

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**EMPLOYABILITY OF UKZN GRADUATES: A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
PERSPECTIVE**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I, **Thinasonke Siphesihle Pamela MBHELE**, declare that

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this study was to establish the extent to which graduates produced at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in the Discipline of Public Governance, are capacitated enough and meet the requirements of the employer. The literature study reveals that graduates need to possess qualities that will assist them to take adaptive, proactive approaches in their careers, which involves managing their employability. Developing graduates attributes through effective communication between UKZN, School of Public Governance, and the employer requires commitment and support from management in order for the process to become successful.

An empirical study was conducted which included the administration of questionnaires to UKZN academic staff, students/graduates, career development officer and employers within the public sector. The data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings reveal that Discipline of Public Administration curricular is in line with the Employability Model, it further reveals that there are challenges that compromise the skills development of students/graduates. Findings also revealed that there is room for improvement in all variables that were posed during the study. The study further recommends that, the involvement of public sector employers input will enrich Public Administration curricular. The study also recommends that sufficient resources are necessary to achieve skills development of students/graduates in the Public Administration programme

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BDLIVE	Business Day Live
EDGE	Experience, Degree Subject, Generic Skills and Emotional Intelligence
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HRM	Human Resource Management
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IT	Information Systems
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NSG	National School of Government
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDP	Personal Development Planning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
Ss	Self-efficacy, Self-confidence and Self-esteem
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

When the new South African government was elected into power in 1994, it had a mandate to be supplier or provider of particular products and services that South African citizens might need. In order to be able to provide these services, the South African public service is in need of educated, trained and professional public servants. To ensure quality services and that there is transformation in public service delivery, as enacted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, there is a need for the maintenance of the public service that is efficient, and effective and career-orientated (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The South African Constitution of 1996, under Chapter 10, highlights the Public Administration's values and principles as key pillars for the transformation of the public service. These values provide a guide for the administration of the public sector institutions, and are relevant to this study. These values are summarised as follows: professional ethics; efficient economic and effective use of resources; public administration must be development oriented; public administration must be accountable; good human resource management and career development practices to maximise human potential must be cultivated. In essence, it is important that government bridge the gap in capacitating employees in order for them to be productive and provide support services needed by the citizens. This is when the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, was introduced. The Skills Development Act seeks to promote development of the South African workforce, whereby improving the productivity of the workplace and the delivery of social services (RSA, 1998).

### **1.2 BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The building of human capacity in the South African public service was one of the issues raised at the 52<sup>nd</sup> African National Congress (ANC) conference of 16-20 December 2007 in Polokwane (ANC 2007: online). Therefore, Public Administration

education can play an important role in building human capacity, skills and knowledge in the South African system of government. Adedeji and Backer (in Van Jaarsveldt 2009: 257-265) state that Public Administration has been recognised as far back as the eighteenth century, and since then the education of the public servants has developed through many phases, to the point where Public Administration is a distinct academic subject. Today, the education of public servants has become more important, particularly in South Africa, where there is a need for skilled, educated and trained public servants.

Although the concept of capacity building is an issue in the South African public service, it is important that graduates in the field of Public Administration are capacitated enough to become professional public servants. This will ensure that South African citizens receive services efficiently and effectively. The study aims to investigate whether University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) graduates meet the employer's requirements in terms of being enterprising, resourceful, adaptable and possess a range of skills to become professional public servants. One also needs to take into account the students' perceptions of Public Administration as a field of study.

According to the Graduate Opinion Survey 2014 conducted in the UKZN School of Management, IT and Governance pertaining to overall quality of the degree, 86% of graduate respondents were satisfied. Moreover 87% of graduates stated that they had developed generic skills during their studies within the UKZN School of Management, IT and Governance, while 72% and 69% of graduates from the disciplines of IT and Governance respectively, found equipment to be of good standard and the support facilities assisted them during their studies. From the above it is imperative to investigate the extent of the provision and improvement of the student's problem, analytical, communication and computer skills. It is therefore essential to determine which degree of employability graduates in the workplace are taking into cognisance that the core function of the university is teaching and learning (Zank, 2014).

This research has provided valuable information on the employability of graduates and the relevance of Public Administration as a field of study. In essence, one could

say that human capacity is the most essential investment especially in the public sector as it contributes to the socio-economic growth of our country.

### **1.3 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

Griesel and Parker (2009: 3) state that, there must be an alliance between the higher education institutions as well as the employer's expectations regarding graduate attributes. On the other hand, Bezuidenhout (2009: 57) believes that, graduates need to possess qualities that will assist them to take an adaptive, proactive approach in their careers, which involves managing their employability. Therefore one can deduce that, the relationship between higher education institutions and the employer is of great importance, to equip graduates in a way that will ensure their sustainability in the working environment.

This study argues the employability of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students and graduates produced in the Discipline of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Pop (2010:75) states that communication, self-motivation, teamwork and directedness are the most important soft skills for graduate employability. Practical training is therefore important for the application of knowledge to enhance graduate employability. An article entitled "South Africa still not producing employable graduates" (bdlive Online:2011) revealed that, organisations have criticised the barring of costs of training graduates to fill positions, and are reluctant in hiring new graduates. Furthermore, the former Higher Education and Training Deputy Minister Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize reported that, South African universities are producing graduates that could 'hit the workplace running' yet it seems the exact opposite is happening. In essence, one could say that much needs to be done to bridge the gap between higher education institutions and that of the employer's expectations. Also it is necessary to ensure that graduates produced are capacitated enough and are employable.

Botman (2011: 1) believes that, high unemployment means that universities have a big responsibility to deliver graduates that meet the needs of the labour market, but expectations need to be managed so that old misunderstandings between employers and universities can be cleared up. Jenvey (2012: 249) states that, in South Africa

there is an evident gap between the higher education system and the workforce, and this is an issue that can only harm an economy struggling to employ its youth as it is facing major problems relating to scarce skills. In essence, public administration needs to ensure students and graduates produced are resourceful, enterprising, adaptable and possess a range of skills to become professional public servants. It is important that the education sector is continuously monitored to ensure that learners are well equipped for entry into the labour force (Pauw, Bhorat, Goga, Ncube and van der Westhuizen, 2006: 31).

Therefore, one can deduce that a monitoring and evaluation process is essential to ensure that institutions produce graduates that meet the needs of those in the labour market. It is also important that these graduates are provided with the necessary skills by both the institution and the employer, so as to become professionals in the public service and provide quality services to the citizens of South Africa.

According to van der Berg and Van Broekhuizen (2012: 22), the rising levels of graduate unemployment has much been exaggerated by the media and a handful of published research studies. These scholars found that the results of those studies are subjected to a number of criticisms, ranging from inadequate definitions of “graduates” to the use of incomplete, dated or unrepresentative data. The current view is that acquiring of a university degree no longer secures success in the job market is just not true, states Altbeker and Storme (2013: 4). These researchers concur that graduate unemployment has been exaggerated.

On the other hand, Ponge (2013: 8) submits that, many university graduates are experiencing difficulties in entering the graduate labour market. Furthermore, Ponge (2013: 8) states that any university seeking relevance today must produce graduates who would employ people rather than searching for employment. Therefore one can deduce from these scholars that, although graduate unemployment has been exaggerated, one needs to consider that is it an on-going issue that needs to be scrutinised and alternative measures need to be implemented to ensure graduate unemployment levels is minimised.

## **1.4 BROAD PROBLEMS AND ISSUES TO BE INVESTIGATED**

This study will investigate the linkage between Public Administration programme and the public sector organisations; establish whether graduates produced are capacitated enough and meet the requirements of the employer; ascertain whether there are any innovative provisions of work experience opportunities within, or external to, programme of study; and examine whether students graduating have attained the required employability skills to participate meaningfully in the graduate labour market.

## **1.5 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are to:

- Investigate the linkage between Public Administration programme and the public sector organisations;
- Establish whether graduates produced are capacitated enough and meet the requirements of the employer;
- Ascertain whether there are any innovative provisions of work experience opportunities within, or external to, programme of study; and
- Examine whether students graduating have attained the required employability skills to participate meaningfully in the graduate labour market.

## **1.6 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research study will attempt to answer the following key questions:

- How do students/graduates feel about Public Administration as a field of study?
- What skills are needed by Public Administration graduates to meet the requirements of the public sector?
- How do new recruits/graduates show intellectual ability and conceptual depth to perform well?
- What suggestions can be proposed to ensure that graduates are adequately skilled to cope with workplace tasks?

## 1.7 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical and conceptual framework of this research study is premised on the *Batho Pele* principles.

### 1.7.1 *Batho Pele* Principles

Based on the fundamentals of the RSA Constitution 1996 and the White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1995, the *Batho Pele* White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1997, was formulated to enhance the quality and accessibility of government services by improving efficiency and accountability to the recipients of public goods and services (*Batho Pele* White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1997:7).

The following principles have been identified in the White Paper on Transforming Public Services of 1997 and are important within Public Administration:

**Consultation**, relates to communication between the public servant and the citizens, therefore citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public services they receive.

**Service standards**, means that citizens need to know what to expect when served by public servants.

**Access**, it does not only mean that services be there, but also refers to the fact that they need to be user-friendly; the attitude of the service providers should be open, and respectful.

**Courtesy**, citizens should be treated with consideration and respect their dignity at all times.

**Information** is power, citizens that we serve need to be always provided with useful information about public services.

**Openness and Transparency**, citizens should be informed about how national and provincial governments operate.

**Redress**, means that service providers need to respond urgently to any complaints, rectify any mistakes that might have happened and apologise to those affected.

**Value for money**, refers to how services should be delivered, always do your best to ensure that services are provided effectively, efficiently and economically (*Batho Pele* White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1997:7).

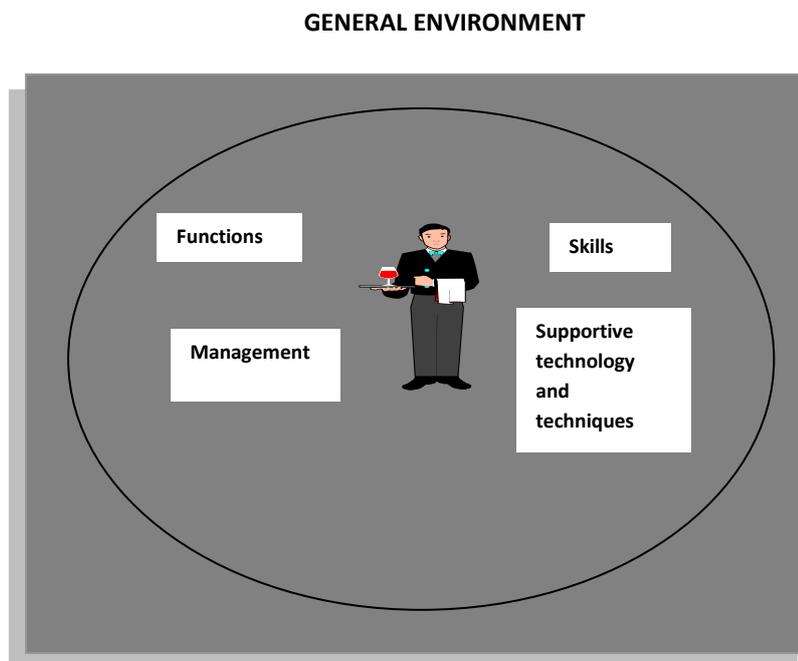
## 1.8 PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

According to Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1999: 21), public management is a discipline within Public Administration which focuses on planning, leading, organising, controlling, co-ordinating human and other resources to ensure efficient, effective and economical delivery of public goods.

### 1.8.1 Public Management Model

The public management model, as depicted in figure 1.1, explains and simplifies the complex concept of public management and public resource management. Open system and Contingency Approach examine the specific and general environment (Schwella et al in Dayaram 2011: 24). The discussion of Griesel and Parker (2009) is a development of Schwella's Model with respect to the aspects of the general and specific environment. Although the significance of this study focuses on the employability environment as part of the general environment, as well as to students or graduates in the specific environment, which can differ greatly in the public and corporate sector since the public sector is not profit-driven but rather customer driven.

Figure 1.1: Schwella's Public Management Model



Source: (Schwella et al., 1996: 7)

## **1.9 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PARADIGM**

Schwella, Burger, Fox and Muller (1996: 5) state that public administration is an efficient, public system and is not merely a process. On the other hand, Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997: 13) contend that public administration is concerned with handling public matters and the management of public institutions in such a way that resources are used efficiently to promote the general welfare of the public. Therefore it is essential that students and graduates produced by institutions of higher learning are knowledgeable and capacitated as professionals to render services to the public.

### **1.9.1 Public Administration**

In line with Chapter 10 of the Constitution, a public administration system has been established in the Republic of South Africa. Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991: 2) states that Public Administration:

- Is that system of structures and processes,
- Operating within a particular society as environment,
- Within the objective of facilitating the formulation of appropriate governmental policy, and
- The efficient execution of formulated policy.

## **1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is defined as the show of collecting data and processing it thereof within the framework of the research process. There are two basic methodologies for collecting data, quantitative and qualitative methods. These methods make use of specific techniques to collect data, amongst other things, literature reviews, interviews, questionnaires and direct observation (Brynard and Hanekom 1997: 27).

In essence, the research methodology gives way on how the study would be planned and implemented. Below is the overall design of the study. Firstly the research design, sampling, data collection techniques, data analysis and presentation is dealt with.

### **1.10.1 Research Design**

According to Creswell (2009: 3) research design are plans and procedures for research that cover the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the selection of a research design is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experience, and audiences for the study (Creswell 2009: 3).

### **1.10.2 Quantitative Methods**

According to Winter (1999), as cited in Golafshani (2003: 598) a quantitative researcher attempts to fragment and delimit phenomena into measureable or common categories that can be applied to all the subjects or wider and similar situation. On the other hand, quantitative research is a method used to test the aim of the theories by examining the relationship among other variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell 2009: 131). This study is quantitative as it will use the responses from graduating students, which will be processed and presented in a numerical manner.

### **1.10.3 Qualitative Methods**

Qualitative research is a method used for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of data (Creswell, 2009: 131). This study will use interviews to obtain the necessary information and will be processed and presented in a thematic analysis. Respondents will be academic staff, graduating students and new recruits.

### **1.10.4 Population**

The term population refers to all the elements such as individuals, objects, events, or substances that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in the study (Burn and Grove 2005: 746). The study is targeting 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, a population size of 105, and eight academic staff in the Discipline of Public Administration, Head of Student Counselling and new recruits who are in the pursue scene.

### **1.10.5 Sampling**

According to Babbie (1990: 148), random sampling is when each individual in the population has an equal probability of being selected, students in the Discipline of Public Administration.

