionalised is answered in probing what is available already in terms of the professions at play in the departments versus the mostly administrative practices.

Literature explored in this study together with responses from the research tool affirmed the possibility of professionalisation. Most respondents already see themselves as ‘professionals’ in their roles and also perceive others as professionals too. More emphasis was placed on qualifications, skills, ethics, empathy and other behavioural traits than membership to a governing organisation. Even within the legal profession, there are levels of specialization. For one to become an Advocate, they must sit for board exams. If not, there are certain jobs that cannot be assigned to them and there are certain rates they cannot claim when a job has been assigned and done. In the medical field, a Neurosurgeon’s rates are much higher than a General Practitioner, because of the extra specialist training they have obtained. As Respondent 10 (DOJCD) emphasized, the need for exclusivity was historically for monetary purposes.

With regards to the differentiation between officials on OSD and those who are not, this is what Respondent 10 (DOJCD) said (edited); *‘I am legally qualified and an admitted Attorney, so the field that I’m in has been professionalised. Then there is OSD and all these people that are left out of it. I am not professional if I am not acting in line with my discipline, admitted or not, OSD or not. I might be put into the government system much lesser than what the administrator or the financial person is put in. Maybe I am speaking a language why we should differentiate, is it really necessary or should people be paid in terms of their input instead of what they’ve studied for. And I think that’s what I’m driving at, like you say everyone has studied for their 4-year qualifications and beyond. People have been studying, some even harder. You find someone who is an administrator getting a doctoral degree and you find someone with an LLB*

who will continuously, going back to my argument, earn more than this one who's got a doctoral degree. This one is simply at an LLB level, but because the area of where a person is studying has been professionalized and there's OSD for this person. I am arguing differentiation and I am saying it is your input that should determine who you are not necessarily what you have studied. My argument is that what criteria are we using to professionalise a profession. And whatever criteria we're using to professionalise, professions must be the same across the board. In the beginning there's all these differences, however, after years of working if you check the administrator at a legal firm actually do so much more than the other one who takes what has been packaged and sits and reads and goes to the court of law and present that (which is packaged by someone else). The difference for me is neither here nor there because after years of practicing, you already know how your case runs, issues, interpretations, applications...it flows. Similarly, with the other person e.g. where a man is married to a lady who is at home who is not working who has a profession but not working and keeping the house and making sure he's well taken care of. Without this one (lady) this other one (man) cannot function.

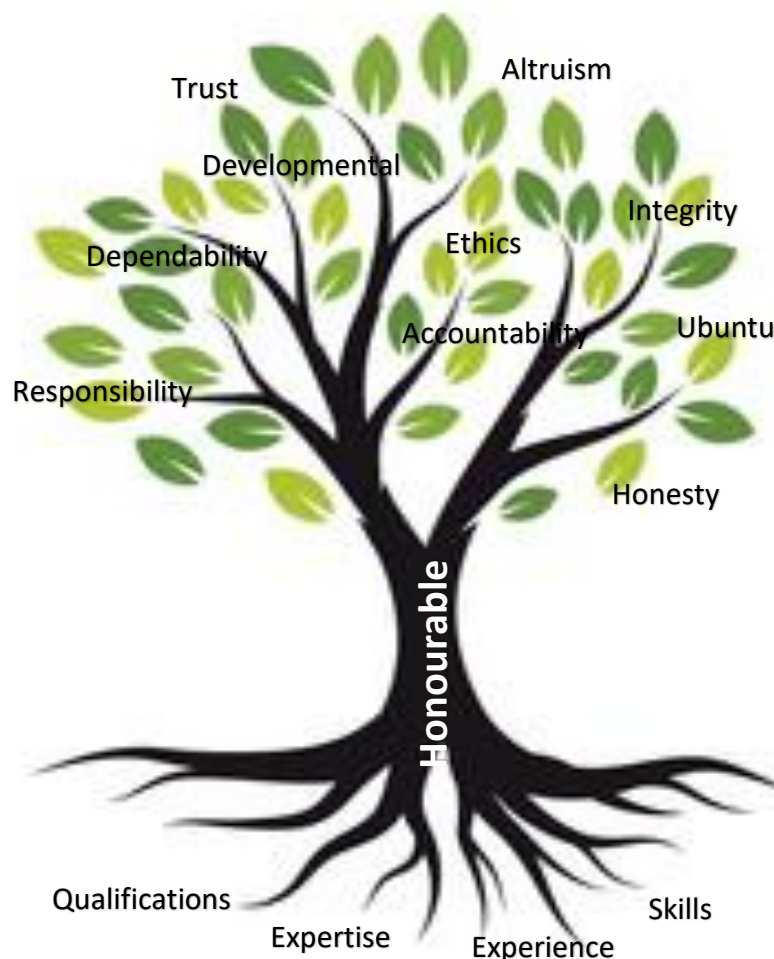
There is this one, if we are traditional about it, I know things have changed now, everybody does home chores; but if we go back to how it was traditionally, she cleans the house, washes the dishes, irons the clothes, makes sure there is food for the man to eat. The man is well taken care of and able to function and can go to court to win cases because he is okay in his minds, everything is in order due to the woman. You think administration is there to support the professional? For me, the same argument flows. Because when these two, usually in case law, when they divorce, you also get the court actually taking care of the woman saying without her the man would have not succeeded. That's my argument. These professions are similar. The one cannot thrive without the other. Why do we differentiate?'

