

# ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN PROMOTING EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY: EVIDENCE FROM eTHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL

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## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates ethical leadership in promoting efficient service delivery in the eThekwini Municipality situated in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. eThekwini is one of the 11 districts of KwaZulu-Natal, and is a metropolitan municipality established in 2000. Ethical leadership is viewed as central to effective service delivery by public institutions, a role that is described as acting in the citizens' interest at all times, and it is against this backdrop that this research paper aims at examining and understanding ethical leadership in promoting efficient service delivery using the case of eThekwini Municipality.

A qualitative research approach, using semi-structured interviews with employees in the Finance Department and Supply Chain Department in eThekwini Municipality is undertaken, with thematic analysis used to analyse data. The study findings revealed that the issue of political influence was considered to be the most prevalent ethical challenge in the Municipality. The study also found that

there is a strong connection between ethical leadership and service delivery. The study concludes that unethical leadership practices have glaring implications for service delivery. Subsequently, the study provides feasible recommendations, which may be applied in the public sector to institutionalise ethical leadership and consequently improve service delivery.

**Keywords:** Ethical leadership, Service delivery, Good governance, eThekwini Municipality.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Deen (2013), ethical leadership is leadership that is motivated by moral convictions, in which individual leaders behave in accordance with the ideals and guidelines of good governance. Chapter 10 of the 1996 South African Constitution (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution) states that a "high level of professional ethics should be established and sustained" in the public sector. According to Govender and Reddy (2019), this appears not to be the case worldwide, since public officials

present a self-centred attitude that jeopardises public positions. Mbandlwa, Dorasamy and Fagbadebo (2020:2497) make the bold assertion that unethical conduct among public institutions is a global concern that adversely affects public services.

There are presently 278 municipalities in South Africa. These are in charge of offering the general public services including public transport, roads, healthcare, and sanitation, among other things (Reddy, 2016). The public's discontent with municipalities' service delivery persists despite the reasonable number of informed municipalities, and this is ascribed to unethical conduct. The eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, which was established in 2000 and includes the South African metropolis of Durban and other municipalities, is the subject of this paper. One of the KwaZulu-Natal's eleven districts is eThekweni.

An example of misconduct is a report to the KwaZulu-Natal Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, which stated that only three of the fourteen basic services were met by eThekweni Municipality (hereafter referred to as EM) (Govender & Reddy, 2019). Corruption is one of the unethical practices that is pervasive in South African public institutions, and is the reason that most of these basic services are not being met effectively. The controversies involving unethical behaviour in a number of public organisations serve as evidence of this (Naidoo, 2012).

In addition to corruption, the municipality's demise is being caused by an increasingly burdensome bureaucracy of rules and concerns about policy compliance (Deen, 2013). Therefore, the research's goal is to investigate

how ethical leadership contributes to effective service delivery, with a focus on the EM case study.

This research supports ethical leadership, which leads to sound governance and facilitates the provision of effective services. Through its examination of the subject of ethics, which is pertinent to public administration, the study adds to the corpus of knowledge by improving the comprehension of responsible governance and ethical leadership, especially in relation to the local institutions under investigation. Other scholars looking into the relationship between ethical leadership and effective service delivery in public organisations might use this study as a reference. The introduction is followed by an explanation of the background and literature on South African communities, the methodology used and finally the results and discussion. Conclusions are then drawn showing that the informal sector influences sustainable livelihoods favourably based on empirical evidence.

## **ETHICAL LEADERSHIP CONTEXT: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

According to Moeng (2019:11), ethical leadership is founded in the observance of appropriate behaviours, norms, and acts that set the tone for subordinates and impact the way they behave, deliberate, and follow ethics in carrying out their tasks. Ethics describes what is ethically right and wrong. According to Reichard, Ellis, Powers, Walker and Priest (2021), ethical leadership is the activity in which leaders are required to carry out their tasks ethically while adhering to the rules of practice of their respective organisations. Ethical leadership scales (ELS) were also

designed to assess leaders' responsibility, transparency, and morality (de Hoogh & den Hartog, 2008, in Tjosvold & Wisse; Resick, Martin, Keating, Dickson, Kwan & Peng, 2006).

