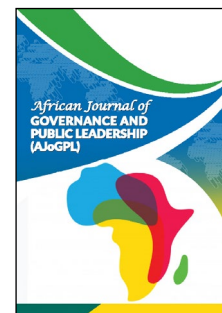


An evaluation of the practice of constitutional basic values and principles of public administration in the Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



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AJoGPL
ISSN: 2789-2298

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Vol 2. Issue 1.
pp. 51 - 67, Sept. 2023
<https://ajogpl.kab.ac.ug>

Abstract

The fundamental values and principles of public administration—embodied in the Republic of South Africa Constitution (1996), stipulate a set of rules governing public administration in all spheres of government. The aim of this paper is to evaluate whether local municipalities in the Zululand District practice the democratic values and principles of public administration. The paper also examined how the practising of democratic values and principles of public administration stipulated in the South African Constitution can improve governance and service delivery in Zululand. A qualitative research method was adopted by this paper where purposive sampling was employed. Data was collected through virtual and physical interviews 45 municipal officials from the Zululand district were targeted. The findings of this paper revealed how Zululand incorporates the values and principles of public administration with local government objectives. Zululand Municipality emphasises the importance of these values and principles to all its employees, encouraging them to continue using them in executing their daily tasks. The paper revealed how fundamental values and principles of public administration produce good governance in Zululand, for example transparency, accountability, fairness, developmental oriented are some of the values and principles that promote effective governance in Zululand district municipality. In conclusion, it appears that Zululand district municipality (ZDM) significantly applies the code of ethics, the values, and the principles of public administration as they are stipulated in the Constitution although they are implemented not in full capacity, according to the participants.

Key words: Constitutional values, public administration, local government

Introduction

Public administration as a set of the activities performed by public officials focuses on the management and implementation of the complete set of government activities on law implementation, regulations and government decisions and management providing public services, finance, health, education, sanitation, housing, and social security. Public administration delivers services using the principal legislation (Ijeoma, Nzewi & Sibanda, 2013). Coetzee (2012), indicates that public administration is a wide-ranging and distinctive area of activity, comprising several public officials operating in public institutions, providing goods and services in the community's interests. These activities or functions can be classified into three groups:

- The generic administrative activities or tasks of policymaking, financing, organising, staffing, determining work procedures and creating control means;
- Functional activities peculiar to precise services, including education, nursing, public works, or defence; and
- The auxiliary functions, such as decision-making, data processing, planning, programming, and communication, are obligatory to simplify or accelerate executing the generic administrative functions and the functional activities (Coetzee, 2012).

In South Africa, public administration is based on its government system with three spheres, indicating the national, provincial, and local sphere. Similar to other states, South Africa, has a fundamental body of principles and laws governing the country, such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Brynard, 2015). Section 195 of the Constitution of RSA (1996) conditions that public administration must be governed by a set of democratic values and principles applied to administration in all spheres of government, organs of state, and public enterprises. National legislation must promote these values and principles (RSA Constitution, 1996). The practice of public administration is highly action oriented as it brings administrative and political participants to the forefront and tests constitutional values for implementation (Sebola, 2018).

Moreover, according to The Citizen (2020), there has been over 10 violent service delivery protests in Zululand between 2016 and 2020. These protests occur in various areas within the district, with some directly by the district municipality. These protests occur in multiple locations and at different times, but they have similar traits. Citizens complain about the insufficient service provision, inadequate financial administration and management, alleged corruption, and inadequate governance. Zululand district encounter challenges, such as maladministration, corruption, and service delivery backlogs, leading to service delivery protests mostly violent, encompassing illegal acts of vandalism. Residents accuse municipal authorities of not following their constitutional obligations regarding governance and service delivery. Reports from news publications, such as The Citizen (2020), Excelsior (2020), and Zululand Observer (2019), remark that Zululand encountered more service delivery protests than any district municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province in the past five years. Citizens claim municipal officials are not following their constitutional obligation by promoting and enforcing the fundamental values and principles of public administration.

Furthermore, the 2016 Auditor-General (AG) report also discloses rural-based municipalities' challenges, such as Zululand, include inadequate skills and inadequate accountability, while local government is observed as the entry-level for self-enrichment. Hence, this paper evaluates whether Zululand District and its local municipalities practice the democratic values and principles of public administration as stipulated in the Constitution and how they implement them to improve governance and service delivery. The public administration activity is intensely action-oriented, significant for governmental and political leaders while assessing fundamental principles for enforcement (Sebola, 2018). Public administration practice was stagnant in shifting cultural values and political trends; the material needed consistency with these complexities. Public administration increased in size, structure, and obligations substantially from the former; therefore, public administration is a complex environment where values and ethics are maintained with difficulty (Curry, 2014).