6.5.2 A Professional: personal attributes and skills set

There was general consensus in describing a professional, both in literature and by respondents of this study. A professional is perceived as a person who is qualified through a prescribed set of systematic knowledge taught at institutions of learning thereby acquiring certain skills in a particular occupation. They behave in a manner that is customer-centric and are altruistic and dependable to the community. Their knowledge and skill make the customers or service users trust them with their lives and resources. For example, whatever a medical doctor prescribes,

it usually is not questioned as the patient trusts the doctor's judgement of their diagnosis and subsequent remedies.

The patient will spend their resources to buy the prescribed medication purely on the basis of trust. It therefore becomes imperative that the professional adheres to a set of prescribed professional norms and standards, so as not to disappoint the service user nor bring the profession into disrepute. When a professional brings the profession into disrepute, there are punitive measures administered up to revoking of a license. The professional knows this beforehand as he or she registers in the profession. He or she then endeavours not to violate the code of conduct. However, they do not operate from a point of fear of reprimand, but from an integrity and honour launchpad. The tree below depicts the attributes of a professional as per findings of this study; however, the list is not exhaustive.



THE HONOURABLE MERCHANT – THE DOJCD PROFESSIONAL – THE PUBLIC SERVICE PROFESSIONAL

Figure 6.1: The DOJCD Professional – created by the Researcher

6.5.3 Membership to a Regulatory body

Although the models explored, including Tseng's model of professionalisation, included the exclusivity element of belonging to and membership in a governing organisation, this did not seem to be an absolute necessity. However, the importance of the existence of an organisation to control an occupation is still very important and recommended.

A lawyer employed by the DOJCD is subjected to the general code of conduct applicable to government and the departmental prescripts that control his work and conduct. Over and above that, he or she is subjected to the regulations of the governing organisation in which he or she holds a membership by virtue of his legal profession. There is value in this. The organisation calls for membership which directs members' modalities of practice. Members will have prescribed qualifications from Institutions of Higher Learning or specialised designated institutions. Outside of these organisations, one is unable or not allowed to practice professionally.

The organisation sets norms, values and standards; codes of practice to be followed by members; corrective and punitive measures where there are deviations by members. The organisation connects with the academic institutions to ensure quality of teaching and relevance of material. Additionally, it provides the learning material or courses to allow specialization, for example, the pupillage exams for a Lawyer to become an Advocate and being part of a Bar Council. Pupilage exams are not provided for by a university.

The biggest challenge for professionalisation of the public service will be in the formation of an organisation to govern public administration practitioners. The current set up of government departments is such that there is a department and its 'off-shoots' or subsidiary organisations established to oversee efficiencies and effectiveness. That department is Department of Public Service and Administration popularly, known as the DPSA. The subsidiaries of the DPSA are the Public Service Commission (PSC), Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) and National School of Government.

These three entities have exclusive mandates specializing in certain aspects to make government governable and an excellent institution. The legislative mandate of the PSC, as reflected in their website, is derived from sections 195 and 196 of the Constitution, 1996. The PSC is tasked and empowered to, amongst others, investigate, monitor, and evaluate the organisation and administration of the Public Service. This mandate also entails the evaluation of achievements or lack thereof of Government programmes. The PSC also has an obligation

to promote measures that would ensure effective and efficient performance within the Public Service and to promote values and principles of public administration as set out in the Constitution, throughout the Public Service.

6.5.4 Professionalism and Organisational Culture

In this study, literature showed that whilst professionalism guides a professional to deliver high-quality productivity while maintaining a positive work environment, that attitude can easily be affected by high stress situations which may lead to decreased workplace psychological wellbeing. This means that support in training should begin early in the education of professionals, to alert them of the dangers of external influences in their conduct and practice of care. For example, a low-paid policeman might compromise the oath of office by accepting a bribe in order to obtain extra income to feed his family. In a high-pressured environment, a professional may find themselves lying about certain functions that fell between the cracks in order to save their reputation and sometimes even their job.