Leaders and great men are born, according to Bhana and Sachin Suknunan (2022), not created. Early thinkers thought that leaders were born with both mental and physical qualities that separated them from non-leaders, according to Shakeel, Kruyen and van Thiel (2019). Trait theory holds that leadership qualities cannot be inherited or taught. Jenkins identifies charisma as a critical component of experience-based or learned efficacy traits (Reichard *et al.*, 2021). Leadership is a position that differentiates a person from the crowd; and a leader is responsible for achieving an institution's goals (Uslu, 2019). The trait hypothesis is concerned with the characteristics that a leader possesses. Trait theorists are concerned with personality traits and characteristics. A leader with these characteristics may sustain ethical ideals as he or she strives for organisational success (Uslu, 2019). The purpose of municipal officials is to ensure effective service delivery to the people in their areas.

The characteristic hypothesis has its detractors. According to Rajah (2016), the list of attributes is not universal and fails to take into account other aspects that impact leadership. This restricts its ability to be influential in all situations. Furthermore, the theory does not provide a comparative study of the various characteristics. As a result, it is unsuitable for identifying a quality and efficient leader.

Contingency theorists say that a leader is at the forefront of the leader-subordinate

relationship, but situational theorists believe that subordinates have an essential part in defining the link. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership, according to the situational leadership model, which was initially proposed in 1969, and effective leaders must be able to adapt to changing situations and transition from a task-oriented to a relationship-oriented leadership style (Alhassan, 2023).

In contrast, contingency theory implies that in order to be efficient, the organisation must be consistent with other parts of the external environment. According to contingency theory, ethical leadership strategies are used to navigate how the government takes responsibility for service delivery, which defines their success.

This responsibility will ensure a high level of motivation, which will improve municipal production and satisfy the community via service delivery. Today municipalities are experiencing an epidemic of corruption. However, if the leader uses situational leadership and follows ethical guidelines, effective service delivery will be achieved.

A servant leader listens to his or her followers' needs and fosters their intellectual and independent growth. The servant leader also cares for and treats the impoverished equitably (Khan, Abdullah, Busari, Mubushar & Khan, 2020). Leaders in high-performing companies should serve the aims of the organisation rather than its members.

In contrast to earlier and current notions, transformational leadership requires integrating followers in processes or activities linked to personal considerations towards the

organisation and charting a route that would result in a higher social dividend (Ayodele, Haron & Ismail, 2019). Transformational leaders create the appearance that they are optimistic about the future.

Abbas and Ali (2023) define transactional leadership as a kind of leadership in which ties between leaders and followers are founded on various agreements. According to Khan, Abdullah, Busari, Mubushar and Khan (2020), the transactional method was founded on reciprocity, implying that leaders not only influence but are also influenced by their followers. Other research assert that transactional leadership has a disparity between the amount of leadership activity and the type of relationships of the followers.

The transactional theory's realisation of reciprocity is founded on the ethical ideals of honesty, fairness, and respect. Thus, it is critical for municipal leaders to develop working conditions that drive personnel, and these motivators will ensure that issues such as corruption are battled and removed in order to achieve service delivery.

As a result of the above, it is clear that theoretical frameworks are a crucial component in crafting and laying a basis for ethical leadership. They contribute to widening the reasoning and components necessary to expound on the value of ethical leadership in companies such as eThekweni Municipality (EM) in terms of service delivery.

Several theories have been presented for the delivery of public services, including the service delivery framework, social contract theory, decision theory, rational choice theory, public value theory, public choice

theory, and social exchange theory (van der Walddt, 2017). These theories also address the question of normative public sector ideals. Although all of the theories described above are significant to the notion of service delivery, the service delivery framework is viewed as the theory that most pertains to this subject. The provision of fundamental products and services is connected to municipal service delivery, which is why it is critical.