It is practising public administration where diverse unethical decisions are made, although the theory is learnt in the discipline, in opposition to known decisions. Constitutional principles are broken without reasonable justification in administrative and political terms. The lack of ethics and principles by public authorities has undermined not only politics and administrative issues but also the legal and ethical concerns (Sebola, 2018). Zululand established this since the area had frequent community protests regarding service delivery, governance, and alleged corruption. Rural municipalities, such as in Zululand, still encounter several challenges regarding public administration and service delivery.

This paper attempted to evaluate Zululand district municipality (ZDM) and its local municipalities' on how they promote and enforce the fundamental values and principles of public administration in their daily operations and how they use these values and principles to improve governance and service delivery. The paper considered steps to enable the South African public service to enhance ethical compliance between government officials and government agencies, public properties, policies, and resources management at an institutional level.

Literature review

Values and principles are essential in a democratic state.

The RSA's Constitution (1996) remarks that the Republic is a single, sovereign, democratic state with distinct national, provincial, and local government domains interdependent and interrelated. The RSA Constitution (1996) further specifies that the norms and principles regulate public administration in Section 195(1) of the Constitution and government administration in all spheres of government. The Constitution mandates that the Republic's government be effective, transparent, responsible, and coherent to ensure the people's well-being and gradual realisation of their fundamental rights (the RSA Constitution, 1996).

In exploring the significance of values and principles in a democratic state, Muller and Cassim (2014) observe them as related ideas. Values and principles of public administration are about the real-world application of ethical standards in governance. Zikhali (2005) emphasises that values reflect universal beliefs that a specific norm of action or state of life is superior to an opposing mode of actions or state existence, personally or socially. Those values and principles involve an aspect of judgement because they hold a person's opinions on what is true and desirable. The human is the only living being capable of distinguishing between noble and evil or correct and incorrect. The term value, therefore, means the definition of what is appropriate by the human (African Union, 2011).

According to Masango and Mfene (2017), values have substance and sound qualities. The content attribute indicates it is essential to have a code of conduct or end-state life. The attribute of strength determines just how critical it is. Values are a customary practice for organisations in the public and private sectors. Of paramount importance is that institutions follow a set of values and principles in their conduct (Masango & Mfene, 2017). Zikhali (2005) indicates that the values' presence and importance must be understood in the public authorities, under varying conditions. Principles are essential and solid, derived from values and norms (Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009). They are simple human behavioural guidelines shown to have long-standing and standing validity. According to Levin (2018), values and principles support choices and empower persons to consider and make informed decisions about diverse situations. Fox (2010) believes that values need to be part of the product of experience, which often has a historical background. A significant portion of the value relates to an individual's experiences.

According to the Public Service Commission (PSC) (2020), the democratic values enshrined in the South African Constitution relate to South African history. They were implemented because of the injustices during the apartheid era and the struggle against apartheid. Section 195 of the country's Constitution outlines South Africa's democratic values and the principles for public administration. The preamble remarks that the Constitution is adopted as the supreme law of the land, designed to ensure that South Africa is a country where all its people are equal before the law, with equal access to services (RSA Constitution, 1996). Masango and Mfene (2017) further add that the values of the Constitution intend to promote and enhance social cohesion among the individuals and population groups within the society. According to Theletsane (2014), the creation and successful implementation of democratic political structures require the formation of fair public administrators, discouraging political partisanship while respecting the complex beliefs and desires of their societies. Molina and McKeown (2012) agree that to advance democracy in South Africa, the government and public officials need to uphold the principles of the Constitution in their daily tasks and handle people in a dignified, non-racial, and non-sexist manner, demonstrating respect for human rights. South Africa is a constitutional democracy requiring the rule of law and accountability, responsiveness, and transparency by the government (PSC, 2020).

In conducting its constitutional mandate according to the principles outlined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution (1996), Public Administration should advance democracy by promoting and respecting the values of the Constitution. In the rendering of public services and the administration of the public sector, these democratic values should always prevail. How the services are provided should not be affected by the political affiliation of the service provider or the recipient of the service. Political affiliations should be irrelevant (Theletsane, 2014).