Stratified sampling means that specific characteristics of individuals (male and female) are represented in the sample and the sample reflects the true ratio in the population of individuals with certain characteristics (Fowler, 2002: 71-86).

According to Babbie (2007: 146) states that, in a multistage or clustering procedure, the researcher first identifies clusters (groups or organisations), obtains names of individuals within those clusters, and then sample within them. This method was applied to the newly recruited graduates.

In essence, the researcher has used the above mentioned samples to analyse the viewpoints of the diverse range of students and graduates within the Discipline of Public Administration. Furthermore ensuring that, significant information is obtained from the relevant people and gives a fair chance to all the elements of the population.

## **1.11 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The procedure of collecting data is obtaining information from the targeted population. Data collection is the systematic recording of information; data analysis involves working to uncover patterns and trends in data sets; data interpretation involves explaining those patterns and trends (Egger, 2008: 1).

This study was dependent on primary data from the targeted population in order to achieve its objectives. Therefore the collection of data was based on observations, questionnaires and interviews.

## **1.12 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Struwig and Stead (2001: 168) data analysis enables the researcher to organise and bring meaning to the large amount of data. In essence, one could say

that data analysis assists the researcher in analysing the data collected and ensure that results acquired meet the objectives of the study. In this study, Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS) will be used to analyse data. The statistical programme employed for this study, a frequency distribution, will be obtained by selecting and analysing descriptive frequencies which usually includes a percentage for each value (Fielding and Gilbert in Pillay, 2007: 214).

#### **1.12.1 Validity**

Gibbs (2007: 55) states that validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the subject under investigation.

#### **1.12.2 Reliability**

Reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researches and different projects (Gibbs, 2007: 55). In essence validity and reliability are relevant to this study as it ensures meaningfulness and accuracy of the study under a similar methodology.

### **1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Researchers need to protect their research participants, develop a trust with them and promote the integrity of the research. It is important for researchers to guard themselves against misconduct or impropriety that might reflect on their organization or institution and cope with the new challenging problems (Israel and Hay 2006: 208). Prior to institutionalising this research, authorisation was received from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Research Ethics committee; the UKZN Registrar; and Office of the Premier.

#### **1.13.1 Confidentiality**

According to Massey (2010: 141) privacy and confidentiality of individuals, communities, ethical groups and other minorities must be respected. No participant may be identified without the consent of the participant. The confidentiality of the information obtained incidentally during research, must also be respected except where disclosure is necessary to avoid grave harm. This possibility needs to be addressed in the information provided to potential participants.

### **1.13.2 Informed Consent**

Informed consent is for participants to give approval before they engage in the research. The form acknowledges that the participants' rights will be protected during data collection (Sarantakos, 2005: 194).

## **1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

The structure of the chapters is based on the researcher outlining how the research will unfold. The study will be divided into six chapters which will be outlined as follows:

### **Chapter One: Introduction and overview of the study**

This chapter provides an overview of the study. Aspects discussed are motivation of the study, focus of the study, problem statement, and objectives of the study as well as the limitations of the study. It also gives an in-depth account of methodology and research techniques. This forms a foundation for the research proposal and the overall investigation.

### **Chapter Two: Public Administration and Employment in the Public Service**

This chapter deals with the literature obtained from distinguished opinions and views from various sources. It is also based on different researchers and authors whose work is significant in this particular research field. The arguments of the literature are used to try to address the objectives of the study.

### **Chapter Three: Employability of Graduates and Public Administration**

This chapter discusses literature focussing on Public Administration and the employability of graduates from the Discipline.

### **Chapter Four: Research design and methodology**

The aims and objectives of the study, followed by the motivation and justification, and the research methodology to be used are explained. The types of research methods, which were used, are discussed. Discussion on the target population, the sample, data collection process, data analysis, and design was done. This chapter presents

the data - the backbone of the research. It contains vast amount of qualitative data that needs to be analysed.

### **Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings of this study. In this chapter, the researcher will draw inferences from the data that was collated from the questionnaires and interviews. The results will be explained and interpreted according to the objectives of the study.

### **Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

In this chapter, the researcher will try and examine findings, propose recommendations and draw conclusions. The concluding chapter contains recommendations as to how the deficiencies can be rectified, the best way of improving service delivery and provides an indication where further research is still required.

## **1.15 CONCLUSION**

This study discussed the need for the study, objectives, research methodology, sampling, data collection procedure, data analysis and scope of the study. Measures to ensure that ethical considerations that will be of great importance in this study, were also mentioned. The next chapter discusses the literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this study the researcher focuses on employability of graduates within the Public Administration programme. The linkage of higher education with the labour market is closely related to the employability of graduates. Therefore the focal point is on the type of attributes that graduates need to possess in order to survive in the turbulent labour environment.

In essence one could say that, it is important that public administration graduates at UKZN acquire the necessary attributes so as to ensure that they are employable. It is important to certify that public administration gives direction to the administrative conduct of public servants, to ensure the effective execution of policies by the public service. Therefore graduates need to be capacitated and professional enough to ensure that public services are delivered economically, efficiently and effectively to the South African citizens.

This chapter reviews the relevant literature which contextualises key elements of this study, in turn exploring the main issue of “graduate employability”. The key themes discussed in this chapter are:

- Institutional Challenges;
- Development of Employability in Public Administration; and
- Employability and Public Administration.

#### **2.2 THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

According to Dye in Naidoo (2005: 64), the term public administration has always meant the study of public service. Furthermore, the purpose of the public service is to provide services to society. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997: 13) state that, public

administration is concerned with handling public matters and the management of public institutions in such a way that resources are used efficiently to promote the general welfare of the public. Schwella, Burger, Fox and Muller cited in Dayaram (2011: 19) contend that public administration is that system of structures and processes; operating within a particular society as environment with the objective of facilitating the formulation of appropriate, legal and legitimate governmental policies; and the effective, efficient and productive execution of the formulated policies. Therefore one can deduce that, in order for public administration to be efficient and effective, persons rendering public services to the citizens must be capacitated to perform such duties.

### **2.3 DISTINCTIVENESS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

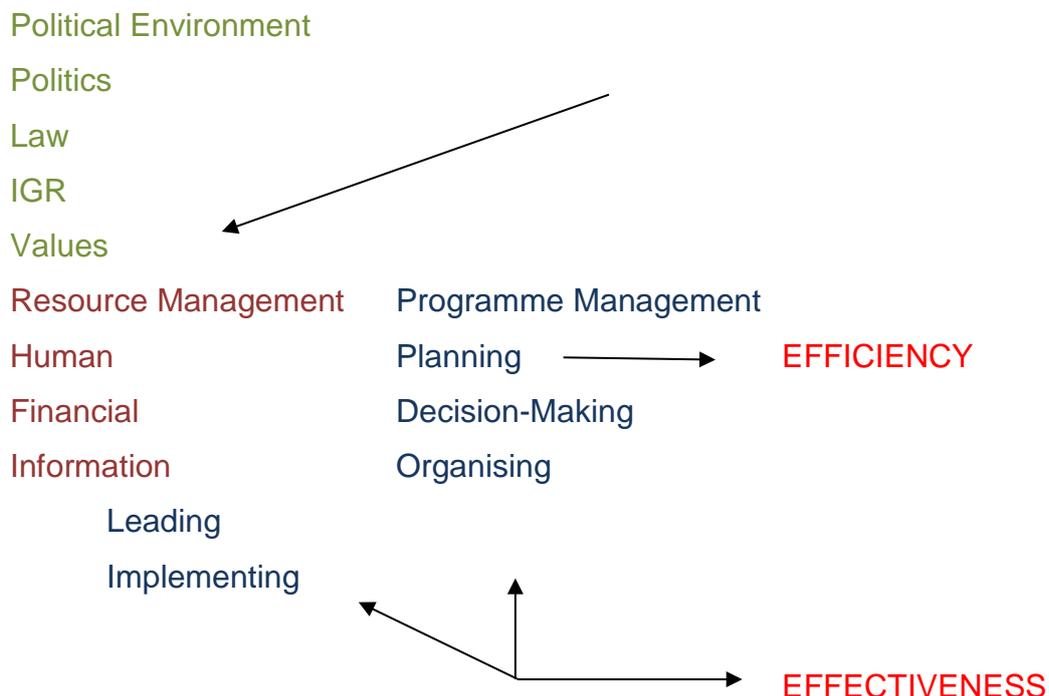
The public sector is different from both the private and non-profit sectors. Ban and Riccucci cited in Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen and Wessels (2005: 33) attribute this difference to “law” and “politics”. This view is shared by Beetham in Ranson and Stewart (1994: 27) who states that a distinguishing feature of public administration is the political character of its services. The content and level of such services is determined by qualitative judgments and by a publicly justifiable compromise between competing values, rather than by any single criterion such as profitability.

Public administration, according to Cloete in Moodali (2001: 32), refers to the administrative processes (which are in fact functions) which must be carried out and which are inextricably linked with the functional activities of the various public institutions. Public administration is thus not a matter of carrying out goals set by the politicians in the most cost-effective manner. It is about administering policy in accordance with the values which have determined it. Decisions in the public arena are based upon judgments of value, so that goods and services are allocated to the public by budget choices. Public administration is essentially political in nature, driven by multiple values and the need to reconcile the priorities of a diverse public. Therefore, public administration is relevant and substantial to this research as a field of study, since the programme at UKZN is linked with the Department of Public Service and Administration within a South African context.

## 2.4 DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The public sector will value and choose to provide those goods and services which are regarded as essential to the community as a whole - these are 'collective goods'. A public good is a good that is non-exclusive (no one can be excluded from its benefits) and non-rival (consumption by one does not preclude consumption by others (Colander 2004: 415). An example of a pure public good is national defence. Ranson and Stewart (1994: 55) concur that public goods possess certain distinctive characteristics such as non-excludability (it is impossible, impracticable and inefficient to exclude consumers from the benefits of the goods and services once they are provided, for example street lighting), non-rivalness (marginal cost of additional consumption is zero; product is indivisible and adding another consumer does not detract from the benefit of another, for example crossing a bridge) and collectiveness (provided for one, they are necessarily provided for all).

**Figure 2.1: The Process of Public Administration**



Source: (Starling 2005: 18)

### **2.4.1 Immediate Environment and the Process of Public Administration**

Starling (2005: 21) summarises the necessary skills for managing any public sector organisation in three categories, as depicted in Figure 2.1: public management, programme management and resource management. The public administrator's skill at programme management ensures that the organisation's activities are conducted in an efficient and effective manner. This figure is used here to illustrate that the process of Public Administration is dependent on two variables, namely efficiency and effectiveness.

Mullins (1999: 22) argues that management is an integral part of, and fundamental to, the successful operations of the organisation. It is, therefore the cornerstone of organisational effectiveness, and is concerned with arrangements for the execution of organisational processes and work. Drucker (in Mullins 1999: 23-22) states that it is management that enables the organisation to contribute a much needed result to society, the economy and the individual.

Efficiency refers to getting the most output from the least amount of input. Since public administrators deal with scarce inputs (such as people, money and equipment), they are concerned with the efficient use of those resources. From this perspective, efficiency is often referred to as 'doing things right' - that is, not wasting public resources. Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum and Staude (2001: 130) argue that efficiency is achieved by both minimizing inputs and maximizing productive outputs. Effectiveness is often described as 'doing the right thing', that is, engaging in activities that will help a government organisation reach its goals. It is also defined as the extent to which an activity fulfills its intended purpose or function (Dayaram 2011:24). Effective and efficient programme management therefore requires a thorough understanding of the five traditional management functions: planning, decision-making, organising, leading and implementing.

## **2.5 ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL PROCESSES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Fayol in George and Jones (2006: 8) refer to four managerial functions that managers at all levels in all departments are responsible for performing, namely organising, leading, policy making and controlling. David (2004: 123) concurs with

some of the afore-mentioned functions and argues that the five functions of management consist of five basic activities namely planning, organising, motivating, staffing and controlling.

### **2.5.1 Policy Making**

A policy is a guideline for organisational action and the implementation of goals and objectives (Mullins 1999: 125). According to Fox (2006: 83), policy making processes will usually start with the collection and processing of the information about the subject matter of the envisaged policy. This could require the obtaining of information and opinions from various private and public institutions and interest groups (Fox 2006: 83). Public managers also implement policies and are required to do so efficiently and effectively.

Within the College of Law and Management at UKZN, the Discipline of Public Governance within the School of Management, IT and Governance does recognise the existing legislation in South Africa as incorporated in the curriculum, and the terms in which these policies will be applied. Thus it is imperative that students/graduates are acquainted with such policies and the way in which they must be implemented, as future public servants.

This legislation includes:

- The Constitution of Republic of South Africa, of 1996; and
- Skills Development Act 97 of 1998.

### **2.5.2 Organising**

Organising or organisational arrangements relate to the establishment of the hierarchies of officials and offices. It refers to the formal and informal nature of organisations. Formal organisations relate to the official structure and relationships. Structures and processes that are established by the legislation, prescription, laws or regulations represent it. The organisation's rules, regulations, policies, code of conduct and structures provide for formal relationships among employees and between supervisors and subordinates. Informal organisation is constituted by the official social relationships and structures as shown in the human and group behaviour. The informal relationships develop from the natural desire of employees

to socialise. This leads to the emergence of informal groups in the workplace. Sanchez and Heene (2004: 87) argue that resources, once they have been determined, must be organised so that there is clear task allocation, authority distribution and information flows.

In essence, one could say that the Public Administration at UKZN is structured in such a way that students/graduates and staff are able to interact and co-operate with each other in achieving the institution's objectives and also ensuring that the services rendered to the students/graduates are delivered efficiently and effectively.

### **2.5.3 Controlling**

This entails evaluating to what extent an organisation is achieving its goals and conforming to planned operations, and taking action to maintain or improve performance. The outcome of the control process is the ability to measure performance accurately and regulate organisational efficiency and effectiveness (George and Jones 2006: 9). Controls should not be regarded as negative, boundary-setting measures. Control and evaluation ensure proactive action towards reaching goals and objectives (Schwella et al., 1996: 59).

Control mechanisms in Public Administration comprise of:

- Budgetary control;
- Personnel Management;
- Organisation and Methods system;
- Administrative ethics and Professional standards; and
- Leadership (Schwella et al., 1996: 59).

In order for control mechanisms to be effective, one could say that there must be service standards in place which are monitored and evaluated and ensure quality of services are rendered to the students/graduates from UKZN in the Discipline of Public Governance.

#### **2.5.4 Staffing**

Staffing is also referred to as human resource management and includes activities such as selecting, recruitment, interviewing, orientating, training, developing, evaluating, rewarding, disciplining, promoting, transferring employees as well as managing industrial relations functions (David 2004: 127). Several legislative prescripts provide the mandate for staffing and managers need to be updated and aware of them to ensure adherence to legal developments and requirements.