Alam, Fawzi, Islam and Said (2022) state that Hobbes (1651), in his study of the State of Nature, depicts service delivery as a state of continual struggle because people are self-centered in their natural condition, and Hobbes (1651) claims that they are exclusively motivated by selfish benefits. As a result of the survival of the fittest, there is no harmony or serenity in the nature. Hobbes (1651) believes that mankind is rational enough to construct a peaceful society in which they freely yield to an authority that can manage them and bring about peace. This is the social agreement. As explained by Ross, Matteson, Sasso and Peyton (2020), in Crawford (2019), a social compact determines the legitimacy of political power and the duties of rulers and subjects.

According to Bhana and Sachin (2022), people know what they desire and are consequently motivated to behave in the direction of achieving those objectives. Thus, in order for service delivery to be effective, it is necessary to discover what people require the most, as they will collaborate with municipal officials to achieve the specified goal. As a result, the rational choice theory is important because it promotes cooperation in achieving goals among municipal officials and residents.

The service delivery framework was established by Hagmann *et al.* (2002) based on their experience with change processes for service reform in a range of nations and circumstances. According to Hagmann *et al.* (2002), the framework is centred on the fundamental principle that service provision must follow a demand and supply cycle. To be effective, both the demand and supply systems must function well on their own, but they must also function well together.

## **ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

According to Musingafi and Mutsau (2017), service delivery is a tactic used by local, municipal or federal governments to provide residents with public services. Street cleaning, public education, health care, and the removal of waste and sewage are a few examples of public services. Taxes provide the majority or all of the funding for public services (van der Walddt, 2017). Public administration specialties such as health, education, home affairs, municipal government, and non-profit semi-state organisations frequently work in the public health sector (Ross, Matteson, Sasso & Peyton, 2020, in Crawford, 2019).

Any attempt to compare services across national borders shows that, depending on the nation, the public, private or nonprofit sectors can handle the same tasks (such as health care and education) (Musingafi & Mutsau, 2017). In many jurisdictions, public services may be operationally leased to private firms; nevertheless, the provision of these services may still be subject to public service requirements and tax support (Vining, Boardman & Poschmann, 2020).

While ethical leaders are valuable and desirable in the public sector, this does not guarantee that the public's expectations will be fulfilled. Leaders who prioritise the well-being of others over personal gain and abstain from embezzlement are morally upright. Puiu (2015:605) lists contributing factors to unethical behaviour in the public sector. The majority of South African political parties acknowledge that corrupt government practices stem from immoral leadership that presents itself as moral leaders who are immune from corruption. This research makes the case that the ethical leadership in politicians gaining support from the people cannot be equated with the provision of quality public services. Leaders may fail to deliver services to the people even if they are ethical and free from corruption.

An ethical leader will put the requirements of their followers before their personal interests. And yet even though they prioritise the requirements of the public and do not misappropriate public monies, they may still be unable to deliver services. Although ethical leadership theories are presented by, for example by Dion (2012), none of these explains how public services are delivered. People will choose unethical leaders if given the choice between unethical leaders who meet the needs of the general public and ethical leaders who have no idea how to perform public services. This means that the development of ethical leaders requires a plan that includes good governance, familiarity with governmental processes, awareness of public needs, and expertise in meeting these demands (Göçen, 2021:38).

If a leader cannot modify their views towards their followers, even with good leadership

principles, they will probably fight change. It is challenging to commit to a government project meant to enhance people's lives if one cannot change one's attitude and conduct. For the government to properly deliver services to the public, qualified persons with the right attitude are needed to do so (Metwally, Ruiz-Palomino, Metwally & Gartzia, 2019:2493).

The successful implementation of organisational transformation and the effective provision of public services are contingent upon the readiness of government leaders and staff to undergo change. This involves a shift in the perspectives and mentalities of government officials and staff. With an impact on millions, if not billions, of lives worldwide, the public sectors are the biggest suppliers of services. For governments to satisfy the needs of their population and operate efficiently, a few essential elements must exist.