Evidenced in Germany during the World Wars, it is said that many salaried professors in Nazi-Germany traded their scholarship to ends which they knew were false. It was observed that teachers were among the earliest and most enthusiastic recruits for the Nazi party and lawyers were sabotaging the rule of law. Physicians were also conducting bizarre medical experiments in the concentration camps to further the cause of the Nazi. This all happened because their careers were threatened by unemployment and political crises.

These professionals felt they needed to align themselves with the then powerful Nazi in order to save themselves from the wrath the Nazis displayed toward opposition. As the religious writer, Ellen G White, once wrote ‘The greatest want of the world is the want of men – men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost soul are true and honest, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men will stand for the right though heavens fall’ (White, 1903:57). The nobility of this latter statement is something to be admired and attained. However, there are no guarantees.

6.5.5 Training and development to enhance professionalism

The School of Governance and Politics at MGIMO University, Russia, is mainly focused on creating a new generation of public officials who will thrive in a highly competitive environment. This generation is fluent in foreign languages and experts in strategic, innovation and crisis management, with a profound understanding of the current national and international

political processes (online source). This is what training institutions should strive for, as one of the themes that came out prominently in the definition of a professional was training and development. A professional is to be a qualified person in a craft or occupation. The training should come from a recognised institution for higher learning or a training institution specializing in that craft. Self-taught knowledge does not seem to matter and therefore cannot be trusted.

In Public Administration, the study found that there is a disjuncture between academics and practice. There is an apparent indication that what is taught in a university class is removed from practice. As a result, the cadre of Public Servants employed fresh from the universities are devoid of the necessary knowledge to practice immediately and it takes them longer to adjust and adapt. What is taught at universities is based on universal mostly westernised public administration practices. These practices do not always talk to the fundamental challenges experienced in Africa and South Africa in this instance.

Africa deals with challenges of poverty, inequality, unemployment, harsh realities of climate change and so forth. Therefore, policies governing the departments should take this into cognizance. One respondent suggested that there should be an interchange of professionals between academia and the public service to bridge the glaring gap. It is noteworthy, however, that in the profession of medicine, there are academic hospitals that are designated as learning centres where student doctors practice in the real world.

The practice of public administration at academic level relies on the research articles produced by scholars and not the actual teaching of the courses that make up the public administration qualifications. The hybrid situation of government brings further complexities in that all professions, for example, doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, and accountants find practice in the context of public administration. They therefore stand out, whilst occupations such as management, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, and planning do not enjoy the same status.

6.5.6 The demand for professionalisation of occupations

The question of professionalisation is as old as occupations themselves. Occupations that managed to make themselves exclusive over the centuries benefitted and continue to benefit from the process which they keep refining to ensure relevance and to stay ahead. They seem to have created a belief that the professions are superior and offer better opportunities for attributes such as respect, dignity, and wealth. Thus far, and for the most part, there is evidence

towards that notion. Because of specialisation they have created, through the academic system and in practice, they are able to charge above-normal rates. That normalises such rates and they get to be accepted and trusted. Therefore, should there be, for example, a medical doctor who charges far less than established rates per patient, they not only become questionable but could also be probed by the regulatory organisation they belong to. So, standardization of operations including fees charged and behaviour becomes important.

Literature examined in this study revealed that there is a growing want for every occupation to professionalise; from restaurants, farming, administration to technical jobs such as plumbing and so forth. However, the practicalities of doing this have been elusive for most occupations.

6.5.7 The Public Servant and the Professionalisation process

The study found that the common notion of ‘nothing about us without us’ applies. If the public service is to be successfully transformed, then the public servant must be part of the conversation and take personal ownership of the process of professionalisation. Over and above being part of mandatory professional bodies, they can take their jobs as a calling, start behaving professionally and keep to commitments to clients. One respondent felt that it is saddening to see government officials chit-chatting about non-issues instead of helping clients, which the respondent felt was the opposite of what one would find at private institutions like the banks.

Another respondent felt that being qualified legally within the DOJCD is not superior to other qualifications. Numerous officials work in the courts to provide administrative, facilities, and psychological services, among other services. They are members of trade associations or other professional bodies. Officials in these fields are qualified and well-trained for the work they perform. These officials follow the rules set forth by their professional associations and their line of work. However, in the DOJCD, in order for the department to meet its goals and targets, other professions are required to help the legal team.