In the Discipline of Public Governance at UKZN, staffing is termed human capital management and policies have been developed in alignment with the national human resource management policies and guidelines, and mandates that are promulgated by the Department of Public Service and Administration.

#### **2.5.5 Leading**

Leadership is the process of influencing an organisation or group within the organisation in its efforts towards achieving an aim or goal (Johnson and Scholes 2002: 549). Lynch (2006: 355) concurs and states that leadership is the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of the organisation's purpose.

Therefore, one can deduce that, it is the Head of the Public Administration department that is responsible for ensuring that harmony is maintained in teamwork to ensure a favourable environment within a workplace. Also this ensures that students/graduates are equipped and have the necessary support as provided by the Discipline of Public Administration.

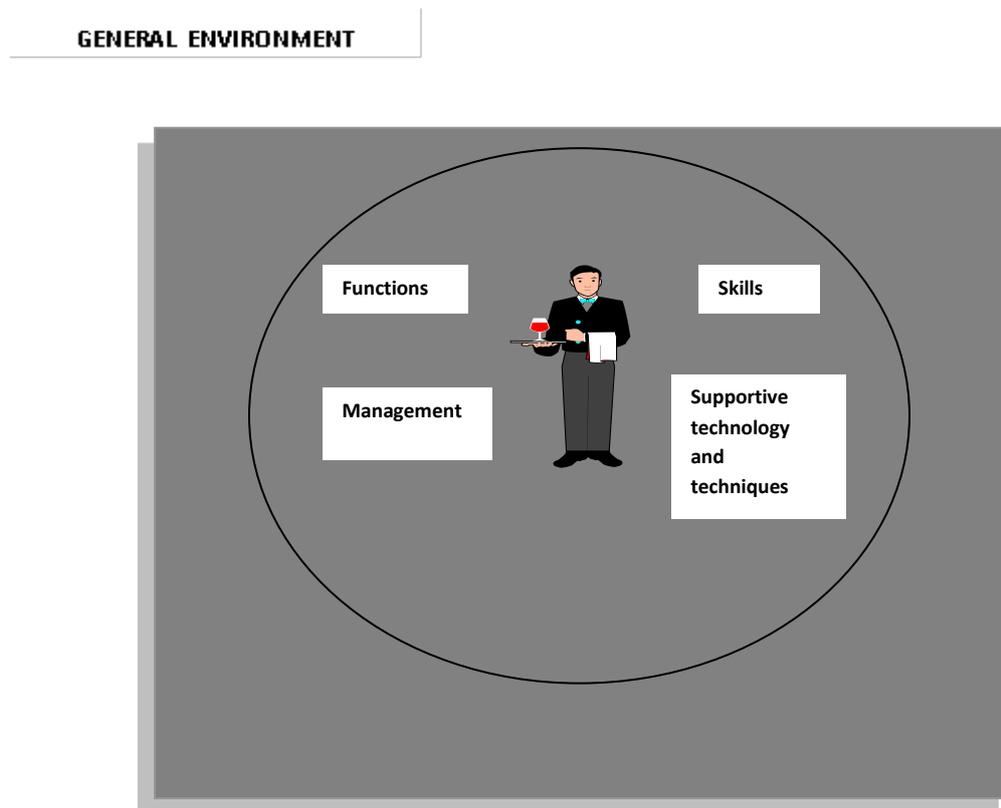
### **2.6 PUBLIC MANAGEMENT**

According to Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1999: 7), Public Management is a discipline within Public Administration which focuses on planning, leading, organising, controlling, co-ordinating human and other resources to ensure efficient, effective and economical delivery of public goods and services.

### 2.6.1 Public Management Model

The public management model as depicted in figure 1.2 explains and simplifies the complex concept of public management and public resource management. Open System and Contingency Approach examine the specific and general environment (Schwella et al., in Dayaram 2011: 24). The discussion of Griesel and Parker (2009) is a development of Schwella's Model with respect to the aspects of the general and specific environment. Although the significance of this study focuses on the employability environment as part of the general environment, as well as to students or graduates in the specific environment, which can differ greatly in the public and corporate sector since the public sector is not profit-driven but rather customer driven.

**Figure 1.2: Public Management Model**



Schwella's Public Management Model (Schwella et al., 1996: 7)

### **2.7.1 Cultural environment as part of general environment**

The culture environment comprises basic beliefs and attitudes of a society and encompasses norms and fundamental values of any group. These values that public organisations strive towards include constitutionalism, democratic values (for example legitimacy, transparency, responsiveness and accountability), economic values (for example efficiency, effectiveness and productivity) and other values such as professionalism and social equity.

### **2.7.2 Suppliers**

Porter in George and Jones (2006: 159) states that suppliers are the individuals and companies that provide an organisation with the input resources that it needs to produce goods and services. In return, the supplier receives compensation for those goods and services. He also states that, changes in the nature, numbers, or types of any supplier result in forces that produce opportunities and threats to which managers must respond if their organisations are to prosper. For example, a major supplier-related threat that confronts managers arises when suppliers' bargaining position is so strong that they can raise the prices of the inputs they supply to the organisation. A supplier's bargaining position is especially strong when firstly the supplier is the sole source of an input and secondly the input is vital to the organisation (Porter in George and Jones 2006: 159).

### **2.7.3 Skills**

Public management, like management generally, is a professional and practical effort at reaching objectives efficiently. As such, it requires not only theoretical knowledge but also practical management skills. The modern public manager is confronted by challenges in many and varied fields as a result of managing in a complex and dynamic environment. The professional public manager requires skills in competent decision-making, constructive negotiation, the successful management of conflict and change and skilful bargaining (Dayaram 2011: 25).

### **2.7.4 Applications**

The dynamic environment of public management presents a host of daunting challenges. Fortunately, developments in this environment have provided numerous systematic applications to assist the practicing public manager in the execution of his

functions and skills. The functions of policy making, planning and organizing are considered in terms of application in policy analysis, strategic management and organisation development (Schwella, 2004: 6).

## **2.8 VALUES APPROACH TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

A value is something that is fundamentally good or desirable that an individual holds onto as a guide through life (Fox and Meyer, 1995: 134). According to Fraenkal (1997: 6), a value is what people consider important in life, something that is worthwhile having, doing or trying to obtain.

According to Du Toit and Van der Walt (1999: 103-107), the public expects public institutions to adhere to the following principles:

- Reasonable and fair treatment;
- Balanced decision making;
- Truth;
- Justice;
- Thoroughness;
- Efficiency; and
- Respect for the peoples religion.

All these principles are embodied in policies and should be implemented by the UKZN specifically the Discipline of Public Governance to ensure that students receive quality services and the objectives and attributes are achieved.

The RSA Constitution of 1996 declares the Republic to be a democratic state, founded on a number of values. These include human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism, non-sexism, the rule of law, universal adult suffrage, accountability, responsiveness and openness. Therefore, in committing himself/herself to the public service, the public servant is bound by the democratic nature of the state and the values which support it.

Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, van der Westhuizen and Wessels (2005: 33) state that the public servant is under an unqualified obligation to understand and appreciate those values and to strive consciously to ensure that his/her day-to-day activities are guided by them. Hence this serves as an authoritative cue to the ethical performance of his/her duties.

## **2.9 IMPACT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ON SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

There are numerous challenges and complexities that governments struggle with in the provision of social services to entitled citizens. In South Africa, the Department of Public Service and Administration has committed itself to redress past imbalances which resulted from an apartheid era of gross unfair discrimination and inequality, by transforming services so that they are more transparent, responsive and equitable.

According to Erasmus *et al* (2005: 29), one of the country's single major objectives is to improve the quality of life of all its citizens. This requires strategies to eliminate socio-economic inequalities that affected historically disadvantaged citizens, and to make public services accessible to all. This is rightly contained in the principles of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

## **2.10 HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY**

According to Becker (1993: 4) human capital is directly useful in the production process. For Woodhall in Dae-Bong (2009: 2) investment of human capital is more effective than that of physical capital. In the investment of human capital, an individual attains knowledge and skills can easily transfer certain goods and services (Romer, 1990).

As that accumulation of knowledge and skills takes charge of important role for that of human capital, there is a widespread belief that learning is the core factor to increase the human capital. In essence, learning is an important component to obtain much knowledge and skills through lots of acquisition ways including relationship between the individual and the others (Sleezer, Conti, Nolan, 2003).

Similarly, for Dimou and Shepard (2005: 6) Human Capital represents the knowledge and skills that individuals bring into the organisation. As it is developed through both education and personal experience, it contributes to the productivity of the organisation. Currently, it is acceptable that the conceptual foundation of one's human capital is based on 'something like knowledge and skills' acquired by an individual's learning activities. Assuming that knowledge can broadly include other factors of human capital such as skills, experience, and competency, human capital and 'knowledge as broad meaning' is recognized as synonymous expression (Dae-Bong, 2009: 2).

The relevance of the human capital theory to this study is that, it highlights the importance of higher education, knowledge, development skills, competencies and experience of students/graduates. From a Public Administration point of view, it is the investment and producing capable graduates that will ensure employability and professional public servants.

## **2.11 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

### **2.11.1 Constitution of Republic of South Africa of 1996**

Since 1994, the South African government has embarked on an extensive programme of primary health care with the objectives of preventing ill-health by providing basic medical assistance to people. According to Plummer (1999: 42) unhealthy people are less productive and also find it difficult to keep work, or find work.

Section 2 of the 1996 RSA Constitution states that the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled. The implication of this is that there is no legal prescript that is higher than the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, under Section 27(a), states that, everyone has the right to have access to: health care services, including reproductive health care.

Section 195(1) of the RSA Constitution, of 1996, further provides other principles that ought to inform Public Service Delivery:

- A high standard of professional ethics must be promote and maintained;
- Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted;
- Public administration must be developmental-orientated;
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- Peoples 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 practice, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated; and
- Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation (Constitution of Republic of South Africa. 1996).

### **2.11.2 White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service of 1995**

In line with the Constitutional imperatives listed above, it therefore became crucial that the public service had to be re-structured into a coherent, representative, competent and democratic instrument for executing government policies and meeting the needs of all. This saw the birth of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1995: Introduction). Of the eight transforming priorities set out in this White Paper on Transformation of Public Service, the key priority was “transforming service delivery”. In this, the government envisaged a public service that would be guided by an ethos of service and committed to the provision of services of an excellent quality; geared towards development and reduction of poverty; goal and performance orientated; efficient and cost effective; consultative and democratic; and transparent, honest and accountable (White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1997: 7)

### **2.11.3 Batho Pele Principles**

Based on the fundamentals of the RSA Constitution of 1996 and the White Paper on Transformation of Public Service of 1995, the *Batho Pele* White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1997, was formulated to enhance the quality and accessibility of government services by improving efficiency and accountability to the recipients of public goods and services (*Batho Pele* White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1997:7).

The following principles have been identified in the White Paper on Transforming Public Services and are important within Public Administration.

**Consultation**-relates to communication between the public servant and the citizens; therefore citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public services they receive,

**Service standards**-means that citizens need to know what to expect when served by public servants.

**Access**-it does not only mean that services be there, but also refers to the fact that they need to be user- friendly; the attitude of the service providers should be open, and respectful.

**Courtesy**-citizens should be treated with consideration and respect their dignity at all times.

**Information**- is power; citizens that we serve need to be always provided with useful information about public services.

**Openness and Transparency**-citizens should be informed about how national and provincial governments operate.

**Redress**-means that service providers need to respond urgently to any complaints, rectify any mistakes that might have happened and apologise to those affected.

**Value for money**-refers to how services should be delivered; always do your best to ensure that services are provided effectively, efficiently and economically (White Paper on Transformation of Public Service 1997).

## **2.12 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACT 97 OF 1998**

The short supply of skilled staff is a serious obstacle in South Africa and this has an impact on growing the economy. The purpose of the Skills Development Act 97 of

1998 is to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies; to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce; to integrate those strategies within the National Qualifications Framework contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995; to provide for learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications; to provide for the financing of skills development by means of a levy-financing scheme and a National Skills Fund; to provide for and regulate employment services; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Another aim is to develop the skills of the South African workforce in order to:

- improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of the workplace and labour mobility;
- improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employer;
- promote self-employment;
- improve delivery of services; and
- increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment;

Further the aim is to encourage employers to:

- use the workplace as an active learning environment;
- provide employers with the opportunities to acquire new skills;
- provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience;
- employ persons who find it difficult to be employed;
- encourage workers to participate in learning programmes;
- improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages of through training and education; and
- ensure the quality of learning in and for the workplace (Skills Development Act, 1998).

## **2.12 EMPLOYABILITY**

### **2.12.1 Background of Employability**

A successful national economy is dependent on a high-powered higher education sector. In the case of South Africa, there are mounting pressures on universities and other HEIs to become more receptive to society and its economic needs. This involves universities creating stronger mutually beneficial partnerships with players in the public and private sector. While the concept of capacity building is an issue in the South African public service, it is important that graduates in the field of Public Administration are capacitated enough to become professional public servants.

## **2.13 INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE**

Universities play a fundamental role regarding quality education. Therefore, the purpose of higher education remains controversial as internationalisation is a given. This is fundamental for substantial growth within higher education and management of institutions as well as the pass rate of students cannot go unchallenged.

According to Sudha (2013: 25-26) the increasing competition and rapid changing economy, entry and survival of graduates in industries is tougher than ever before. Furthermore, Sudha (2013: 26) argues that employers expectations are changing day by day and graduates have to obtain skills for their sustainability. In essence one can deduce that, the producing of skilful graduates cannot be left solely to the universities; it is also imperative that employers provide graduates/ new recruits with training to advance their skills so they become eligible to fill positions within the organisations.

Griesel and Parker (2009: 2) state that, there must be an alliance between the higher education institution and the employer's expectations regarding graduate attributes. On the other hand, Bezuidenhout (2009: 57) believes that graduates need to possess combination of attributes that will enable them to take an adaptive, proactive approach in their careers, which involves managing their employability. Therefore, one can deduce that the relationship between higher education institutions and the employer is of great importance, to equip graduates in a way that will ensure their sustainability in the working environment.