The practice of fundamental values and principles of public administration in South Africa.

According to Matsiliza (2013), an independent, normative (value) structure to which all South Africans must adhere and where all South Africans must live is provided by the principles expressed in Section 195 of the Constitution. Beyond meritocracy, it describes the essence of a South African civil servant who respects ideals and beliefs, executing their daily obligations. Regarding the values and principles of public administration, the RSA Constitution (1996) set the basis for fairness, equity, and social justice. The South African public service focuses on creating an effective environment and policy structure to strengthen and discuss inequities and divergences in providing services, especially in historically deprived South African communities (Muller & Cassim, 2014).

A public service that would provide efficient public governance with equal and valued equity, facilitating performance, was universally inclusive, neutral and independently prepared by the Constitution of the RSA (1996). The Government of National Unity had an idea, “to continually improve the lives of the people of South Africa through a transformed Public Service which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all” (Danver, 2013).

According to the RSA Constitution, the Public Service Commission (PSC) exists to;

to promote the values and principles set out in section 195, throughout the public service; to investigate, monitor and evaluate the organisation and administration, and the personnel practices, of the public service; to propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the public service; to give directions aimed at ensuring that personnel procedures relating to recruitment, transfers, promotions and dismissals comply with the values and principles set out in section 195; to report in respect of its activities and the performance of its functions, including

any finding it may make and directions and advice it may give, and to provide an evaluation of the extent to which the values and principles set out in section 195 are complied with; and either of its own accord or on receipt of any complaint— (i) to investigate and evaluate the application of personnel and public administration practices, and to report to the relevant executive authority and legislature; (ii) to investigate grievances of employees in the public service concerning official acts or omissions, and recommend appropriate remedies; (iii) to monitor and investigate adherence to applicable procedures in the public service; and (iv) to advise national and provincial organs of state regarding personnel practices in the public service, including those relating to the recruitment, appointment, transfer, discharge and other aspects of the careers of employees in the public service and to exercise or perform the additional powers or functions prescribed by an Act of Parliament.

The RSA Constitution (1996) presents a vision of service focus and dedication to providing all South Africans with high-quality services concerning the values and principles of public administration. Service provision in South Africa should, therefore, be unbiased. Service provision should be described as a response to the needs of the people and be compassionate and respectful to the public. The Constitution (1996) specifies that all government workers, regardless of colour, gender, or status, need equal labour standards. Public service is necessary to enhance the service delivery to the South African community in a sustainable (efficient, economical, and fair) way.

According to Danver (2013), this is a major departure from the practices and principles followed by the civil sector in South Africa before 1994. Thebe (2017) believed that practising fundamental values and principles of public administration in South Africa is vague. The political placement without suitable political education and training is the cause of incompetent human resources, mismanagement of financial administration, and poor management within the government. The fundamental values and principles of public administration lay a solid foundation for equality, equity, and social justice in the South African public service (Addison, 2011). The values and principles of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) provide a vision of service orientation and commitment to providing high-quality services to all South Africans. According to this document, service delivery in South Africa ought to be affected in an unbiased and impartial manner. Gordon (2010) emphasises that service delivery is to be characterised by responsiveness to the needs of the public—one of the nine values and principles of public administration.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) also remarks on the need for fair labour practices for all public servants, despite race, gender, or class. Moth (2014) commends the stunning work of the South African government and its Constitution in ensuring this by establishing support institutions. These support institutions ensure that institutions—especially public institutions, comply with all the constitutional compulsions. These support institutions include The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), the Human Rights Commission, the commission for gender equality, and the Public Protector. Mokhethi (2017) adds that these institutions have a constitutional obligation to protect the people of South Africa from any form of discrimination or unfair practices. With the notion of accountability, public sector institutions have guidelines detailing how important it is for servants in the South African public service, to be honest and accountable. Public sector institutions and their employees are informed about the obligation to expose, explain, and justify actions (Muswede & Thipa, 2017).

The South African government contends that public servants in South Africa ought to be guided by an ethos of service delivery. Public servants ought to be committed to promoting service delivery in an unbiased and impartial manner. This is important considering the exclusion policy under the previous government in South Africa (Cox III, 2017).