Nonetheless, an introductory course about the work taking place in the courts can be given to those in other professions that are not related to law. This can be viewed as interdependency, which should essentially put all occupations on equal footing. Therefore, the department should professionalise the officials who do not belong to professional bodies. This will combat the corruption in courts and Masters’ Offices and should address the mismanagement of funds and poor level of service at these service points. It will also allow the department to hire people who are well trained, qualified and competent in their respective fields to enhance accountability and improve service delivery.

6.5.8 Approach to Professionalisation

The terms professionalisation and professionalism are complex terms that are quite difficult to break down. The conundrum presents itself in how to narrow down and navigate through terms, their meanings and existing frameworks or models; to find the best fit not just for the DOJCD but for the public service as a whole. Therefore, an approach to simplify the process is important. In simplification, one must commence at the narrowest end of what the intention of public service is. The value in the process is derived from breaking down the process to the smaller, doable and relevant elements.

The Framework for Professionalisation of the DOJCD suggested in Chapter 5 does exactly that; in that the process is compartmentalized for ease of use and implementation. It begins with the professionalisation of operations, to the entrenchment of institutional development. The Public Servant must also be professionalised, hence the modelling of the DOJCD professional after The Honourable Merchant of Germany. Public service ought to be a think-tank on how to deliver services. Therefore, thinking is elementary to government. There must be professionalisation of thought-leadership by crafting frameworks that keep the public service innovative, preferably well ahead or at least on par with governments of other countries. This study found that professionalising thinking starts at institutions of learning at all levels.

Solutions are derived from thinking processes. The government must think of how best to serve its citizens. The thought-processes will include various elements, including the involvement of the citizens as the outcome of its success. When the citizens are satisfied with their government, the thought process has been successful, notwithstanding that citizens of most countries will never be fully satisfied.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in thought-leadership. Leadership must listen to the communities and understand what their needs are and how best to deliver on those needs. The professionalisation process must be much simpler, once a framework and model is chosen. The process must reflect flexibility, readiness, openness, and willingness to connect with communities, who are the end users of government services. Professionalisation must also prioritise public servants as service providers. The image of government is carried in the conduct of the public servants. These thoughts shape strategy and decision making, which in turn shape the delivery of services.

6.5.9 The current uncertainty of professionalism in government

Most participants in this study attested to the partial existence of professionalism in their departments. Without prior guidance there have been pockets of professionalism that were not uniformly applied. Unfortunately, this has caused inconsistencies as there has been no measure of what it is to be professional. All officials of government are aware, however deep or shallow that knowledge is, that professionalism is supposed to be there, and that they are expected to behave in a professional manner; however, in the absence of a leadership that models that, there is an erosion of morals, ethics, respect and excellence in performance. Within the public service there are professionals who belong to professional bodies that govern their conduct and output. Therefore, with these officials, the freedom to choose to be professional is limited or non-existent.

This study also found that professionalism is closely tied to values, and therefore there are those that continue upholding it with or without membership to a professional body. One cannot quantify the extent of professionalism in an environment where it is not a requirement. The study also found that political affiliation can play a role on someone's behaviour at their workplace. This means that professionalism will be practiced as long as it does not clash with the political party they affiliate with. There are practices of nepotism, favouritism, prioritisation of fellow party members in job assignments and so forth. Prioritisation of the needs of political party members, by and large, is problematic because it puts the interests of the nation in its totality as secondary. Professionalism would place the needs of the citizens first, irrespective of political affiliation.

Notwithstanding the number of professionals employed by government for example, lawyers at DOJCD, doctors at the public hospitals and so forth; there will always be a level of professionalism in government. However, this study is proposing bringing everyone else on board. How this could be achieved is outlined in the proposed Framework in Chapter Five.

6.5.10 Professionalisation for service delivery

At the very least, professionalisation should not have much to do with the organisation but everything to do with the clientele of the organisation. In this instance, professionalisation of the public service should benefit the citizens it serves. The literature review revealed that the measure of success of professionalism lies with the service users and/or citizens in the case of government. Therefore, the policies, strategies, frameworks that shape the operations of an

organisation or government department, are effective only as far as they benefit the service users.

An important element of professionalisation of the public service is not embedded in the end-result only but in the entire process of serving the citizen. This means the business processes of a department must take into consideration the citizen whilst they are still in the comfort of their homes, before they need the service; to the time they need the services of the department until they are fully served and the ‘aftersales’ service well after they have left the service point. As part of the professionalisation of the operations, a table has been presented in this study depicting elements that must be considered in the process of planning for service delivery.

The service delivery planning process calls for planning for the customer before they need the service. This entails backroom re-engineering of policies, processes and procedures to meet the needs of the customers. Such elements may include activities such as consulting the customers on services offered and how they wish to be serviced; setting service standards as a contract between the department and the customers on timelines to conclude a service; setting up mechanisms for feedback such as a call centre, mapping business processes that consider the speed at which the service is rendered, the quality of the service and the satisfaction of the customer.