Outlining the policy framework is vital to understanding the ethical leadership problems in South Africa. Municipalities have a framework for administering their legislative, political and administrative processes thanks to the South African Constitution, the White Paper on Local Government of 1998, and local government legislation (Naidoo 2011). Some of the laws that control how municipalities in South Africa operate include the Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act, the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (2000), the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2003), and the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act (2003).

Even with these in place, South African cities continue to experience instability because of

a lack of ethical leadership (Irwin, 2011). A person is not inherently ethical just because they make wonderful leaders. Bribery, corruption, and fraud are caused by a lack of leadership principles, claim Zondi and Pillay (2022). The South African corruption rate did not decrease since the previous year's poll, according to the Afrobarometer (2021) corruption study. South Africa received a score of 44 out of 100 (Statistics South Africa, 2017), meaning that more work has to be done before the nation receives a perfect score of 100. Additionally, according to Statistics South Africa (2017), 62% of South Africans thought corruption had risen, 24% thought it had decreased, and 14% said it had stayed the same.

Municipal administrators are the most corrupt in local government, according to the Corruption Watch Report (2021). According to Ncala (2021), the majority of South African municipalities suffer from a leadership crisis, which is the root cause of the perception that South African municipalities are corrupt.

In 2016, the advocacy and research group Good Governance in Africa (GGA) came to the conclusion that nine out of the ten worst performing municipalities in South Africa were located in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape (GGA, 2016:2). The study identified one of the contributing reasons as the lack of moral leadership on the part of municipal politicians, but it made no suggestions as to how to correct the issue (GGA, 2016).

Unethical leadership hampered the provision of essential public services including power and water, sanitation, rubbish collection, housing, medical facilities, and police

access. According to Shakeel, Kruyen and van Thiel (2019), KwaZulu-Natal municipalities' subpar performance was mostly caused by a lack of ethics in their leadership. However, in KwaZulu-Natal, 53 out of the 54 municipalities displayed financial inconsistencies, which led to adverse audit opinions and increased scrutiny. These issues stemmed from inadequate financial controls and irregular expenditure practices.

A study by Ayodele, Haron, and Ismail (2019) further reveals that eThekweni Municipality (EM) workers were allegedly avoiding payment of their invoices, exacerbating financial inefficiencies. Additionally, municipal officials were found to be in arrears, and there was no evidence of wages being withheld, further reflecting poor financial discipline and oversight, which means they have to undergo a certified audit. A study by Ayodele, Haron and Ismail (2019) reveal that the workers of EM were intentionally avoiding payment of their invoices. The municipal officials were said to be in arrears and there was no proof of wages being withheld in his report.

Msunduzi Municipality was one of KwaZulu-Natal's municipalities to receive a capable audit for the 2018-19 fiscal year (Deen, 2013). In the 2016-17 fiscal year, 14 municipalities in South Africa lost their clean audit reviews, while only nine were added to the clean audit category, according to the Auditor-General (*Business Report*, 2017). Additionally, 49 municipalities passed their audits, according to the survey. The municipal audit findings thus showed progress (15%), regression (13%), and stability (67%), indicating that local government ethics are still a major problem. According to Donnelly (2018), a number of municipalities received

a qualified audit review as a result of their wasteful and inefficient spending. In most South African communities, there are unethical and inefficient practices and a lack of accountability, which are key obstacles to properly providing public services.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

A qualitative research technique was used to assess the impact of ethical leadership on improving successful service delivery in the EM. The main advantage of employing qualitative approaches is that no hypothesis testing or verification is required. As a result, the data and conclusions provided are of greater quality (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This study used qualitative methodologies to gain a better understanding of how ethical leadership might improve service delivery in the eThekweni Municipality. As a result of the foregoing, an exploratory design was deemed best for this study. The motivation for this decision was that the investigation would be primarily into individuals' behaviours, actions, and perspectives on ethical leadership in fostering efficient service delivery in the eThekweni Municipality.

A case study was employed to allow discussions and explanations of real-life scenarios that occur within the municipality of eThekweni. A case study technique was employed to collect information from many situations that were thought to be similar or relevant (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The paper focuses on all levels of leadership inside departments (bottom, medium and top).