This study argues positively regarding the employability of final or 3<sup>rd</sup> year students and graduates produced in the Discipline of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in spite of the challenges faced. Pop (2010: 75) states that communication, self-motivation, teamwork and directedness are the most important soft skills for graduate employability. Practical training is therefore important for the application of knowledge to enhance graduate employability. An article entitled “South Africa still not producing employable graduates” (bdlive Online: 2011) revealed that, business has long complained about the cost of training graduates to fill positions, and is becoming unwilling to hire new graduates. Furthermore, Higher Education and Training Deputy Minister Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize reported that, South African universities are producing graduates that could “hit the workplace running,” yet it seems the exact opposite is happening. At a time when graduates are increasingly being relied upon to add value and foster innovative practice in organisations, concerns for the impact of an endemic graduate skills gap are growing. Higher education institutions are consistently blamed for soft skills deficiencies and are now pursuing policies on the development of generic skills (Jackson 2010: 29-58). In essence one could say that, much needs to be done to bridge the gap between higher education institutions and that of the employer’s expectations. Also there is a need to ensure that graduates produced are capacitated enough and are employable.

Botman (2011: 1) believes that, high unemployment means that universities have a big responsibility to deliver graduates that meet the needs of the labour market, but expectations need to be managed so that old misunderstandings between employers and universities can be cleared up. Jenvey (2012: 249) states that, in South Africa there is an evident gap between higher education system and the workforce, and this is an issue that can only harm an economy struggling to employ its youth as it is facing major problems relating to scarce skills. In essence, public administration needs to ensure students and graduates produced are resourceful, enterprising, adaptable and possess a range of skills to become professional public servants. The education sector urgently requires continued emphasis and monitoring to ensure that learners are adequately prepared for entry into the labour force (Pauw et al. 2006).

Therefore, one can deduce that a monitoring and evaluation process is essential to ensure that the institution produces graduates that meet the needs of those in the labour market. It is also important that these graduates are provided with the necessary skills by both the institution and the employer, so as to become professionals in the public service and provide quality services to the citizens of South Africa.

According to Van Der Berg and Van Broekhuizen (2012: 8), the rising levels of graduate unemployment has much been exaggerated by the media and a handful of published research studies. These scholars found that the results of those studies are subjected to a number of criticisms, ranging from inadequate definitions of “graduates” to the use of incomplete, dated or unrepresentative data. The popular view that possession of a university degree no longer guarantees success in the job market is simply not true, states Altbeker and Storme (2013: 81). These researchers concur that graduate unemployment has been exaggerated. However, one can thus pose a question of, what measures have been taken to ensure graduate attributes are developed so as to ensure graduate employability?

On the other hand, Ponge (2013: 8) submits that many university graduates are experiencing difficulties in entering the graduate labour market. Furthermore, Ponge (2013: 8) states that any university seeking relevance today must produce graduates who would employ people rather than searching for employment. Therefore one can deduce from these scholars that, although graduate unemployment has been exaggerated, one needs to consider that is it an on-going issue that needs to be scrutinised and alternative measures need to be implemented to ensure graduate unemployment levels is minimised.

## **2.14 DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Knight and York cited in Lowden et al. (2011:10) state that students should be entitled to experiences in Higher Education institutions that develop understanding, skills, and self-theories and reflection; and that this good learning and education improves employability. Skills are defined as, any component of the job that involves doing something, and include manual, diagnostic, interpersonal or decision making

skills. Furthermore, it is recognised that some skills are more difficult to develop than others; there is an agreement that skills can be trained or at least developed (Harrison in Tymon 2011: 845).

Prokou in Bezuidenhout (2011: 57) claims it is accepted that higher education has the responsibility for advancing graduate employability in developing the abilities and skills of students and promoting a lifelong learning. Weligamage (2009: 116) concurs with Bezuidenhout, stating that HEI are one of the key stakeholders in enhancing employability, and their responsibility to identify how they can enhance skills of their “future employees”. Furthermore, Weligamage (2009: 116) believes that graduates of any faculty or college of the university should have knowledge skills, thinking skills, personal skills, personal attributes and practical skills. Therefore one can deduce that, HEIs play a vital role in developing graduates skills, specifically in the Public Administration field of study, and ensuring that students are capacitated enough to sustain themselves so that they become employable.

An initiative by the South African government through the former Public Service and Administration Minister, Lindiwe Sisulu resulted in the launch of the National School of Government and also a key stakeholder in enhancing employability, which aims to train and develop new recruits and re-orientate and educate all currently employed public servants (Mbanjwa, 2013: 81). Furthermore, Mbanjwa (2013: 81) states that there are challenges facing the National School of Government (NSG) in implementing policies and strategies of these training project, which as a result has hindered development of the public servant and newly recruited graduates. In essence one could say that the National School of Government gives opportunity to graduates to gain necessary experience and to ensure that graduates are equipped enough to survive in the working environment as future employees/public servants. The NSG also aims to develop the current crop of public servants in ensuring that efficient and effective services are delivered to the South African citizens.

## 2.15 EMPLOYABILITY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful (Pool and Sewell, 2007: 280). Since public administration graduates are the main focus of this study, one can deduce that, public administration as a programme sets the foundation of equipping students/graduates with the skills and competencies that assist graduates so that they become employable.

**Figure 2.1: Essential components of Employability**



Source: Pool and Sewell (2007: 280).

According to Pool and Sewell (2007: 280-281) the design of the Employability Model (See Figure 2.1) reflects an assertion that each component is absolutely important and one missing element will considerably reduce a graduate's employability. A degree of overlap between some of the components is acknowledged and this is reflected in the visual presentation of the model. However, it is not suggested that these are the only areas of overlap, as this occurs at various points. For example, in addition to work experience being a valuable part of career development learning, it may in some cases directly inform subject learning relevant to the public administration degree course being studied. The mnemonic "CareerEDGE" is used

as an aid to remember the five components on the lower tier of the model (Pool and Sewell 2007: 280).

Therefore, one can say that providing students with opportunities for them to access and develop everything on this lower tier and importantly, for reflecting on and evaluating these experiences, will result in development of higher levels of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem, which are crucial links to employability.

The Public Administration programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal matches with the employability components (See Figure 2.1) as the curriculum consists broadly of the following modules/subjects:

- Introduction to Public Administration;
- End User Computing;
- Principles of Microeconomics;
- Management;
- Introduction to Individual Behaviour and HRM
- Introduction to Public Management;
- Principles of Social Behaviour and Group Dynamics;
- IS&T Development Fundamentals;
- Introduction to Local Government;
- Introduction to Public Financial Management;
- Career Management;
- Intermediate Macro and Applications;
- Introduction to HR;
- Introduction to Marketing;
- Systems Analysis and Design;
- Introduction to Public Sector HRM;
- Introduction to Public Policy Management;
- Managing Workplace Diversity;
- Intermediate Micro and Diversity;
- Introduction to Entrepreneurship;
- Introduction to Operations Management;
- Databases and Programming;

- Development Policy and Project Management;
- Organisational Change and Leadership;
- Public Service Delivery: Principles and Process
- Global and Regional Trends in Public Administration

### **2.15.1 Degree subject knowledge**

Understanding and skills are a central concept in the model. The motivator to enter higher education is generally perceived to be to study a specific discipline in depth, to gain a degree, get a higher qualification and thus get a good or better job, and it still remains the case that the better qualified have far greater employment opportunities (Johnes in Pool and Sewell, 2007: 281). Graduate Prospects (2005/6: 17) identified two-thirds of graduate vacancies as open to graduates of any discipline, which implies that for the remaining third, subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills are still of vital importance. In essence one can deduce that, it is essential to recognise that employers will evaluate graduates on the basis of how successfully they have completed their degree course, possibly because this is often the sole measure available to them. This tends to be the case whether or not they are entering an occupation with direct relevance to their degree, and as such there is a need to recognise the central importance of this particular element of graduate employability.

### **2.15.2 Generic skills**

There has been considerable debate in the literature about the terminology for generic skills, which may also be referred to as “core skills”, “key skills” or “transferable skills”. The term “generic skills” has been used for the purpose of this model and is used to represent the skills which can support study in any discipline, and which can potentially be transferred to a range of contexts, in higher education or the workplace (Bennett et al., 1999: 76). In Knight and Yorke’s (2002: 2) paper, they discuss some of the research into the value placed by employers on generic skills in graduates and interpret the message from employers as: “Give us a bright and engaged graduate, and we will build specific expertise for this organisation on top of that.”

Employers want graduates with relevant subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, but in addition to this are looking for well-developed generic skills in a number of areas (Harvey et al. 1997). A considerable amount of work has been published which lists the many generic or transferable skills that employers are looking for. The Pedagogy for Employability Group (2004: 5) provides a list derived from research carried out over the last 25 years and suggests that employers expect to find that the following generic skills have been developed in graduates:

- imagination/creativity;
- adaptability/flexibility;
- willingness to learn;
- independent working/autonomy;
- working in a team;
- ability to manage others;
- ability to work under pressure;
- good oral communication;
- communication in writing for varied purposes/audiences;
- numeracy;
- attention to detail;
- time management;
- assumption of responsibility and for making decisions;
- planning, coordinating and organising ability; and
- ability to use new technologies (not included in the list above but mentioned in many others as an important element).

There is also the need to mention enterprise and entrepreneurship skills, which are often discussed in the employability literature. It is likely to be the case that an enterprising graduate would be valued in any organisation, either profit-making, non-profit making, large or small. For the purpose of this model, it is suggested that a graduate who could be described as enterprising would be imaginative, creative, adaptable, a willing learner – in fact, they would have most of the skills already listed under the “generic” category. Entrepreneurial skills, on the other hand, may be a valuable addition that some graduates will want to acquire, but not all. Not everybody

wants to set up their own profitable business. As entrepreneurial skills are not considered an essential element in the model, they have not been included.

### **2.15.3 Emotional intelligence**

Goleman (1998: 4) provides strong support for the inclusion of emotional intelligence in any model of employability stating that in a time with no guarantees of job security, when the very concept of a “job” is rapidly being replaced by “portable skills”, these are prime qualities that make and keep us employable. Furthermore, Goleman (1998: 4) submits that loosely for decades under a variety of names, from “character” and “personality” to “soft skills” and “competence”, there is at last a more precise understanding of these human talents, and a new name for them: emotional intelligence.

Moynagh and Worsley (2005: 101) suggest that in the future knowledge-based economy, emotional intelligence will become even more important with the predicted expansion of customer-facing jobs in which human interaction plays a central part. Emotional intelligence has been defined as, the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer et al. 2004: 197).

In more simple terms, Goleman (1998: 317), who has done much to make emotional intelligence accessible to a wide audience, defines it as, the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.

As with all the components in the model, in order to achieve their true employability potential, a graduate will need to have well developed emotional intelligence competencies. Yorke and Knight (2002: 132) list emotional intelligence as one aspect of employability under their personal qualities section, but it could be suggested that it in fact subsumes many of the other personal qualities listed and some of the process skills listed too. As such it deserves a much higher profile. Research has shown that people with high levels of emotional intelligence motivate themselves and

others to achieve more. They also enjoy more career success, build stronger personal relationships and enjoy better health than those with low levels of emotional intelligence (Cooper, 1997: 89). Jaeger (2003: 634) demonstrated that emotional intelligence can be improved through teaching and learning in a higher educational setting and is positively correlated with academic achievement. She suggests that enhancing emotional intelligence is a desirable outcome for students, employees and employers.

Tucker et al. (2000: 336) state that, the key to employability as educators is for students to graduate with a solid foundation in the knowledge and skills they will need to be productive managers and effective leaders. By implementing emotional intelligence theory and exercises, the faculty responsible will help students become well-rounded graduates.

#### **2.15.4 Career development learning**

For a graduate to stand the best chance of securing occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful, it is essential that they receive some education in career development learning. According to Watts (2006), career development learning has not always been as strongly represented in HEI employability strategies as it should have been. However, he does suggest that there is evidence that this is changing. Career development learning, should include activities that help students to become more self-aware, to enable them to give real consideration to the things that they enjoy doing, are interested in, to motivate them and suit their personalities. They also need to learn how best to research the job markets to see what opportunities are available to them, how to present themselves effectively to prospective employers, and how to make considered decisions about their careers. As stated by Foster (2006: 5) there is little to be gained in developing employability if, at the end of the day, students cannot identify a market in which to advertise their newly developed employability.

Importantly, after acquiring so much knowledge, understanding and skills at university, they will need help and guidance in how best to explain to potential employers their achievements and how they will be of benefit to them, in application forms, Curriculum Vitae and interview activities.

### **2.15.5 Career Guidance**

Lyon and Kirby in May (2005: 346), argue that few students prepare career plans on their own initiative. Students are required to take responsibility for their own career development and to learn the competencies necessary to manage the career planning process successfully (Ball and Jordan in May, 2005: 346). University of KwaZulu-Natal, Student Support for the College of Law and Management studies offers career counselling and assessments of students to assist them with their study and career choice, career planning and career development while studying at the university. Student employment services offered as follows:

- Graduate Recruitment seminars and presentations
- Careers/Employer Exhibition;
- Guest presentations by Top 100 companies;
- On campus promotions;
- Part-time and full-time employment;
- Trainee and internship positions;
- Training and development in the job search process including online application;
- Workshops on job market skills and branding;
- Mock interview programmes; and
- Resource materials on company profiles and access to employer booklets and publications.

### **2.15.6 Experience – work and life**

So much research points to work experience as being something that prospective employers value greatly in graduates. Some of the key findings of the Work Experience Group (2002), appointed by the government to look at work experience opportunities in higher education, ascertained that with guidance, students of all ages can learn from their experiences in the world of work to develop their key competences and skills and enhance their employability. Employers value people who have undertaken work experience, being able to reflect upon that experience and then go on to articulate and apply what they have learnt.

Partnerships between employers and Education are valuable in promoting work-related learning and in improving the quality and quantity of such experiences (Pool and Sewell, 2007: 4).

According to The Pedagogy for Employability Group (2004), it is widely agreed that graduates with work experience are more likely to secure employment than graduates without. It is also important to consider the wider life experiences that many students, particularly mature students, bring with them into Higher Education. There is a need, therefore, for students to be given this information and provided with guidance as to how their life experience and work-related experience, either arranged as part of a course, carried out on a voluntary basis or gained through part-time work, can be used to enhance their levels of employability.

#### **2.15.7 Reflection and evaluation**

Providing students with the opportunities to gain the necessary skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes is obviously important, but so too is providing opportunities for reflection on and evaluation of the learning experiences that have already taken place. Without these opportunities, a student is unlikely to give full consideration to how far they have come in developing their employability and what they may need to do in order to develop it further (Pool and Sewell, 2007: 284). Personal development planning (PDP) is a highly appropriate vehicle for reflection and evaluation in this context, and as all students are now entitled to PDP as part of their university experience, it should be relatively straightforward to ensure that it is used to full effect in developing employability. PDP can help students to:

- plan, record and reflect upon their experiences in a way that develops their employment related skills and self-awareness;
- understand how their transferable skills might be applied in new settings;
- make realistic and suitable career plans based upon their heightened self-knowledge; and
- demonstrate both their employment potential and their ability to manage their future professional development to employers.