Other elements were listed in detail in the previous chapter. However, it is important to note the quality assurance that must be in place prior to the customer requiring the service. This will help the department to measure itself on how professional it is when customers reflect satisfaction.

The next step to planning is to ensure implementation of activities when the customer needs the service; for example, when a mother requires the father of her children to contribute towards the upbringing of their children through the Maintenance services at DOJCD or in a domestic violence case. Activities such as monitoring how services are delivered, performance of the officials, ensuring cleanliness of the premises, availability of basic utilities such as electricity, water, functioning networks, to available, neat and friendly officials to render the service. This also includes adequate waiting areas and reasonable waiting times.

The aim at this stage is to ensure that the customer gets the full bouquet of the service without delay, discomfort or prejudice of any kind. It is at this stage that, in the private sector, an organisation may have a repeat customer or the customer will go elsewhere to obtain the same service. However, in government, a customer usually does not have an alternative; for example,

criminal cases are only heard at courts and the decision of the court is binding to both plaintiff and defendant.

The last phase of planning is after the customer's experience of the service. Activities planned for this phase are, for example, analysing customer feedback through surveys or evaluation forms; analysing performance reports to understand trends, analysing customer complaints and getting feedback from officials as well. The importance of getting feedback from officials is crucial as they bear the brunt of face-to-face interactions with customers on a daily basis in the wake of dwindling resources of government.

6.5.11 Professionalisation of public service in other countries

The question posed to respondents on professionalisation in other countries was open-ended, allowing the respondents to name any country they admire for running their government professionally. Responses from participants were underwhelming. However, there were suggestions for consideration from those who attempted the question. Respondent 15 (DPSA) and Respondent 1 (DOJCD) emphasised the need for exchange programmes that expose South African public servants to other countries to learn what they do to serve their public. Respondent 1 (DOJCD) highlighted the need for a country to identify its competitive edge in order to stand out. This was suggested in the wake of the differences of cultures, approaches to life in general and well as entrenched generational tendencies.

Some of the good leaders in South Africa and in other countries are people who studied, worked or lived overseas, that is, outside of their own countries. Such people become well rounded in appreciating shortcomings and excellence in their own countries and the same in the foreign country they are in. It is this infusion of two or more worlds that brings solutions to a country. The most important element is to ensure that solutions are commensurate with the local challenges, so that they are not rejected by the socio-cultural system of that country.

Some respondents named the countries they admire for professional public service. Respondent 6 (CSIR) and Respondent 8 (National Treasury) mentioned Singapore. They stated that two governments, South Africa and Singapore are similar and have copied a great deal from each other. For example, the monitoring and evaluation framework which helped establish the DPME model was premised on the Singapore model. Singapore's approach to professionalisation started from the top politicians and the administrators followed suit. In that manner, there is accountability at every level. Singapore recruits and appoints public officials based on merit and they invest in a comprehensive training programme to upskill officials. The

Ministries and agencies including private sector collaborate to address complex issues. There is an emphasis on anti-corruption and integrity to ensure that the citizens have trust in government. Their structure is largely the same as that of South Africa; however, they differ in terms of size and scope as well as the historical context.

6.5.12 Public views in professionalisation of the Public Service

Respondents and literature reviewed agreed that inclusion of the public is crucial in the process of professionalisation. The public should be consulted regularly and not in a once-off incident. Respondent 8 (DOJCD) indicated that ‘it is the responsibility of public servants working for government departments to fulfil the objectives of the national development plan and national priorities. Public officials that are appointed in the public service are responsible for delivering public services. For this reason, it is critical that the public provide their inputs in the process of professionalising the public service.

When drafting the frameworks, they must get the inputs from the public to get their expectations of ideal public sector that they want. The processes that are being followed should be made public as well.’ There are various ways government can achieve public participation in a sustainable manner.

The utilisation of non-governmental and community-based organisations is one method, whereas public surveys and direct community engagements in the form of izimbizo ought to be conducted at locations where public services are rendered. It is also the responsibility of the public service to teach the public how to hold public servants to account if they are not adhering to the Batho Pele principles and how to report corruption to build a compliant and progressive public service.

6.5.13 Professionalisation at National Government level

As indicated in earlier chapters, the NDP 2030 brought professionalisation into sharp focus for government. This necessitated a well-defined framework to realise this identified shortcoming. The objective of such a framework is to deliver a capable, ethical, and developmental state as envisaged in the NDP.