Nekati (2015) believes that in all three spheres of government, but municipalities, the ideals of administrative justice should be associated with the structure of democratic governance in South Africa regarding community participation. Christopher (2015) continues, “Community participation is an essential component or principle as far as relevant and basic service delivery is concerned”. A responsive, transparent, and accountable municipality avoids service delivery protests. Service quality protests arise when the population of a region expressed its frustration with the mode and measure where public services are delivered, remaining in South Africa for an extensive period (The Citizen, 2020).

The practice of fundamental values and principles of public administration in local government

Binza (2012) remarks that with ratifying the 1996 Constitution, local government in South Africa began a new era. The Constitution established a wall-to-wall local government system for the first time in history, requiring municipalities to be constituted over the entire territory of the Republic (Binza, 2012). The Constitution of RSA (1996) indicates that South African local government has these objectives:

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- Ensure service delivery to people in a sustainable manner;
- Encourage social and economic growth;
- Encourage a safe and healthy environment; and
- Promote the participation of the public and their organisations in the matters of local government.

According to SALGA (2021), South Africa's local government is divided into eight metropolitan municipalities, representing the country's eight most populated and industrialised areas. Outside of urban regions, the local government mandate is conducted through a two-tier system, with 228 local municipalities divided into 44 district municipalities, sharing the functional competencies outlined in the Constitution's Schedules 4B and 5B. The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 establishes a division of responsibility between the district and the local municipality (SALGA, 2021). SALGA (2021) further adds that the Constitution allows municipalities to regulate the local government affairs of their community on their own initiative. This paper focused on fundamental values and principles of public administration in one district municipality, Zululand. Zululand comprises five local municipalities. Since local government is autonomous, how do we know that, as a public sector institution, they maintain public ethics within their operations?

Brynard (2015) believes that municipalities need to attempt—within their financial and administrative dimensions, to accomplish these objectives. For local government to be effective, they need to *meet all* these objectives. To meet the above aims, local government and its entities and employees need to adhere to Section 195 of the South African Constitution. Motubatse, Ngwakwe, Sebola (2017) insist that a municipality must aim to attain these goals within its financial and administrative potential. A municipality needs to accomplish all these goals to succeed. Local government and its organisations and workers must adhere to Section 195 of the South African Constitution to accomplish the above goals (Motubatse, Ngwakwe, & Sebola, 2017).

Molina and McKeown (2012) conclude that the values and principles of public administration serve as a guide for municipalities. These values and principles promote efficient, effective, and cost-effective resource management while assisting municipalities in determining if service provision is conducted within its scope and the constraints of resources. Services must be provided in a legal and ethically acceptable manner (Molina & McKeown, 2012).

Research Methodology

This paper employed a qualitative research method in the collection and interpretation of data. The qualitative research method was employed in order to evaluate thorough the level of implementing constitutional values and principles of public administration in Zululand. This paper and its findings are descriptive, comprising the participants' verbal expressions about practising democratic values and principles of public administration in Zululand. The data was qualitatively analysed by narrating the opinions, and perceptions of participants.

The targeted location for this paper was the Zululand district in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Zululand comprises of five local municipalities, indicating eDumbe, Bhekuzulu, Ulundi, Nongoma, and uPhongolo. This study initially targeted a mayor and a municipal manager of each of the five local municipalities within Zululand, heads of departments from ZDM. The paper however presents the findings of municipal officials, because politicians were unable to participate in the process of data collections. All targeted participants hold a significant function in Zululand district, the paper initially targeted 42 participants (mayors and municipal officials), however, only 35 municipal officials were able to participate, mayors were unable to participate. Moreover, A purposive, non-probability sampling was used to select municipal officials which include municipal managers and heads of the departments. Primary data were collected through structured interviews with the municipal managers and heads of the departments (HODs) in ZDM. Data were analysed based on themes emanated from interview questions as they are presented below.

Presentation and discussion of findings from municipal officials

After conducting structured interviews with municipal officials, the responses were independently sorted through the analysis of the results. The results were analysed based on research questions as they are presented below. When sorting the answers, the statements projecting similar ideas were grouped according to different themes. The first question was on their understanding of the concept of public administration and the participants from various local municipalities within the Zululand district responded:

"It is the management of state resources for the benefit of the society. It is about ensuring that service delivery is at the best interest of the public through proper utilisation of public funds".

It was crucial for the researcher to get the understanding from the participants especially because there has been various report of maladministration in this municipality. Coetzee (2012) supports this statement, by defining public administration as a wide-ranging and distinctive area of activity comprising public officials operating in public institutions and providing goods and services in the community's interests.