A sampling method of convenience was appropriate for this study since the focus was on selecting as participants easily available

persons in leadership roles in the eThekweni Municipality.

Semi-structured interviews were drawn up and conducted with the 12 participants as these allowed them to have free conversations and comment on the study's issues in a less formal and organised manner (Govender & Reddy, 2019). Participants were asked to answer 16 questions on how officials conduct themselves while carrying out their duties as public servants.

Thematic data analysis was performed to examine the qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews with participants. Excerpts from the transcripts of participants were studied to develop theme material that aided in summarising findings and generating conclusions. The key themes were ethical leadership and service delivery.

Individual transcript replies were first categorized based on the themes identified by the researcher through the study questions. These included: (1) an understanding of ethical leadership, which directly addresses the first objective of the study – to define and explore the concept of ethical leadership within the context of the municipality; (2) important values and ethical behaviors that respondents expected from their leaders; (3) ethical leadership challenges faced by the eThekweni in terms of service delivery; and (4) various existing mechanisms within the municipality to punish or discourage unethical leadership. second objective,

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this research was to offer comprehensive insight into ethical leadership

in the promotion of effective service delivery in the eThekweni Municipality.

There were 12 key informants. Answers to the questions posed and the reasons they were included are discussed below.

### **Variations in the Description of The Understanding of the Concept Ethical Leadership and its Conduct**

The first question was posed to elicit the respondents' understanding of ethical leadership to inform the second objective of the research study.

Some of the responses provided by the respondents were:

I would describe ethical leadership as honest leadership. (Participant 5)

Ethical leadership is openness. (Participant 1)

Ethical leadership means a leader that is honest and has moral values and principles and also trustworthy. (Participant 3)

I believe ethical leadership is when all leaders give no room for unethical behaviour, when it is safe, even for junior staff members to do the right thing and to report unethical behaviour. (Participant 2)

I would say showing and encouraging respect for others, their rights and dignity. (Participant 6)

Leading with the end in mind in a manner that promotes social responsibility and drive environmental sustainability with the

future generation in mind through innovative solutions. (Participant 4)

Ethical leadership is about leading by example when it comes to ethics. (Participant 8)

Shakeel, Kruyen & van Thiel (2019) state that while ethical leadership involves a wide range of traits, it ultimately comes down to six essential traits: accountability, integrity, honesty, justice/fairness, respect, and transparency. It was evident from the aforementioned answers from participants that not one of them was able to list every essential component of ethical leadership. This suggests that the participants may not completely understand the requirements of ethical leadership.

The second question explored the key principles and moral behaviors that participants expected from their leader. Among the most prominent values, transparency emerged as the most critical, followed by fairness, which was highly valued by the participants. Integrity was another key ethical trait identified, as it is crucial in fostering trust and confidence in leadership. These values were consistently emphasized by the respondents as essential characteristics for effective ethical leadership in the municipality. Transparency was found to be the primary problem, with fairness and accountability ranking as the second and third.

According to some participants:

Transparency, accountability, fairness, honesty. With these a leader can't go wrong. (Participant 10)

...transparency, honesty and fairness most importantly. (Participant 11)

This also presents a dilemma, because not knowing what to anticipate from an ethical leader makes it harder to discern when they are not performing ethically. The following theme discusses the difficulties associated with ethical leadership.

### **Ethical Leadership Challenges Regarding Service Delivery**

Participant were asked to list the ethical leadership difficulties they encountered in the EM when providing services, in order to support the issues above. A number of significant and crucial obstacles were discovered through semi-structured interviews.

Half of the participants said that the most common ethical concern was related to political influence. They highlighted the matter of political sway as among the most morally challenging leadership issues confronting the EM. As stated by certain respondents:

Political influence, I think, is the biggest challenge. Leaders are not being empowered to lead ethically, they are fearful to stand up against crime in fear for the lives and threats to the job. (Participant 2).