### **2.15.8 Self-efficacy/self-confidence/self-esteem**

The three closely-linked “Ss” of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem provide a crucial link between knowledge, understanding, skills, experience and personal attributes and employability. According to Bandura in Pool and Sewell (2007: 285) perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs, influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves and act.

One can deduce that increased self-esteem is a major part of the key to employability. It is important to have a belief in one’s ability to succeed and be able to project this belief to the outside world, but by achieving a high level of self-esteem a graduate will also be realistic about his/her achievements and be committed to lifelong learning. Steinem in Pool and Sewell (2007: 286) state that, “self-esteem isn’t everything; it’s just that there’s nothing without it.”

### **2.16 VALUE OF THE EMPLOYABILITY MODEL**

As discussed above the components of the model and the justification for their inclusion, it is also important to demonstrate how it will be a useful and practical addition to the literature already available on the subject of employability. Firstly any model of employability should inform the planning of programmes and structured interventions intending to focus on the area. This model provides transparent information about what needs to be considered and included. Second, a model concerning graduate employability should be something that can be explained with ease to students and possibly their parents, as well as academics. This model allows lecturers, personal tutors, careers advisors or anybody else involved with the promotion of employability within higher education to do so without beating around the bush. Third, the model will be a valuable tool for knowledge transfer activities. It can be used to demonstrate to employers how the roles of HEIs and business can both contribute to graduate employability with the resultant benefits for both parties. Finally, it would be useful to have a model of employability that could be adapted for use with groups other than students and new graduates.

With regards to future developments based on the “Key to Employability” model, work has begun to develop a measurement tool with which students can evaluate their employability and identify any areas in which they need to access further opportunities for development. The intention is for this tool to be made available to practitioners also, to enable them to assess if their employability interventions are achieving their aims.

Yorke and Knight (2006: 28) suggest that a number of issues need to be borne in mind when the desire is to embed (or embed more firmly) employability into the curriculum. It is therefore of particular relevance to colleagues who are designing new curricula or are considering how existing curricula might be “altered” in order to highlight the potential of their programmes to develop students’ employability.

## **2.17 CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined the relationship between public administration and the employability of graduates. The Public Administration department at UKZN is firmly guided by the legislative mandate and the development of graduates skills and competencies to ensure employability. The next chapter discusses employability of graduates and Public Administration.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to present an over view of the conceptual framework of employability of graduates. The focus is on defining employability, understanding how it is formed and the maintenance of employability, the relationship between tertiary institution, student and employer, organisational change, leadership, and research undertaken on administrative management.

A graduate's skills and competencies strongly affect the way managers perform their management functions of planning, organising, leading and controlling. Therefore, the actions that managers take can have an impact on the performance of the organisation. For instance, employability of graduates, managerial action, and organisational performance are all linked together.

One can deduce that employability represents a web of understanding and the complexity of the ever changing environment at universities and in shaping students/graduates to meet the requirements of the employer.

#### **3.2 DEFINITION OF EMPLOYABILITY**

Employability derives from complex learning, and is a concept of wider range than those of core and key skills.

Harvey in Weligamage (2009: 116) argues that, employability has many definitions and can be broken down into two broad groups. The first is the ability for students to get, retain and develop in a job after graduation. The other set are concerned with enhancing the students attributes (skills, knowledge, attitude and abilities), and ultimately with empowering the student as a critical life-long learner (Hillage and Pollard 1998; Harvey 2001). Yorke in Tymon (2013: 843) defines employability as a

set of achievements, skills, understanding and personal attributes, that make a graduate more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

Employability is a combination of factors and processes that enable people to progress towards employment, to remain employed, and/or to advance in the workplace (Brown, Hesketh, & Williams, 2003; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Houston, 2005). Garrido (2012: 17) contends that, as persons enhance their skills, develop experience, and become more competitive job applicants, their employability improves. Even if their position in the labour market never changes, their employability may have been enhanced.

### **3.3 FORMATION OF EMPLOYABILITY**

The argument by Knight and Yorke (2003: 9) is that graduate employability is promoted by teaching approaches that take this set of factors into account. As academic staff might reject employability as a curriculum goal, they are more likely to accept that curriculum processes can improve the chances that students will gain in terms of employability. Furthermore, Knight and Yorke (2003: 9) contend that good subject matter understanding is compatible with employability policies, and that employability and good learning are highly compatible. According to Tymon (2011: 846) whilst there is an expectation from government and employers that higher education institutions have the responsibility to prepare graduates for the world of work, higher education institutions continue to build employability into the programmes. Therefore, one can deduce that, the relationship between these parties is essential, the monitoring and evaluation of graduate development and curriculum in terms of flexibility is vital to ensure sustainability in a labour market that is ever changing.

### **3.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, EMPLOYER AND STUDENTS**

According to Makoni (2014: 71), beyond completion of degree courses there is a severe lack of information on the knowledge, skills and values that graduates actually possess, which give little room to compare across contexts or over periods of time. A strong need for research assessing student perceptions of university quality and their own employability needs is also required. Tymon (2013: 849) concurs with Makoni (2014: 71) stating that, the missing perspective is the view of current students, as these students are the intended recipients of employability skills development, therefore their view is important.

Global economic changes, the requirement of flexibility, adaptability, and innovation, the development of information technology, and the emergence of networking firm collaborating to enable competitiveness have lead to new education and training demands (Kruss, 2004: 675).

In essence one could say that, the co-operation and commitment of tertiary institutions, the employer (public sector) and the students need to be equal in ensuring graduates produced specifically in Public Administration programme at UKZN are well rounded graduates that “will hit the ground running.” In this study interviews were conducted with the public sector officials, as the employer, and academic staff at the university. A survey was conducted for the students to assess the expectations of responsiveness.

### **3.5 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE**

Nelson (2003) defines organisational change as moving from the norm or status quo to a new, desired, configuration to better match the environment. Change can be a departure from the norm or as a natural response to environmental and internal conditions (Nelson, 2003). Beck et al. (2008) also conceptualised change as “discrete modification of structural organisational elements.”

Van de Ven in Austin and Bartunek (2003: 317) identify four types of change theories namely, teleological motor, life-cycle motor, dialectic motor and evolutionary motor.

- Teleological motor, defines organisational change as a result of purposeful social construction by organisation members. The motor of development is a cycle of goal formation, implementation, evaluation and modification. Organisational change is a goal driven inducement for change emerges when actors perceive that their current actions are not enabling them to attain their goals and the focus is on processes that enable purposeful activity towards the goal.
- Life cycle motor, view change as a progression through a predetermined sequence of stages. "Ordering of the stages does not change, but the speed of the progress and the triggers that lead to the advancement through the process vary." There is not much on the life cycle theorizing except in the entrepreneurship where it is used to understand the development and failures of new ventures. Therefore life cycle motor is a variation used in conjunction with the teleological motor in transforming leadership.
- Dialectic motor, describes organisational change as resulting conflicts between opposing entities. New ideas and values confront the status quo/change. This motor builds from a Hegelian process of a thesis and antithesis coming into direct conflict. Conflict capable of being resolved in different ways:
  - Separating thesis and antithesis;
  - Attempting to create a synthesis; and
  - Attempting to embrace the different perspectives.

Driving cognitive and political change model theories; plays critical role in communication change models; greatly informs schematic change theories; and evolutionary motor. Theories of organisational change focus on environmental conditions that create inertial pressures for organisational change. This motor holds environmental setting of an organisation as extremely important in understanding the dynamics of change. Organisations evolve based on their ability to respond and adapt to powerful external forces.

According to Harvey (2004), both higher education and the graduate labour market are changing rapidly. The student intake is becoming more diverse, in age,

background, previous educational experience and interests and ambitions although government's efforts to broaden the social base of the undergraduate population has recently been characterised as a limited success (Harvey, 2004). In essence, organisational change plays a vital role in the establishment and development of graduate employability skills, and in moulding future leaders of South Africa.

### **3.6 LEADERSHIP**

Goleman cited in Dayaram (2011: 98) states that, leadership is about creating an enabling environment for a multiplicity of constituencies through the way people behave and that in a utilitarian paradigm, the fundamental drive is that of giving service to others beyond the motivations of money and status. Hellriegel in Jarbandhan (2011: 21) states that leadership involves "influencing others to act towards an attainment of a goal. It is based on interpersonal relationships, not administrative activities and directives." Jarbandhan (2011: 21) further states that, the development of leadership competency frameworks became central to government thinking in 1980s. To date, leadership competencies are one of the many central themes in modern Public Service development.

This is important because it means that leadership is not a property of the individual but a complex relationship among these variables. Leadership therefore functions as task functions, group building and maintenance functions (Johnson & Scholes, 2002: 237; Lynch, 2006: 355).

#### **3.6.1 Leadership Styles**

Greater attention to the manager's style of leadership has been the focus of many writers such as McGregor, Likert, Blake and Mouton because of a greater understanding of the needs and expectations of people at work. There are many dimensions to leadership and various ways of describing leadership style such as dictatorial, benevolent or charismatic. However, managerial leadership style towards subordinate staff can be classified within a broad three-fold heading:

- Autocratic: this is where the focus of power is with the manager and the manager alone exercises decision-making and authority for developing policy, work tasks and relationships and control of rewards and punishment.

- Democratic: in this leadership style, the focus of power is more with the group as a whole and the manager is more part of a team. Leadership functions are shared with group members and they have a greater say in decision-making and implementation of systems and procedures.
- Laissez-faire: Mullins (1999: 267) argues that a genuine laissez-faire style is where the manager observes that group members are working well on their own and makes a conscious decision to pass the focus of power to members and not to interfere, but is readily available if help is needed. This may be confused with and contrasted with managers who do not care and who deliberately keeps away from trouble spots and do not want to get involved. This can be labelled as abdication or a non- style of leadership.

### **3.6.2 Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is in contrast to transactional leadership. In the latter, it is based on legitimate authority within the bureaucratic structure of the organisation. The emphasis is on the clarification of goals and objectives, work task and outcomes, and organisational rewards and punishment which appeals to the self-interest of followers (Mullins, 1999: 280).

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is a process of engendering higher levels of motivation and commitment among followers. The emphasis is on generating a vision for the organisation and the leader's ability to appeal to higher ideals and values of followers, and creating a feeling of justice, loyalty and trust. In an organisation, it is about transforming the performance of that organisation.

Transformational leadership is comprised of four basic components:

- Idealised influence;
- Inspirational motivation;
- Intellectual stimulation; and
- Individualised consideration (Mullins, 1999: 280).

Burns and Bass (in Mullins 1999: 282) assert that leaders can be identified by their actions and the impact those actions have on other people. Successful transformational leaders are usually identified in terms of providing a strong vision

and sense of mission, arousing strong emotions in followers and a sense of identification with the leader. Coles (in Matshabaphala 2008: 6) argues that the organisational cultures do reflect the personalities and beliefs of the organisation's leadership.

### **3.6.3 Leadership for Change**

"Not every manager is a leader" (Mullins 1999: 437). Good leadership can build positive cohesion, but bad leadership can unite the group against management. The styles, attributes, orientations and approaches of leaders all have a major effect on subordinates and ultimately on the success of organisations. Research indicates that there is no 'one best style' of leadership and that situational leadership, flexibility, adaptability and contingency approaches will allow the organisation to flourish. It may be necessary to balance democratic, participative leadership styles with adequate consultation with staff with the aim of.

- Establishing direction: by developing a vision for the future along with strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision.
- Aligning people: communicating the direction to those whose co-operation may be needed so as to create coalitions that understand the vision and are committed to its achievement.
- Motivating and inspiring staff: energising people to overcome major resource and other barriers to change, by appealing to very basic but often unfulfilled human needs, values and emotions.
- Conflict resolution: being able to negotiate, mediate and conciliate to maintain positive group dynamics.

Successful leaders are open and sensitive to the needs and differences of others, and look at relative viewpoints rather than absolutes (Swanepoel et al., 2006: 358).

## **3.7 ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT**

Henri Fayol (1841-1925) the French industrialist believed that managers need to understand the basic management tasks of planning, leading, controlling and applying certain principles to them. He emphasised formal structures and processes for the performance in all important tasks. Clear definition of tasks and how should

they be met, therefore managers need the key management principles of (Hellriegel et al, 2012: 110):

- Division of labour, the more people specialise, the more efficiently they can perform their work;
- Authority, managers have the right and the authority to give orders to get things done;
- Discipline, members of an organisation need to respect the rules and agreements that govern it;
- Unity of command, each employee must receive construction about a particular operation from only one person to avoid conflicting instructions and confusion;
- Unity of direction, managers should co-ordinate the efforts of employees working on objects, but only one manager should be responsible for an employee's behaviour;
- Subordination of individual interest to the common good, the interests of individual employees should not take precedence over the interests of the entire organisation;
- Remuneration, pay for work done should be fair to both the employee and employer;
- Centralisation, managers should retain final responsibility, but should also give their subordinates enough authority to do their job properly;
- Scalar chain, a single uninterrupted line of authority (often represented by the nest boxes and line of organisational charts) should run rank to rank from top management to the lowest level position of the company;
- Order, materials and people should be in the right place at the right time. In particular, people should be in the jobs or positions best suited to them;
- Equity, managers should be both friendly and fair to their subordinates;
- Stability and tenure of staff, a high rate of employee's turnover is not efficient;
- Initiative, subordinate should be given the freedom to formulate and carry out their own plans; and
- *Esprit de corps*, promoting team spirit gives the organisation a sense of unity.

According to Hellriegel et al. (2012: 111) managers still use Fayol's principles in different ways. For example the principle of equity, initiative, stability, tenure of staff and *esprit de corps* is highly valued at Toyota South Africa.

Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933), made a contribution to the behavioural viewpoint of management. Follett believed that management is flowing, continuous process, not a static one, and if one problem has been solved, the method used can lead to new problems. Therefore she stressed the following ideas:

- The involvement of workers in problem solving; and
- The dynamics of management, rather the static principles.

However both ideas contrasted with the viewpoints of Weber, Taylor and Fayol. Follett studied how managers performed their jobs by observing them at work, and concluded that co-ordination is vital for effective management (Hellriegel et al., 2012: 113):

- Co-ordination is best achieved when the people responsible for making a decision are in direct contact;
- Co-ordination is essential during the early stages of planning and project implementation;
- Co-ordination should be addressing all the factors in a situation; and
- Co-ordination must be worked at continuously.

Follett believed that the people closest to the action could make the best decisions. For example, she was convinced that first-line managers are in the best position to coordinate production tasks. Therefore, increasing communication among themselves with workers, managers can make better decisions. Follett contends that, first line managers should not only plan and co-ordinate workers' activities, but should also involve workers in the process, as managers should recognise that each person is a collection of beliefs, emotions and feelings.