A municipal official from Zululand added:

"Public administration is a platform for them to serve their communities the best way they know-how. It requires them to be aware of society and look after it, prioritizing individuals and their communities' progress and well-being, integrity, sensitivity, empathy and foresight".

Understanding Section 195 of the South African Constitution.

The second question that was posed to participants was based on their understanding of Section 195 of the RSA Constitution. Participants observed this section of the Constitution as a set of public sector guidelines.

“These are guidelines that are intended for public officials, and they regulate how public officials should conduct themselves in the performance of their duties within public institutions. All public servants, whether in local, provincial or national government, should follow and duly comply with these guidelines”, one participant mentioned.

“Section 195 of the RSA Constitution, beyond meritocracy, describes the essence of a South African civil servant who not only respects ideals and beliefs but also executes his/her everyday obligations consequently. The values and principles of public administration set basis for fairness, equity and social justice”, another participant added.

Participants understood Section 195 of the RSA Constitution. The responses correspond with Matsiliza (2013), indicating that an independent, normative (value) structure that South Africans need to adhere to and where all South Africans must live is provided by the principles expressed in Section 195 of the Constitution. Moreover, Section 195 of the RSA Constitution provides values and principles supporting public administration in South Africa. According to Levin (2018), values and principles support choices, empowering individuals to consider and make informed decisions about diverse situations and act to advance democracy. In the rendering of public services and the administration of the public sector, these democratic values should always prevail.

Promoting and enforcing the democratic values and principles of public administration by the municipality.

The third question was based on the promotion and enforcement of the constitutional democratic values and principles of public administration in their municipality. The Public Administration Management Act (PAMA) (2014) emphasises the importance of promoting and enforcing the values and principles enshrined in Section 195 of the Constitution. The RSA Constitution (1996) Section 195, Sub-section 2 remarks that the values and principles embodied in Section 195, Sub-Section 1 apply to administration in every sphere of government; organs of state; and public enterprises. As local government administrations, the local municipalities within Zululand, according to participants, follow their constitutional obligations of promoting and enforcing the democratic values and principles of public administration.

Participants responded as follows:

“The Zululand district promotes and maintains high standard of professional ethics, promotes efficient, economic and effective use of resources. Municipal services, both at local and at district level are provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias. When I say ‘local’ I’m referring to all five local municipalities within the district”.

“In this municipality, the needs of the residents are well responded to and public participation is highly encouraged for the improvement of service delivery”.

“Zululand has mechanism for ensuring transparency and accountability, both at local levels and at district level. Our audit reports can vouch for us. Chief, I can assure you that our district is indeed guided Section 195 of the RSA Constitution in its operation”.

“As a municipality we have risk management and auditing, as well as fraud prevention and anti-corruption measures to ensure that a high standard of professional ethics in our municipality is promoted and maintained”.

“In my professional capacity as an accounting officer of this municipality, I ensure that this municipality promotes and maintains a high standard of professional ethics by reporting corruption, investigating financial misconduct, staff screening and financial interest declaration, having staff restrictions on conducting business with the municipality, and getting authorisation for remunerated activities, of staff, outside of their contractual obligations”.

“As public servants, we are guided by the Constitution in the execution of our municipal duties. We adhere to the values and principles given in section 195 of the Constitution and we continuously strive towards the improvement in the practices of these values on a daily basis in variety of ways”.

This was a compelling argument that the municipality promotes and enforces the democratic values and principles of public administration as they are entrenched in the constitution. These findings are supported by the literature, where Ijeoma *et al.*; (2013) remark how South Africa progressed by implementing the values and principles of public administration in developing the country and providing for its people.

Implementing the values and principles of public administration to improve governance and service delivery.

The fourth question, participants were questioned on how local ZDM and the district municipality employ/implement the values and principles of public administration to improve governance and service delivery. Participants responded as follows:

“As a municipality we promote liberty, non-racialism, and democracy in order to build communities. We, as a municipality strive at developing a democratic culture in which tolerance, openness, and free expression flourish. We have the legitimacy, accountability, and credibility, in which municipal officials become true servants of the people they serve”.

“Our municipality promotes equity in society by creating and sustaining an atmosphere that promotes economic growth and development, restores law and order and instilling respect for security, public law, and order in order to combat violence, crime, and corruption within our territory”.