The current President, Cyril Ramaphosa, acknowledged that there is political interference in administration to a certain extent. This happens whenever there is a change in Cabinet Ministers, wherein a Minister will bring his or her own staff members or they get to the department and change senior management around. The President stated that

professionalisation of the public service is a necessity in this instance, especially for stability in the public service (NSG, 2022:3). The same notion was articulated by Respondent 1 (NPA) who mentioned the ‘cadre deployment’ issue which has been a bone of contention since the installation of the democratic government in South Africa. Cadre deployment never took professionalism into consideration, as it only operated based on trust. Some of these cadres who were put into positions of power and influence were not qualified in any occupation or skill. If cadre deployment cannot be abolished, at least it must be done with professionalisation in mind through skilling the deployed cadre.

The President specified some examples of the reforms that will bring about professionalism in the public service such as employment of Heads of Departments (HoDs) based on merit and performance. Such individuals will undertake occupation-based competency assessments. He cited the involvement of the PSC in the interviews of Directors General (DGs) and Deputy Directors General (DDGs).

Integrity tests would also be conducted for all shortlisted individuals to help bring in honest individuals willing to serve the public with integrity. In 2019-2020, government introduced compulsory exams called ‘Nyukela’ (meaning ‘go higher’), for entry into the Senior Management in the public service. Nyukela will also be extended beyond senior management as part of professionalisation of the public service. The framework emphasises a non-partisan state in order to achieve professionalisation. This approach embraces the merit principles in all staffing practices in the public sector. For this to be realised, the public sector must insulate itself from the politics of political parties (NSG, 2022:4-7)

As directed by the President of South Africa, the National School of Government has since published the National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector. It is in this publication that the national reforms in government are tabled. In this document, it is stated that the MTSF that has lapsed (2019- 2024) focussed the government’s strategic commitment to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

The Framework seeks to afford the State with an opportunity to implement key activities and systems to institutionalise the public sector as a profession of choice with a career system based on meritocracy and an ethical character immersed in the Batho Pele principles as found in the African philosophy of humanism (Ubuntu/Botho). Reforms planned to achieve this, even beyond the MTSF period, would include the following areas:

- Professional, meritocratic and ethical public administration; Improved leadership, governance and accountability;
- Functional, efficient and integrated government;
- Mainstreaming of gender, empowerment of youth and people with disabilities; and
- Social compact and engagement with key stakeholders (NSG, 2022:6).

The Framework proposes five critical professionalisation pillars, led by the NSG in partnership with various learning institutions. The five pillars include (i) pre-entry recruitment and selection within the Public Service (ii) induction and on-boarding, (iii) planning and performance management, iv) Continuous Learning and Professional Development (CLPD), and v) career progression and management of career incidents of Heads of Departments (NSG, 2022:22).

6.6 Key Contributions of the Study to professionalisation theory in developmental states

6.6.1 Theoretical implications

Scot (2025:1) views a theoretical contribution as an enhancement to scholarly understanding, which is the primary focus of an academic. An academic is someone who opts to advance the theories within a specific discipline or area of expertise. These personal contributions subsequently foster progressive growth in theoretical knowledge, which can be utilized to enhance societal conditions. Therefore, it is essential for any academic paper to explicitly state and rationalize its contribution.

This study expanded the realm of professionalisation theories to include operations, organisational culture (the character of the organisation) and customers in terms of how they experience the public services. Going forward, the new emerging theories will hone in to this expansion.

In Chapter One, it is stated that the findings of this study would contribute to the ongoing public discourse on professionalisation of the public service and suggest a direction that can be followed in the task of professionalisation. Chapter Four and Five sought to delineate this assertion in detail.

In 2022, the South African democratic government adopted a national framework for professionalisation of public service for the first time since the dawn of democracy in 1994. It is the view of the researcher that the gains from slow implementation will take some time to be realised. True impact is yet to be measured. Therefore, the study at hand could play a pivotal

role to enrich and enhance the adopted national framework. The adoption and implementation of the national framework suggests that the South African government has moved beyond debates about professionalisation into practice. It is in the practice that the debate must continue. This is where the ‘how’ of professionalisation will come alive, as not one practice will sustain in the long run.

6.6.2 Transferability and International Relevance

A research study serves as a link between theoretical concepts and practical applications. It makes a contribution by either confirming what is already known, addressing information gaps, or offering practical answers to particular issues. This study pragmatized the professionalisation theory and expanded it to operations, strategy and most importantly to customers. Adopted as is, or even with amendments, it would give a department an immediate platform to formulate the necessary policies to drive the phases of professionalisation according to the Tseng’s model used in this study.