I'm sure you are aware of what's happening from the news. Here we don't make decisions, all orders come from the political offices. Our job is to follow instructions. (Participant 1)

According to the majority of the responses from the key informants, political influence is a serious hurdle the EM faces as it is subject to the decisions of the political parties. This finding aligns with Local Government Ethical Leadership Initiative (LGELI) (2022), that

highlights the challenges faced by municipalities, such as political influence, lack of skills, lack of accountability, abuse of accountability and insufficient community engagement. Corruption is another ethical challenge that impedes efficient service delivery at the EM as stated by five respondents). They had this to say:

People will be saying that political influence this, political influence that but these our leaders are corrupt but no one has the guts to say it. (Participant 11)

Every official is now corrupt which is against our oath. (Participant 7)

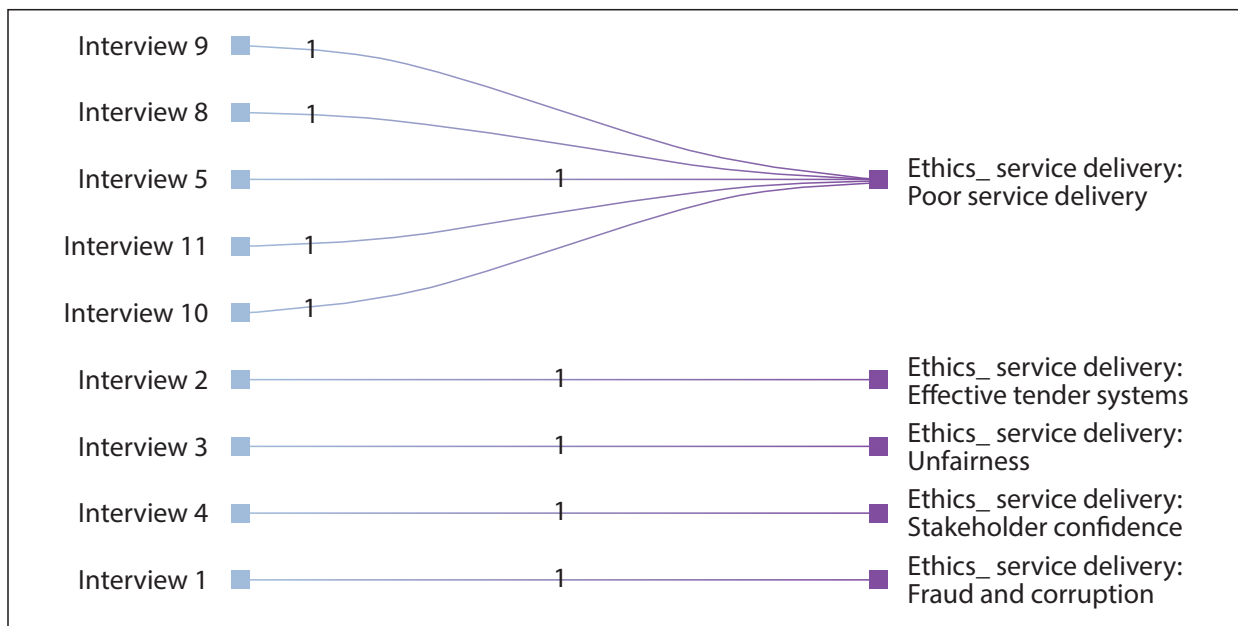
Thus, corruption stood out for these participants as one of the biggest issues affecting the municipality. The Corruption Watch Report (2021) listed the eThekweni Municipality as ranking fourth on the list of corrupt

metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. This is in line with what was noted in the literature that the municipality of eThekweni is in this state of corruption due to the lack of ethical leadership as highlighted by Ncala (2021). The following discussion focuses on the link between ethical leadership and service delivery.

### **The Link Between Ethical Leadership and Service Delivery**

In order to address objective two, various questions were posed starting with trying to understand the link between ethical leadership and service delivery to ascertain respondents' perspectives of the perceived impact of ethical leadership on service delivery in the municipality. The findings are given below. Sankey's diagram (Figure 1) shows how ethical leadership and service delivery link as per the respondents' answers to the questions.