“As an accounting officer of this municipality, I ensure that resources are allocated to programs that provide the most value for money and are implemented in accordance with local government objectives. I also make sure that the municipality is getting inputs at suitable prices through proper Supply Chain Management practices”.

“All operations of this municipal are guided by the provisions of the Constitution, national legislation, provincial legislation, and by-laws, which provide the basis for effective governance”.

“The ZDM uses or implements the values and principles of public administration in conjunction with relevant legislations such as the MFMA, municipal structures act and, more in particular, the Local Government Municipal Systems Act”.

Moreover, study participants further highlighted the importance of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act and how it is used in ZDM to enhance the provision of services.

They indicated that municipal systems acts intends to:

“To establish the basic concepts, procedures and processes necessary to allow municipalities to develop towards local community social and economic elevation, and to provide universal access to affordable vital services”.

“To provide for the exercise and performance of municipal authorities and functions”.

“To provide for public participation”.

“Providing a foundation for local public administration and development of human resources”.

“Develop the support, monitoring and standard-setting framework for other government spheres so that local governments progressively establish themselves as an efficient, forward-load development agency able to integrate all levels of government's activities in order to enhance social and economic overall communities in harmony with its natural local environment”.

A municipal official commented that:

“What guide our service standard is our knowledge and well implementation of legislations relevant to the public service. Legislation such as the Public Service Act of 1994, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (WTPSD) of 1995, the White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery (WTPSD) of 1997 (the Batho Pele principles), the Public Service Regulations of 1999, the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999 and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act of 2000”.

The above is maintained by Damon (2015) who avowed that:

Post-apartheid, South African municipalities have transformed their ethical infrastructure and integrity system to promote good behaviour through legal framework. This includes the Public Finance Management Act of 1999, the Public Administration Management Act of 2014, the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act of 2004, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act of 2000, and the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000.

The findings presented above revealed that municipal officials implement constitutional values and principles as their daily guidelines towards ensuring effective service delivery in ZDM.

Development-oriented activities by the municipality.

The fifth question was about how they ensure that activities of their respective municipalities are development-oriented and participants responded as follows:

“Zululand District consists of local municipality such as UPhongolo, Nongoma, uLundi, Abaqulusi and Dumbe. These local municipalities are supported financially by the district. The Zululand district municipality ensures the redistribution of resources to all its local municipalities timeously, also assist these local municipalities to provide services to the people and sustain the provision of services in their areas”.

“We develop and support sustainable local economic development, with a focus on tourism development and involving the youth and the vulnerable”.

“In ensuring that activities within the district are development orientated, the Zululand district municipality has a local economic development (LED) office. All local municipalities within the district also have their own LED offices. The existence of these LED offices is to develop the local economies through the implementation of proper economic development initiatives”.

“As officials, we constantly update citizens about the services available within the municipality. The Zululand district municipality also provide support to local municipalities through cooperation with local municipalities; also assist local municipalities to promote social and economic development”.

“Since we came into office in 2016, we have been responsible for basic services that support human well-being and economic progress. We have redefined the importance of promoting economic and social development. Each financial year, a big chunk of the budget goes towards economic and social development initiatives. Our main budget priorities include infrastructure development, LED programmes, water supply, education, health, sanitation, and agriculture”.

“As a municipality, in ensuring that our activities are development-oriented, we are guided by the Integrated Development Planning (IDP). The IDP is a five-year strategic plan for future social and economic development of the municipality. It is a mechanism that involves both the municipality and the citizens in finding a solution in achieving the long-term objectives. Since IDP looks at social and economic development therefore ZDM uses IDP to create jobs for local citizens, provision of infrastructure and service delivery”.

A participant added:

“We further the development of our municipality by forming collaborations with local businesses and non-profit organisations that can help accomplish developmental goals, enhancing community development capacities and public engagement capacity”.

There are different strategies that were mentioned by participants as a way of ensuring development in their district, such as the use of IDP, budget, partnerships with businesses and NGOs and public participation. These findings are supported by Addison (2011) maintains that the mobilisation of all society stakeholders behind the development goal is another crucial aspect of development orientation. This involves forming partnerships with the business sector and putting development in the hands of communities so they may take charge of their progress. It involves encouraging patriotism and general goodwill among the private sector and community stakeholders.

Enforcing and encouraging municipal public participation.

Participants were also probed about the enforcement of public participation, and the following responses were provided:

“Public participation is a crucial aspect in municipal service delivery. In our municipality, public participation is stimulated through the design of flexible programs that involve citizens more in in-service design, delivery, evaluation, and governance of projects/service delivery”.