Barnard (1886-1961) made two significant contributions to management thought and practice. Firstly, Barnard viewed organisations as social systems that require employees co-operation if they are to be effective. Managers' main roles are to communicate with employees and motivate them to work hard to help achieve the organisation's goal (illustrated in South African insight feature with Toyota). Successful managers also depend on maintaining good relations with people outside the organisation to whom managers deal regularly. Barnard stresses the dependence of the organisation on investors, suppliers, customers and other outside interests. Barnard emphasised organisation's managers need to examine the organisation's external environment and adjust its internal structure to balance the two.

Secondly, Barnard (1886-1961) proposed the acceptance theory of authority which stipulates that employees have free will and so they choose whether or not to follow management orders. In other words, employees will follow orders if the following conditions are met:

- They understand what is required;
- They believe that the orders are consistent with the organisational goals; and
- They see positive benefits to themselves in carrying out orders.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

Employability is viewed as attributes that a graduate needs to acquire to meet the needs of an employer in order to perform duties and survive in any organisation. Organisations have to survive in a complex, dynamic and ambiguous environment. The opportunities and threats in the external environment lead to inconsistent demands: the need for internal control on the one hand and the need to adapt in the external environment on the other. Jarnandhan (2011: 21) states that, the current world of public sector senior manager/leader is complex. The rapid pace of globalisation, democratisation, change and public sector organisations to develop competency frameworks for their senior managers/leaders in order to promote effective governance.

The Discipline of Public Governance at UKZN through its academic programmes and research activities seeks to develop a new cadre of competent, professional, effective and efficient managers critical to the transformation of the South African public and non-governmental sector. The next chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the research methodology is explained and the chapter also incorporates the main objectives of the study, the sampling techniques and description and the statistical analysis and interpretation of the data.

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 11), scientific research is the translation into practice of the relationship between facts and theory presented in order to acquire specific information. Leedy in Brynard and Hanekom (2006: 2) concur with Bless and Higson-Smith, stating that research is essentially a thought process, surrounding accumulated facts and data, which seeks to determine what the facts say and what the data means. Therefore, it is said by social scientists that in practice, good social research is where approaches are selected because they are appropriate for specific types of investigation and specific kinds of problems, and where the choices are reasonable and made explicit. Research design is used to describe how the study is to be arranged when it comes to the selection of participants.

This empirical research focuses on employability of graduates in Public Administration with particular reference to UKZN. The research is useful as it can enhance effective service delivery, productivity, staff motivation and graduate satisfaction through improved leadership, performance management, entrenched values and adapting to the best type of organisational culture model.

#### **4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

In Chapter One, the following objectives were highlighted:

- Investigate the linkage between Public Administration programme and the public sector organisations;

- Establish whether graduates produced are capacitated enough and meet the requirements of the employer;
- Ascertain whether there are any innovative provisions of work experience opportunities within, or external to, programme of study; and
- Examine whether students graduating have attained the required employability skills to participate meaningfully in the graduate labour market.

#### **4.3 KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED IN THE RESEARCH**

The following key questions were identified:

- How do students/graduates feel about Public Administration as a field of study?
- What skills are needed by Public Administration graduates to meet the requirements of the public sector?
- How do new recruits/graduates show intellectual ability and conceptual depth to perform well?
- What suggestions can be proposed to ensure that graduates are adequately skilled to cope with workplace tasks?

#### **4.4 VALUE OF ACTION-ORIENTATED RESEARCH**

According to Sauder, Lewis and Thornhill (2000: 96) action-orientated research is constructive and differs from other forms of applied research because it specifically focuses on action, in particular, promoting change within an institution. In addition, the researcher is involved in this action for change and subsequent application of knowledge gained elsewhere.

#### **4.5 RESEARCH APPROACH**

This study is exploratory in nature. According to Aaker, Kumar and Day (2007: 112), exploratory research is used when one is seeking insight into a general nature of the problem, the possible decision alternative and relevant variables that need to be considered. Based upon the nature and purpose of the study quantitative and

qualitative research approaches were primarily used to obtain deeper information on the perceptions and information on the research topic. Creswell (2009: 3) suggests that quantitative methods are used to test the aim of the theories by examining the relationship among other variables. Furthermore, in Creswell (2008: 3), qualitative methods are used for individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem. In this study, structured closed questionnaires were used as a data collection technique. These data were complemented and triangulated with qualitative methods using self-administered open ended questionnaires and key informant interviews.

#### **4.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Burger and Silima (2006) citing Babbie and Mouton (2001: 202), describe sampling as a process of selecting observation required for a specific subset of a population in order to make inferences about the nature of the total population itself. Therefore it can be deduced that, due to time or financial constraints, it is not always possible to include the whole population in research and sampling may be the only practical method of data collection, particularly when the population is indefinite or extremely large.

Denscombe in Dayaram (2011: 204) argues that although evidence gathered from a portion of the whole in the expectation that what is found in that portion will apply equally to the rest of the population, it is not good enough to assume that findings for the sample will be replicated in the rest of the population. The sample in the first place, needs to be carefully selected if there is to be any confidence that the findings from the sample are similar to those found amongst the rest of the population being investigated.

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 85), good sampling implies:

- A well-defined population;
- An adequately chosen sample; and
- An estimate of how representative of the whole population the sample is.

In other words, the sample must reflect population validity which is the extent to which sample distributions reflect those of the population which the sample is supposed to represent (Jupp, 2007: 312).

The population, as defined by Bless and Higson-Smith in Dayaram (2012: 205), is the set of elements that the research focuses upon and to which the results obtained by testing the sample should be generalised. Bryman and Cramer (2001: 96) define a population as a discrete group of units of analysis and not just populations in the conventional sense. It is interesting to note that Sekaran, cited in Pillay (2007: 194) further explains that a sample is a subset of the population, however, not all the elements of the population would form the sample.

#### **4.6.1 Non-probability sampling**

According to Fox and Bayat (2007: 59), non-probability sampling is sampling techniques where the probability of each element of the population being included in the sample is unknown. Jupp (2006: 196) concurs and further explains that there are several techniques associated with this approach, for example, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling. On the other hand, Denscombe (2007: 17) argues that with non-probability sampling, there is a difference from the principle which underlies probability sampling: that each member of the research population stands an equal chance of being included in the sample.

Denscombe (2007: 16) states that the reasons for choosing this approach are because:

- it is not feasible to include a sufficiently large number of examples in the study;
- the researcher may not have sufficient information about the population to undertake probability sampling; or
- it may prove exceedingly difficult to contact a sample selected through conventional probability sampling techniques, for example, research on drug addicts or the homeless would not lend itself to normal forms of probability sampling.

#### **4.6.2 Probability sampling**

In probability sampling, elements in the population have a known chance of being selected to partake in the study (Saunders et al., 2009: 121). It is also defined by Jupp (2006: 238) as any method of sampling that uses some form of random selection that will ensure that all units in the population have an equal probability or chance of being selected. Babbie and Mouton (2007: 175) contends that, probability sampling enhances the likelihood of accomplishing this aim and also provides methods for estimating the degree of probable success.

#### **4.6.3 Stratified random sampling**

This method of sampling indicates the specific characteristics of individuals (male and female) are represented in the samples which reflect the true ratio in the population of individuals with certain characteristics (Fowler, 2002: 71). According to Denscombe (2007: 15), the significant advantage of stratified sampling over pure random sampling is that the researcher can exert some control over the selection of the sample in order to guarantee that crucial people or crucial factors are covered by it, and in proportion to the way they exist in the wider population. This is supported by Bryman and Cramer (2001: 99) who also agree that the advantage of stratified sampling is that it offers the possibility of greater accuracy by ensuring that the groups which are created by a stratifying criterion are represented in the same proportions as in the population.

This study used stratified and probability sampling methods to ensure significant information is obtained from the relevant people and give a fair chance to all the elements of the population, as it is less bias than the non-probability sampling method.

### **4.7 DESCRIPTION OF TARGET POPULATION**

The term population refers to all the elements such as individuals, objects, events, or substances that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in the study (Burn and Grove 2005: 746). Nichols (1991: 50) is of the view that, at an early stage of survey design, the researcher needs to define exactly which group of people or units he/ she is interested in, and that the full group of interest is the target population.

For this study a sample size of 105, 80 respondents who were final year students in the School of Public Governance at UKZN, 8 academic staff in the Discipline of Public Administration, 2 Student Counselling, 10 new recruits and 5 employer (Officials from the Office of the Premier). This sample size draws on the views of final year students and new recruits pertaining the Public Administration programme, and understanding of employability of UKZN graduates within the programme in ensuring a well-rounded graduate is produced and meet the expectations of the employer.

#### **4.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

The procedure of collecting data will be the collection of obtained information from the targeted population. Data collection is the systematic recording of information; data analysis involves working to uncover patterns and trends in data sets; data interpretation involves explaining those patterns and trends (Egger, 2008:1). According to Pillay (2007: 197), data collection is a method of obtaining information from a group of respondents by means of direct contact, personal interviews or self-administered questionnaires.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 97) submit that data consists of measurements collected as a result of scientific observations and can be classified according to the way in which it was collected or in terms of its intrinsic properties. For example, when researchers collect their own data for the purpose of a particular study, the data is called primary data.

Very often, however, researchers must use data collected by other investigators in connection with other research problems, or as part of the usual gathering of social data in the case of a population census. Such data constitutes secondary data. This study has relied on the primary data from the targeted population in order to achieve its objectives. Therefore the collection of data was based on questionnaires and interviews.

#### **4.8.1 Data collection using personal interviews**

An interview involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions relating to the research problem. Kahn and Cannell cited in Saunders et al. (2000: 242) state that an interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people.

Some of the distinct advantages of personal interviews are as follows:

- It helps the researcher gather the most valid and reliable data that are relevant to the research question;
- It is most accurate;
- It obtains the highest response rate;
- Interviewers can ensure that all items on the questionnaire have been considered and that respondents do not omit difficult questions;
- They can be administered to respondents who cannot read or write; and
- They help overcome misunderstandings and misinterpretations of words or questions (Bless and Higson-Smith 2000: 108).

#### **4.8.2 Data collection using questionnaires**

Saunders et al. (2000: 278) broadly define a questionnaire as a term to include all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a pre-determined order. They include the following techniques:

- Non-scheduled, unstructured interviews;
- Non-scheduled, structured interviews;
- Scheduled, structured interviews; and
- Non-personal data collection such as self-administered and mailed questionnaires.

A questionnaire is one of the most widely used data collection techniques because it can reach large numbers of people with little time or cost involved. Also, another advantage is that it can ensure anonymity of the respondents, and hence helps to gather honest responses. However, one of the major disadvantages of mailed questionnaires is the low response rate due to various reasons, and this can have serious negative consequences on the quality of the research.

### **4.8.3 Construction of the questionnaire**

Whether a questionnaire is to be filled in directly by a respondent or by an interviewer, it remains a complex instrument of data collection. In constructing a questionnaire, certain guidelines are given by Bless and Higson-Smith (in Dayaram, 2011: 213) in order to avoid particular pitfalls and for the study to be a success:

- The needs, interests and problems of respondents must be considered;
- Time and venue must be convenient to respondents;
- The environment should allow for some privacy;
- Language and vocabulary used should be adapted to the respondents;
- Questions should be simple, short and easy for respondents to understand and answer;
- Leading questions should be avoided;
- Double-barrelled questions should be avoided and made into two separate questions;
- Questions should be unambiguous and avoid being too vague or general;
- The flow and length of the questionnaire should encourage and sustain the interest of the reader;
- The intended responses should be easy to edit and codifiable; and
- Response set, which is the tendency of respondents to answer all questions in a specific direction regardless of the content of the questions, should be avoided.

In addition, Imenda and Muyangwa in Pillay (2007: 201) state that in constructing a questionnaire, the following should be avoided:

- Avoid leading questions, that is, questions which somehow suggest a preferred answer;
- Avoid jargon that is, use of high-level professional language/ terminology;
- Avoid complex sentences with various sub-clauses and/or double negatives;
- Make sure instructions for completing the questionnaire are clear;
- Make sure that the subject matter of the question is readily identifiable, that is, conceptually as well as linguistically;
- Avoid ambiguous questions; Avoid the use of inappropriate vocabulary;

- Questions that lead to bias or distorted responses, for example, use of leading questions or questions linked to authority figures; and
- Sensitive or embarrassing issues should also be approached with care.
- Direct questions about unacceptable attitudes or behaviours often lead to understatement of those characteristics by respondents. Positive attitudes or behaviours, on the other hand, are usually overstated. Denscombe (2007: 164) also adds that it is equally important to avoid the following when constructing a questionnaire:
  - Do not make unwarranted presumptions in the questions. For example, questions about peoples' reading habits should not start with 'How many novels have you read in the past few months?' as it can be annoying to respondents who do not share the presumption. Instead, the researcher should start off by asking 'Do you read novels?' and then ask supplementary questions; and
  - Avoid words or phrases which might cause offence.

#### **4.8.4 Questionnaire as the chosen method**

Denscombe (2007: 154) suggests that a questionnaire consists of a written list of questions designed to collect information which can be used subsequently as data for analysis.

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information on graduates, and employability of graduates produced in the Department of Public Administration at UKZN, and whether they meet the requirements of the public service sector. Denscombe (2007: 169) claims that there are several advantages of questionnaires as a method of investigation. Some of these include:

- Questionnaires are economical;
- They are easier to arrange as compared to, for example, personal interviews;
- Questionnaires supply standardised answers with little scope for data to be affected by 'interpersonal factors';
- It encourages pre-coded answers which allows for speedy collation and analysis of data; and

- There is data accuracy particularly with surveys that use the internet so that the human error factor is eliminated.

However, there were various disadvantages that were associated with the use of questionnaires, the most important being low response rates and these have been concisely summarised by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 115) as follows:

- Respondents do not have enough time;
- The respondent may not have received the questionnaire from his/her manager at the local office;
- The participant lacked interest and could not be bothered to fill it in; and
- Respondents lacked knowledge of the issues contained in the questionnaire.
- Further general disadvantages were as follows:
  - It can be difficult to interpret subject's responses;
  - It is difficult to check whether the respondent understands the questions fully;
  - There were incomplete or poorly completed answers; and
  - The researcher cannot check the truth of the answers.

#### **4.9 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The design of the questionnaires went through three drafts, which required reviewing and readjustment, until they were acceptable as final research instruments. The questionnaires for this survey were designed keeping the study objectives in mind.