The professionalisation framework suggested by the researcher is premised on a widely used model internationally. Its practicality, with explicit suggestions of professional operational programmes and ways to make customers’ experience comfortable would not only benefit DOJCD as an individual department, but any public service in the world. The customers of the DOJCD are never a happy people. There is nothing pleasurable that brings anyone to the premises of the DOJCD. Therefore, the proposed framework encompasses an organisation and its customers in their various points of need, pleasant or unpleasant.

6.7 Policy Recommendations of the Study

The key recommendations emanating from this study are drawn from the literature reviewed, interviews conducted and analysis thereof, the suggested Framework for Professionalisation of the Public Service and the key conclusions derived. The researcher’s public service practitioner’s status has also been taken into consideration.

6.7.1 Embark on a ‘Market disorientation’ Project

The project will draw its deliverables on the first phase of the Professionalisation Framework. This phase explores all aspects of operations in order to put in place proper and progressive management tools such as business processes, service delivery models and management practices such as the Likert’s System 4.

6.7.2 Establish of a Regulatory Body

Whilst scholars did not make it a compulsory item to professionalise an occupation, it strongly transpired that the successful professions that enjoy exclusivity and a certain degree of autonomy are those that established regulatory bodies for themselves. It is therefore recommended that Public Administration, as a profession should do the same. The framework presented in chapter 5 delves deeper into the responsibilities and functions of such a regulatory body.

6.7.3 Teach professionalism

From the literature reviewed, the important aspect of teaching professionalism as a subject or a module at tertiary school level was encouraged. Whilst there is what is commonly known as continuous professional development, in which a professional undergoes skills development over and above their minimum qualification, a need to develop specific learning material for professionalism was discovered. Continuous professional development pertains to course work designed to enhance the occupation, whereas teaching professionalism pertains to the actual teaching of the subject as part of making one a professional. One of the primary duties of the regulatory body PSRA would be to ensure the development of such material and implementation thereof; the same way that Lawyers register with the Legal Practice Council to write professional examinations in order to qualify to practice in South Africa. Therefore, a person wishing to practice as a Public Servant must go through the professional training as developed.

6.7.4 Plan for Training and Continuous Development

Public Administration should define minimum requirements for acceptance in an occupation. It is common knowledge that public service houses almost all occupations, even those that are governed by regulatory bodies, for example, Accountants, Auditors, Doctors, Lawyers and so forth. However, a number of them are in pure administration, for example, Human Resources, Monitoring and Evaluation, Policy development and planning, Communication and so forth. These are hundreds of thousands of government officials who do not necessarily belong to a regulatory body that prescribes minimum requirements for their occupations. However, whilst the government of South Africa contemplates the establishment of such a body, continuous professional development (CPD) should be a basic policy in government. Practically, this means for each salary level, there should be a minimum set of qualifications and courses that must be made compulsory. For example, an Assistant Director (Level 9), which is a junior

management level, there must be an extra management qualification required in comparison to an Administration Officer (Level 8). Additionally, work-based learning must be part of professional development because it occurs within the context and challenges of daily professional life. As a finding in the literature review, other characteristics that must be cultivated continuously include emotional intelligence, motivation, normative behaviour and ethics.

6.7.5 Include Public Servants in the Professionalisation Process

Findings from the interviews indicated that the respondents already view and attach professional status to themselves. This was across the board on both administrative and traditionally professional officials. Therefore, no professionalisation process should come as a top-down approach without consultation as to how this phenomenon can best be implemented. This kind of consultation will not only ensure buy-in but also cooperation and participation. Coaching and mentorship programmes should form part of the inclusion of public servants in ensuring participation for everyone.

6.7.6 Develop transparent exchange programmes with other countries

As Respondent 15 (DPSA) and Respondent 1 (DOJCD) highlighted the need for exchange programmes that expose South African public servants to other countries, it is recommended that each government department sets aside a budget biennially to conduct an exchange programme with selected countries based on set criteria. This should be the work of the established regulatory body for public administration, to collect data on countries, and present them to departments for selection and criteria purposes. Each department will select the countries as per their exclusive legislative mandate. In this way, South African public service will always be on par with the international world. It must be noted that South Africa also has a lot to offer, as postulated by Respondent 1 (NPA). The justification for the biennial timeline is informed by the budget constraints experienced by government over the years.

6.7.7 Include the public in professionalisation of public service

It is recommended that public participation is considered strongly in the professionalisation of public service process. Whilst respondents recommended various tools, many of them are in existence already (Izimbizo, community outreaches, complaints mechanisms and so forth). The interesting item recommended is community service. Community service must be made

compulsory for every person wishing to serve in public administration. This can be determined before or within a certain period, preferably one year, of joining public service.