“We enforce public participation by enhancing and redesigning the municipality’s authority frameworks, processes, rules, and culture to make it more responsive and by empowering municipal officials to be change agents in their communities by creating an organisational culture that ensures officials are in tune with their communities”.

“As municipal officials we frequently organise community meetings and Imbizos for the people to voice their opinions in matters of public interest”.

“Since we now live in a digitalised world, as a municipality we have taken advantage of media and digital communication and use it to facilitate and promote public participation. We make use of modern communication methods such as social media and internet surveys to promote public participation”.

A participant added:

“As a municipality, we use ward committees to facilitate and encourage public participation. Our municipality also has Community Development Workers who work with the ward committees to carefully provide vital information that community and governmental organizations should gain”.

This was a standard answer provided by over ten participants interviewed. This shows that this is regarded as the most effective way to ensure effective service delivery in the district. The literature supporting these findings include the PSC (2008) report, mentioning that ward committees and community development workers are great facilitators of public participation in each municipality.

Impartial and fair service provision within the municipality.

The participants were further asked about the impartial and fair provision of services, some participants responded as follows:

“As municipal officials, provision of services, in a fair and equitable manner, is our core mandate. In ensuring this, we conduct proper research surveys and feasibility studies of the area as well as the type of services that are needed and then draft a proper budget allocation that will assist in fulfilling this duty”.

“The needs of the people are met through targeting of services and eligibility criteria to see if they're equitable. This municipality ensures impartial, fair and equitable resource allocation to various groups and geographic areas. To further ensure impartiality, fairness and equitability, our municipality makes necessary changes to policy, budgets, and administrative procedures. Administrative decision-making procedures are laid-out and compared to PAJA and other pertinent legislation”.

“As a municipality, we are conscious of the people's needs and strive to reflect our communities' aspirations. We are dedicated to taking responsible and accountable actions, promoting racial harmony through tolerance and care; and protecting our citizens. As a municipality, we provide infrastructure and municipal services to all, with a focus on rural communities, in a sustainable and fair manner”.

“Municipal officials constantly engage with community members and ward councillors to identify services that are needed in the community and then work towards the provision of those services”.

The responses from the municipal officials from various municipalities across Zululand indicates that with service provision, people are treated equally and with respect, regardless of their gender, race, age, or political affiliation.

Transparency and accountability within the municipality.

Proceeding with evaluating the implementation of constitutional values and principles of Public Administration in ZDM, municipal officials were asked during the interview session on how they ensure accountability and transparency in their respective municipalities. They mentioned various ways to ensure transparency and accountability within Zululand. Participants responses are presented below:

“The district municipality and its local municipalities have a variety of ways of ensuring transparency and accountability. This includes regular communication with stakeholders and the people, publicising memos, cases, minutes of meetings and outcomes”.

“This municipality ensures transparency by sharing relevant information with the citizens. The municipality has a multitude of ways (both online and offline) for community members to obtain information.

These include municipal website and information boards. Holding an annual general meeting (AGM), which offers different stakeholders the opportunity to assemble, learn about previous year's municipal operations and finances and to raise questions is another method that we use to ensure transparency and accountability”.

“In order to ensure transparency and accountability and to put people’s minds at ease about any corruption allegations, forensic investigations have been implemented in our municipality. When we took over this municipality in 2016, we realised that there was a lot of corruption going on. We knew we had to work hard to bring about change in this place, till this day we continue to work hard for our people”.

“As a municipality we regularly host workshops and trainings for our employees on the importance of transparency and accountability”.

“Officials of this are always asked and are always expected to account for their actions or actions within their respective departments and they do, as it is reflected in our audit reports. Officials do provide information about decisions and actions, explain and justify decisions and actions, exercise discretion, accept responsibility for these, disclose the results in a transparent manner, and, most importantly, understand that failure to meet duties and commitments has consequences”.\

“I know when people talk about transparency, they always focus on financial matters. To show transparency in our financial activities as a municipality we always publicise our overall budget and publicise how financial resources are being spent”.

“We guarantee transparency and accountability by reporting on the regularity and effectiveness of the use, including own activities and actions, of public monies. We always welcome audits and publicly publish audit findings and recommendations, unless specific laws and regulations render them private. Additionally, we report on the follow up actions taken with respect to audit recommendations”.