The following were considered to be important during the design of this survey:

- The literacy and intellectual level of the respondents;
- The importance of the study objectives;
- The length of the questionnaire, ensuring that all questions essential for the research were covered;
- The relevance of the various types of statistical techniques to be employed; and
- The sequencing of the statements could affect the response rate if respondents become annoyed with questions that they found irritating at the beginning of the questionnaire.

#### **4.10 DESCRIPTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

This researcher used a pre-coded questionnaire which was carefully constructed and amended on the advice of the supervisor to obtain the maximum responses and detailed information pertaining to the topic of the research. The assumption is that in random sampling, provided that there are sufficiently large numbers of examples selected, and the selection has been genuinely 'at random', then the resulting sample is likely to provide a representative cross-section of the whole. The questionnaire was directed to employers at the Office of the Premier, final year graduates, academic staff and Student Counselling at UKZN. The questionnaire aimed to survey the extent to which graduates in Public Administration programme are employable and have acquired the necessary skills and competencies to enter the labour market.

The questionnaire was divided into the following sections for graduates, staff, and employer:

**SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS (GRADUATES); SECTION B: EMPLOYABILITY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A FIELD OF STUDY (GRADUATE, STAFF AND EMPLOYER); SECTION C: SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES EXPECTED (EMPLOYER) SECTION D SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME (STAFF)**

A covering letter addressed to the respondents outlined the importance and nature of the study and contained the contact details of the researcher and the supervisor. The respondents were assured that confidentiality and anonymity would be strictly maintained. The covering letter also indicated the institution that the researcher is studying at and was signed by the researcher and supervisor to assure authenticity and facilitate co-operation from the respondents.

Instructions were given on how to complete the questionnaire and respondents were informed that additional space was available for any further information.

## **4.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Struwig and Stead (2001: 168) data analysis enable the researcher to organise and bring meaning to the large amount of data. In essence, one could say that data analysis assists the researcher in analysing the data collected and ensure that results acquired meet the objectives of the study. In this study SPSS will be used to analyse data. The statistical programme employed for this study, a frequency distribution will be obtained by selecting and analysing descriptive frequencies which usually includes a percentage for each value (Fielding and Gilbert in Pillay, 2007: 214).

### **4.11.1 Validity**

Validity is described as a degree to which a research study measures what it intends to measure. There are two main types of validity, internal and external. Internal validity refers to the validity of the measurement and test itself, whereas external validity refers to the ability to generalise the findings to the target population. Both are very important in analysing the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the research study (Psucd8.com, 2011). According to Gibbs (2007: 55) agrees that validity refers to extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the subject under investigation.

### **4.11.2 Reliability**

Joppe in Golafshani (2003: 598) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of the study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, the research instrument is considered to be reliable. Dayaram (2011: 221) concurs with Joppe stating that, reliability refers to the reproducibility of a measurement. Reliability is quantified simply by taking several measurements on the same subjects. Poor reliability degrades the precision of a single measurement and reduces the ability to track changes in measurements in experimental studies.

## **4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Prior to institutionalising this research, authorisation was received from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Research Ethics committee. Israel and Hay (2006: 208) stated that researchers need to protect their research participants, develop a trust with them and promote the integrity of the research. It is important for the researcher to guard themselves against misconduct or impropriety that might reflect on their organisation or institution and cope with the new challenging problems

### **4.12.1 Confidentiality**

According to Massey (2010: 141) privacy and confidentiality of individuals, communities, ethical groups and other minorities must be respected. No participant may be acknowledged without the consent of the participant. The confidentiality of the information obtained incidentally during research must also be respected except where disclosure is necessary to avoid grave harm. This possibility needs to be addressed in the information provided to potential participants.

### **4.12.2 Informed consent**

Informed consent is for participants to give approval before they engage in the research. The form acknowledges that participant's rights will be protected during data collection (Sarantakos, 2005: 194). All interviews were noted down with the participants' consent. The participants' were assured of confidentiality and were told that they had the right to choose whether to participate or not and to withdraw at any stage. It was made clear at the outset that there were no rewards or financial remuneration for participating. To safeguard their confidentiality, participants' names and identities were not disclosed.

## **4.13 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate the connections between the investigation's purpose, its organisation and the manner in which its conclusions are drawn. The chapter focused on a few research questions such as what is the problem; which sample should be used to investigate the problem; in what context should the data be collected and what research design and statistical methods

should be used to analyse the data. Measures to ensure that ethical considerations that will be of great importance in this study, were also mentioned. The next chapter will discuss data analysis and interpretation of findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented the research methodology used in this study and established a foundation for the data collection and analysis. This chapter represents the results of data collected in the form of tables and figures such as bar graphs and pie charts. Metrics has been drawn up to summarise results and the complete statistical analysis on the research questionnaire and its responses are presented in the appendices. The results give insight into questions asked and provide a breakdown of the demographics of the respondents. The results are then discussed and considered in line with the interview process, where employers in the public sector and academic staff were asked their viewpoints.

#### **5.2 ADOPTED METHODOLOGY**

The data was captured from semi-structured questionnaires with both qualitative and quantitative sections. The quantitative data from the completed survey questionnaires was coded and captured in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Version 20, for Windows and used for the descriptive and inferential analysis, while the qualitative component was analysed manually by grouping the issues into thematic areas.

Eighty questionnaires were distributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students for their responses. Only 67 completed questionnaires were returned and from the 8 targeted academic staff and the 5 employers, who were sampled, a total of 7 interview self-administered questionnaires were received. The findings of the research are discussed in the light of the literature. By interpreting the statistical analysis of the data collected, the extent to which the research objectives are met and the research questions are answered is demonstrated.

### 5.3 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

The questions in the questionnaire were drawn up based on the literature review. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the issue of reliability in order to understand whether the questions in the questionnaire all reliably measured the same underlying variable. This reliability test has been employed to determine the interpretability of the data. Validity on the other hand is defined as whether or not an indicator (or set of indicators that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept (Bryman and Bell, 2007:165). The following tables show the reliability analysis results.

**Table 5.1**  
**Case Processing Summary**

	N	%
Valid	62	92.5
Cases Excluded <sup>a</sup>	5	7.5
Total	67	100.0

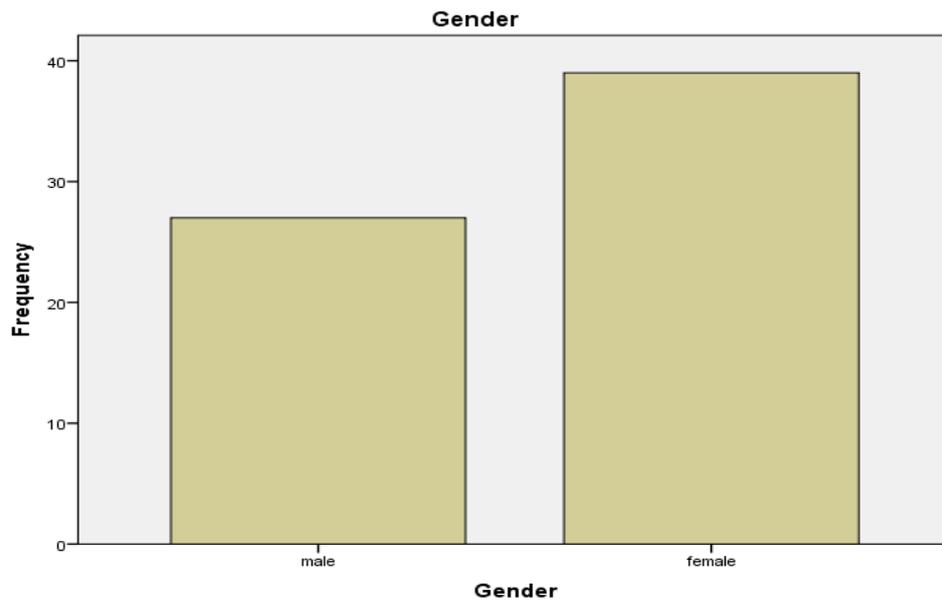
List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Table 5.2**  
**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.816	15

Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. The closer Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated at 0.816 which is above 0.7, so the scale can be considered reliable with the samples (Pallant, 2007). In other words the Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient of 0.816 shows that the questionnaire was sound.

**Figure 5.1: Gender**

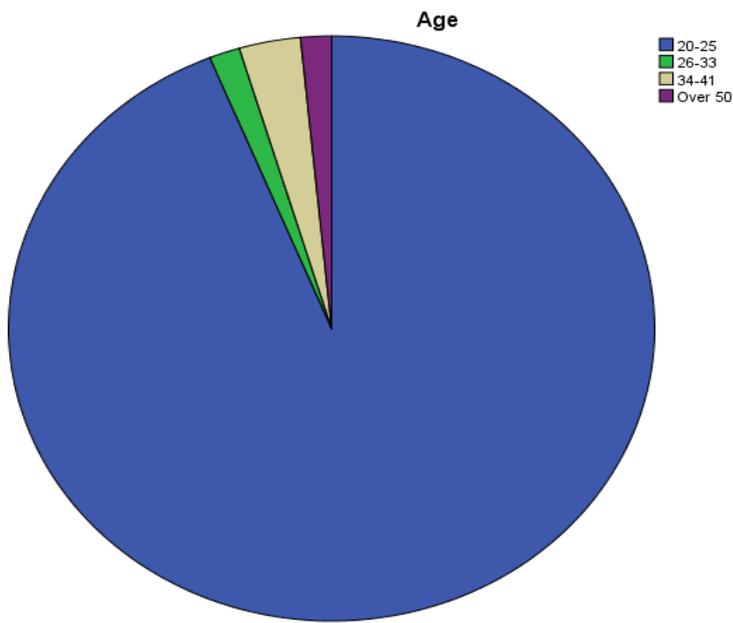


**Table 5.3: Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	27	40.3	40.9	40.9
Valid female	39	58.2	59.1	100.0
Total	66	98.5	100.0	
Missing System	1	1.5		
Total	67	100.0		

The graph above illustrates that only 40.9 percent of respondents are male and 59.1 percent are females.

**Figure 5.2: Age**

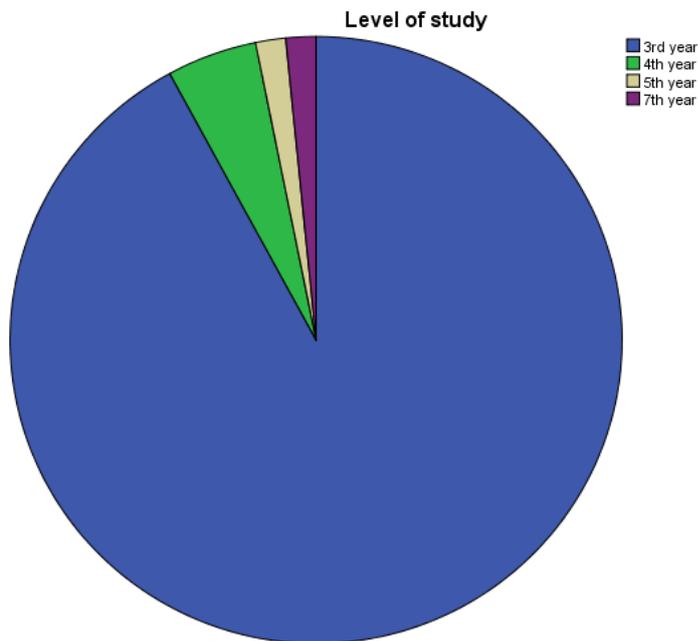


**Table 5.4: Age**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20-25	61	91.0	93.8	93.8
Valid 26-33	1	1.5	1.5	95.4
Valid 34-41	2	3.0	3.1	98.5
Valid Over 50	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	65	97.0	100.0	
Missing System	2	3.0		
Total	67	100.0		

The pie chart above illustrates that 93.8 percent of students that are at the University completing their final year are between the ages of 20-25, followed by 26-33 years (1.5%), 34-41 years (3.1%) and over 50 years (1.5%).

**Figure 5.3: Level of Study**

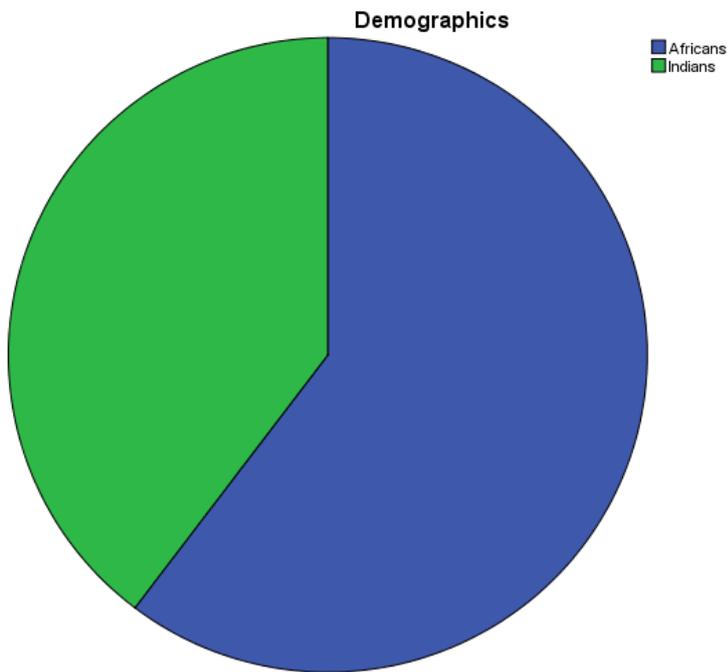


**Table 5.5 :Level of study**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
3rd year	58	86.6	92.1	92.1
4th year	3	4.5	4.8	96.8
Valid 5th year	1	1.5	1.6	98.4
7th year	1	1.5	1.6	100.0
Total	63	94.0	100.0	
Missing System	4	6.0		
Total	67	100.0		

The pie chart above illustrates that 92.1 percent of students are doing their 3<sup>rd</sup>/final year at the University, 4<sup>th</sup> year students are at 4.8 percent, 5<sup>th</sup> year students at 1.6 percent and 7<sup>th</sup> year students at 1.6 percent. The results could indicate that the students are completing their degree in record time. The students are pursuing their post graduate studies or that student is not performing to their optimal level.