**FIGURE 1: Link Between Ethical Leadership and Service Delivery**



Source: Authors

Based on Figure 1, it appears that the majority of participants agreed on the connection between ethical leadership and service delivery. They believe that unethical leadership contributes to poor service delivery and vice versa. Some participants went on to say that ethical leaders lay the foundation for performance.

Ethical leadership produces service delivery and vice versa. Misuse of funds, which is unethical behaviour that were meant for provision of water or electricity means that those services will not be provided. (Participant 8)

### **Structures to Promote Ethical Leadership**

This question focused on determining whether the municipality had any established frameworks to promote or encourage ethical leadership. According to all participants, performance management is an effective instrument for promoting ethical leadership, by aligning a compensation system to define performance indicators, which ultimately encourages ethical behaviour.

We currently have a performance management system which is used to reward overall performances to employees. (Participant 1).

The performance management and performance rewards I think is an excellent tool that should encourage ethical leadership. (Participant 2)

One of our main programmes at the moment is performance management. This will encourage staff to act ethically and professionally. (Participant 3)

Performance management and rewards. (Participant 6)

Safety, safety, I think is a critical point because the first thing that we should ensure is a safe space to report unethical behaviour. (Participant 7)

I am not personally aware of any, but in my experience, I have been reprimanded and placed in good disciplinary action and placed under extreme pressure for insisting ethics are maintained especially when making payments. (Participant 8)

Promote ethical leadership culture through a reward system, for example, financial incentives, and performance-based employment contracts for executive leaders. (Participant 12)

The majority of respondents advised on proper management tools and performance mechanisms to ensure that ethical leadership prevails to promote service delivery. The study by Nde (2021) highlights the need to create and encourage a culture of ethical leadership in the workplace to achieve good results for the organisation.

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

According to the general debate, corruption was one of the issues identified by participants, pointing to the fact that municipal authorities are involved in acts of bribery, nepotism, and fraud. This is also consistent with the literature, which indicates that corruption has brought the EM to its knees, as it is currently ranked fourth among corrupt municipalities in South Africa (Corruption Watch, 2021).

Poor communication was another issue that contributed to the municipality's chaos. Ineffective communication is a difficulty because it leads to dissatisfied employees who fail to work to the best of their ability. Maramura and Ruwanika (2023) identify lack of communication in municipalities as one of the factors that have significantly contributed to the challenges affecting service delivery. Additionally, Mndawe (2020) argues there is a challenge with communication and public participation is lacking. They authors stressed that interactive platforms of communication should be integrated in all crisis communication strategies to improve community participation, engagement and ensure a quicker response to improve service delivery to the affected communities.

In addition to these issues, the leaders' dishonesty has resulted in residents' dissatisfaction with the municipality's failure to deliver on pledges. This has once again harmed the municipality's image. Ineffective disciplinary processes have also been mentioned as issues in EM. Participants emphasised the importance of enforcing stricter rules and regulations so that unethical activities are punished.

It has been established that there is a correlation between ethical leadership and service

delivery. The interviews indicated that unethical behaviour results in poor service delivery. According to the key informants, unethical activity damages one's reputation.

Poor service delivery and money collection have also been connected to unethical conduct. This is due to citizens' unwillingness to pay for services they do not receive and this further increases the problems in delivering quality service. Ayodele, Haron and Ismail (2019) report that some municipalities duplicate procedures and operations as a result of bad management, and this also has a detrimental influence on a municipality's budget. Mbandlwa, Dorasamy and Fagbadebo (2020) point out that poor service and money collection have also been linked to unethical behaviour.

## CONCLUSION

The responses from participants to the semi-structured interview questions of the study were examined in this report. Data was collected from the staff members of the eThekweni Municipality's Supply Chain and Finance departments. The findings show that some of the participants lacked an understanding of ethical leadership. They made a few suggestions the eThekweni municipality could follow to guarantee that service delivery is improved.

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