6.7.8 Introduce a Coaching and Mentorship Programme

Respondent 12 (DOJCD) and Respondent 14 (Gauteng Provincial Government – Office of the Premier) recommended coaching, mentorship and leadership as key components to ensure that Public Servants at all salary levels are developed. This must be done beyond the PMDS policy. The respondents emphasised the promotion of diversity and inclusivity in these programs as well as advocacy for professional growth of others. Onboarding should form part of this programme. This recommendation must not be taken to mean that Senior Managers leading their team in the Directorates, Chief Directorates and Branches are automatically Coaches and Mentors. However, on a voluntary basis, Senior Manager must be encouraged to voluntarily enrol into the programme and they must be assigned junior colleagues they will mentor, regardless of where they are placed within the department. The importance of this random selection is that it is not every time that the team members and their leader have a good relationship.

6.7.9 Review Recruitment Policy and other Policies

Whilst the National Professionalisation Framework provides for reviewed recruitment guidelines, the recruited official may still lack the attributes of professionalism. Therefore, part of the recruitment process should include tests of attributes fit for public service, fit for purpose. These need to be defined and enforced. The code of conduct exists in the public service; however, it is not enforced. This policy needs review and robust implementation. New policies with regards to implementation of the Framework outlined in Chapter 5 are necessary. These will include policies governing operations, customers, official conduct, institutional development and so forth.

6.7.10 Decide on the Role of Academia in Professionalisation

In the analysis by respondents on the role of academia, it transpired that there is a disjuncture between academia and public service practice. The establishment of the regulatory body is imperative for the correction of this status quo. The regulatory body will become the nodal point for public service interface with academia. This would ensure standardisation across the public service as opposed to each government department discussing with academia individually.

6.7.11 Eliminate Barriers to Professionalism

Political dynamics and external pressures emerged as notable barriers to professionalism within departments. Respondents described how political influences can conflict with professional standards, often leading employees to prioritize political affiliations or external agendas over their professional responsibilities. At political and administration levels, policies that already exist must be enforced on the separation of powers, especially on what respondents called ‘political interference on administration.’ It is well understood that administration implements policies of a ruling political party. In the case of the 7th Administration in South Africa, it is the implementation of the ruling parties, since it is a government of national unity (GNU), which is a collaboration of parties as chosen by the people of South Africa through the voting system. However, administration must be left to lead in the implementation of the policies without interference from the political parties.

6.8 Areas for further research

The topic of professionalisation is vast but relatively new in the South African Public Service. The first framework was published by NSG in 2022 after much consultation with relevant diverse stakeholders. Implementation may be, at this stage, in its infancy as all the reforms mentioned in the framework require extensive deliberations, budgets, reviewed legislations, establishment of new structures and so forth. This, on its own, leaves much room for evaluation studies that might need to be done in a few years’ time. This study dealt with the DOJCD as a case study and the framework suggested in the previous chapter is confined to a department and its operations. Further studies should deal with extrapolation and customisation of this framework into all spheres of government; national, provincial and local municipality levels. Further studies may be specifically in the areas of establishment of a professional body to govern public service as a subsidiary of the DPSA. Exploration of the views from the public is also important; however, this study did not extend to that aspect.

6.9 Concluding Remarks

The study has shown that the professionalisation of the South African public service is practicable. Although the government of South Africa has a professionalisation framework that is currently being implemented, it is imperative that there is more scholastic research on the professionalisation phenomenon, particularly of the public service. This will increase the body of knowledge beyond the academic level and include the practical level as well.

The South African public service as a democracy is only just over 30 years old. Therefore, at this stage, it can use every piece of research that seeks to contribute to its growth. Ultimately,

a well organised professional public service will benefit its citizens. The vision statement of the NDP reads *‘We, the people of South Africa, have journeyed far since the long lines of our first democratic election on 27 April 1994, when we elected a government for us all. We began to tell a new story then. We have lived and renewed that story along the way. Now in 2030 we live in a country which we have remade’* (NDP: 2012: 14). This vision statement articulates the expectations of all citizens of the country they wish to live in. It is a well organised and professional public service that can bring this wish to fruition.

The study revealed the fragmented approach to professionalism the world over. There seems to be a drive to professionalise everything. Occupations are clamouring for attention in this space, mostly with little success, save for the ones that had decisively professionalised in the early 1800s to mid-1900s. The reason for stagnant success seems to be the difficulties in getting exclusivity through putting barriers to entry into such an occupation. There is also lack of ownership of occupations, for example, Human Resources or general management; hence there is no one organisation that can drive professionalisation. However, with the public service, there is the government as the ‘owner’ which should drive the process of professionalisation to exclusivity status.

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