The above results indicate that transparency and accountability have profound implications for good governance. Good governance is inseparable from accountability (Coetzee, 2018). Cloete and Mokgoro (1995) postulate that the original meaning of accountability is to be answerable for one's behaviour/ actions or inaction. Public accountability implies the obligation resting on each public functionary to act in the public interest and in accordance with his or her conscience, with solutions for every matter based on professionalism and participation, and development as the safety measure. In a constitutional democracy, public accountability means that politicians and officials should show responsibility by accounting to the very public on the way they execute the authority and responsibilities entrusted to them.

Good human resource management and career-development practices within the municipality.

The last question that was posed to participants was with regards to good human resource management and career-development practices, the participants remarked the following:

“Our human-resource management and career-development practices, as a municipality, are guided by relevant South African legislations such as the basic conditions of employment act, the employment equity act, the labour relations act, the skills development act and many others”.

“The Zululand district municipality, like any other public institution, is guided by relevant legislations such as the Basic Conditions of employment Act and Labour Relations Act”.

“The Zululand district municipality regularly organises Career workshops for its employees. The purpose

of these workshops is to enable officials to identify and analyse problems in public administration, develop solutions to those and act professionally. These workshops help employees to be able to interpret and apply the principles underlying administrative justice, for example fairness, real estate, and so on, and to provide information about norms and values that promote democratic public administrative management”.

“As a municipality we ensure good career-development practices by providing subsidies to employees who want to further their studies and providing rewards and performance management bonuses. We also ensure good human-resource management practices by ensuring that the selection processes are fair, transparent and within the bounds of the law. All the nepotism allegations that people always make against our municipality are not true”.

“The municipality enhances employee capacities by professionalizing essential jobs and implementing a coordinated career development plan. Analytical capabilities are being built into institutional capacities. The municipality require excellent analytical talents to establish policies, devise programs, and plan execution (financial modelling, policy analysis, evaluation, strategic planning, organisational development, process design)”.

“I think it is also important to mention that as a municipality we strive for human resource capacity development through education and training of municipal personnel to a level that allows the municipality to perform its tasks in an efficient, quality, collaborative, and accountable way”.

“As a municipality, we do not strive only strive for good human-resource management within the municipality, but we also provide career-development opportunities to the people that we serve, the community. We provide learner ships and internships for youth, give youth an opportunity to do computer studies, provide students with academic fees for registration in higher institution after completing their matric”.

“In South Africa, as the law states, a public servant is motivated by a set of values and a responsibility to serve his/her fellow citizens, the municipality renders no exception. Upon joining the municipality, a candidate is expected to be prepared for a long-term career and participate in a structured training and development programs. The municipality has a career system that is designed to systematically create pools of skills and to promote candidates preferentially from a pool of people who possess functional as well as generic management competencies to enhance performance”.

“Municipal employees are encouraged to develop their own career capacities by taking up postgraduate studies and to also register for online courses at the National School of Government to expand their knowledge of the public service”.

The PAMA (2014) also outlines the function of the National School of Governance in ensuring that the values and principles are gradually realised in the quality, scope, and effect of human resource capacity development in institutions through education and training. These responses confirm that ZDM cultivates good human resource management and career-development practices to maximise human capital. Local municipalities and the district municipality are constantly developing staff skills, maximising employees, and increasing staff productivity.

Conclusion

The paper aimed to evaluate if the ZDM and its Category B municipalities practice the democratic values and principles of public administration as stipulated in the Constitution and how such municipalities implement them to improve governance and service delivery. This paper provided vivacity to some principles enshrined in the Constitution. Facts were presented on how applying fundamental values and principles of public administration produces good governance in Zululand. The public sector significantly applies the code of ethics, the values, and the principles of public administration. Conversely, applying the values and principles of public administration in Zululand is at a low level, according to the participants. Evidence was presented on how the district municipality provides its utmost support to its local municipalities in ensuring good governance and improved service delivery. For a municipality to thrive, it must be supported by values contributing to creating an environment conducive to its consolidation. Such values should not merely remain on paper, not affecting how people live or how government institutions conduct their mandates. The government, at all levels, should constantly encourage public officials to share democratic values and provide services to society. In a municipality, a wide range of political party affiliations and interest groups is beneficial because it allows for a more thorough examination of the decisions and policies of the administration; however, in a constitutional democracy, all manifestations of variety must be submissive to the Constitution.

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