**Figure 5.4: Demographics**



**Table 5.6: Demographics**

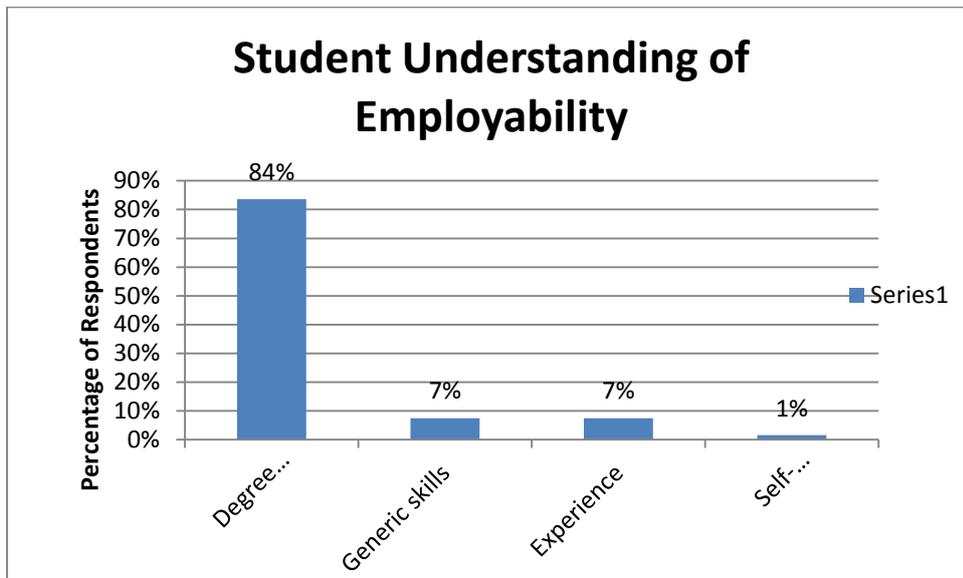
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Africans	38	56.7	60.3	60.3
Valid Indians	25	37.3	39.7	100.0
Total	63	94.0	100.0	
Missing System	4	6.0		
Total	67	100.0		

The Figure above illustrates that 56.7 percent of respondents are African and 37.3 percent are Indians.

## PART B

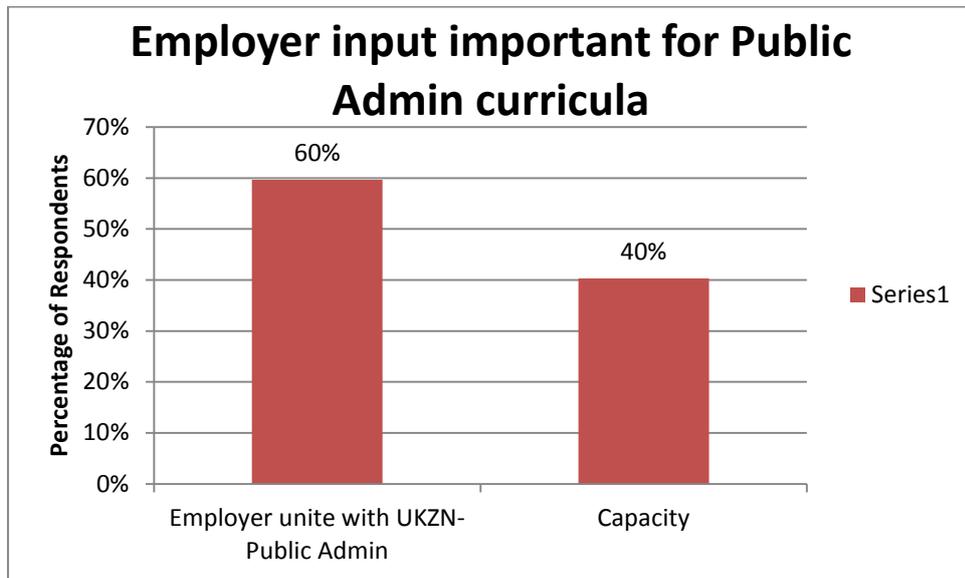
This section provides the qualitative analysis, in a form of open-ended questions of the UKZN final year students/graduates. Thematic analysis is used to interpret findings.

**Figure 5.5: Student understanding of employability**



Of the participants, 84 percent were of the view that employability is about knowledge, understanding and skills. Knight and Yorke (2001:10) state that, students should be entitled to experiences in HEI that develop understandings, skills, self-theories and reflection and that this virtuous learning and education improves employability. Seven percent of the participants stated generic skills, as mentioned in the literature, employers want graduates with relevant subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, but in addition to this are looking for well-developed generic skills in a number of areas (Harvey et al., 1997). Another seven percent of the participants stated experience, which is also an essential component of employability. Experience enhances development of skills as it gives students/graduates exposure to the working environment as a result graduates become employable. One percent of the participants were of the view that self-confidence and self-efficiency contributes to employability.

**Figure 5.6: Employer input important for Public Administration curricula**



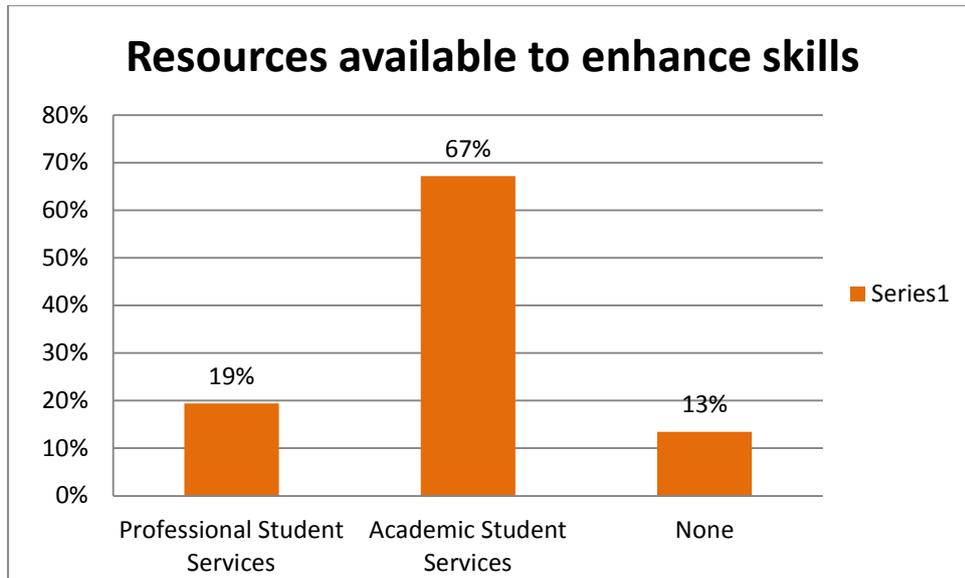
This graph illustrates that, 60 percent of the participants were of the view that the relationship between the employer and Public Administration department at UKZN is important as to ensure Public Administration programme curricula is sustained and made relevant to the needs of the work environment. According to van der Walt (2013: 77) universities gain particular relevance because of the aspects of their curriculum:

- Academic programmes with appropriate content for the development of the person as a whole, as well as preparation for the world of work;
- The value and relevance of research undertaken and of published reports, conference papers and articles;
- International through co-operation and exchange agreements;
- The expertise of staff: inter alia rated researchers, media profile;
- Graduate research: focusing on themes relevant to the society;
- The establishment of centres of excellence in specialist areas;
- Capacity building and short learning programmes; and
- Community service projects.

Van der Walt (2013: 77) further states that, for Public Administration and Management programme to remain relevant as far as mentioned above activities are concerned, requires continuous adjustment, change and transformation.

On the other hand, 40 percent of the respondents state that, capacity is an essential component of public administration and management curricula. Respondents argue that the relationship between these parties, employer and public administration department at UKZN, is imperative and recognise the skills needed in the working environment especially in the development of the curricula, for instance, the introduction of problem based learning.

**Figure 5.7: Resources available to enhance skills**

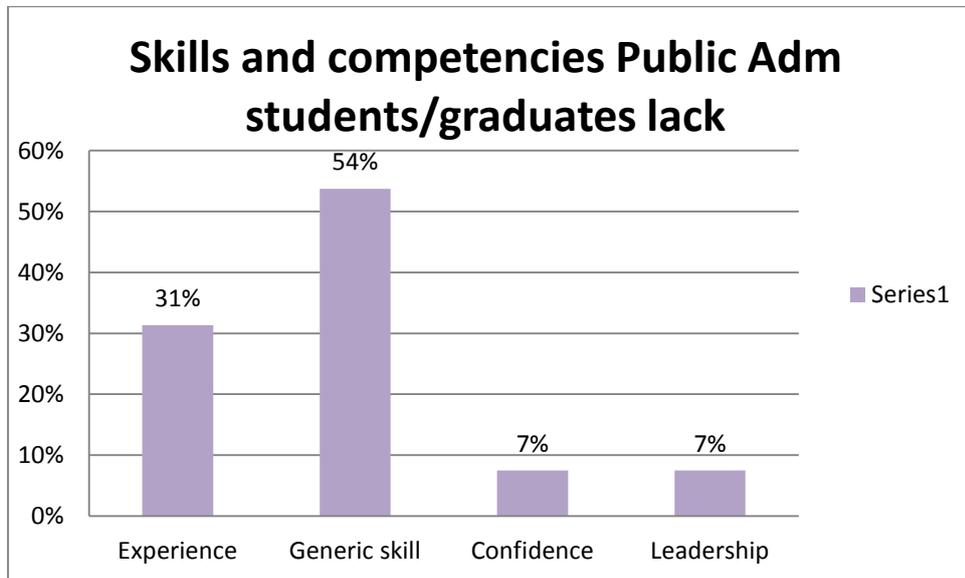


The figure above illustrates that, 67 percent of resources available are academic student services, which are inclusive of:

- Lecturers;
- Tutors;
- academic development officers;
- student mentors;
- internet access; and
- Guest presentations.

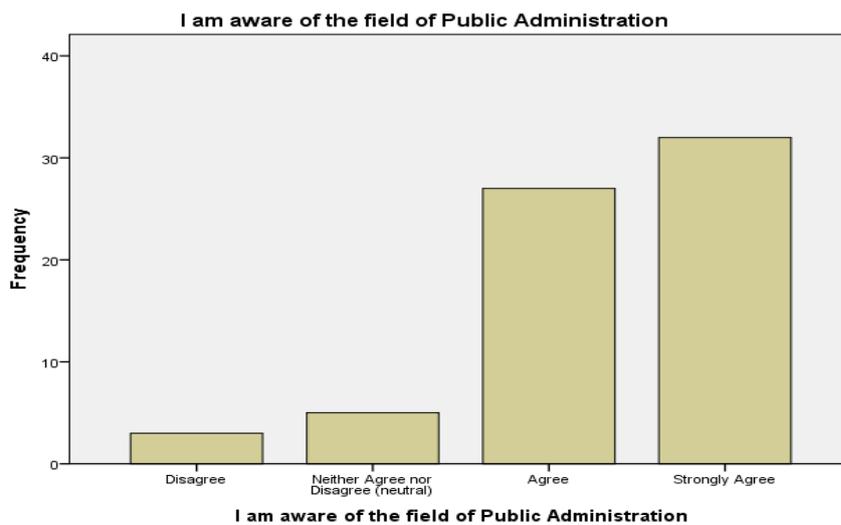
19 percent of the respondent's state professional students resources are available, skills development programmes such as ENACTUS (Entrepreneurial Action US) University of KwaZulu-Natal. This programme is designed and encompasses both teaching and learning through practical application and of knowledge and skills gained at university, in the wider community by means of student-designed outreach programmes. On the other hand, 13 percent of respondents felt that, there are no resources. According to the respondents, the Department of Public Administration is not active in ensuring student/graduates exposure to practical and real life projects.

**Figure 5.8: Skills and competencies Public Administration students/graduates lack**



Of the participants, 54 percent state they lack a generic skill, specifically communication skills. In Knight and Yorke's (2002:2) paper, they discuss some of the research into the value placed by employers on generic skills in graduates and interpret the message from employers as: "Give us a bright and engaged graduate, and we will build specific expertise for this organisation on top of that." 31 percent of the participants believe that they lack experience; one can assume the reason for this is more graduates focus on completion of their qualification and therefore do not undertake vocational work experience or part-time work. 7 percent of the participants contended confidence, participants lack interpersonal skills and attitude, skills to interact with people and communicate, which are imperative for persons to become employable and survive in a working environment. On the other hand, 7 percent of the participants are of the view that they lack leadership skills. Leadership is another important aspect of employability (Van der Heijden and Bakker 2011: 234).

**Figure 5.9: Awareness of the field of Public Administration**



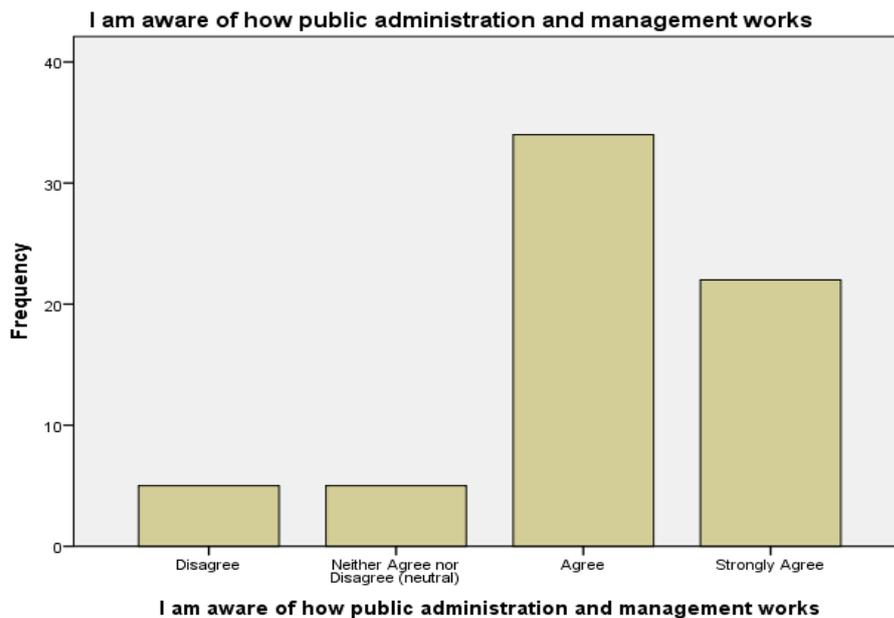
**Table 5.7: Awareness of the field of Public Administration**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	4.5	4.5	4.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	5	7.5	7.5	11.9
Valid Agree	27	40.3	40.3	52.2
Strongly Agree	32	47.8	47.8	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The graph above illustrates that 4.5 percent of the respondents disagree and are not aware of the field of Public Administration, 7.5 percent are neutral, 40.3 percent agree and 47.8 percent strongly agree. Reasons for this result may suggest the following:

Students/graduates in their final year of study in the Public Administration programme still do not have a clear perspective of their chosen field. It is also the responsibility of the student to take the necessary initiative to find out what the course is about so as to better equip them for their careers. As submitted in the literature review, Public Administration programme does set the foundation in ensuring graduates produced are not only knowledgeable but understand the complexity of the field.

**Figure 5.10: Awareness of how public administration and management works**

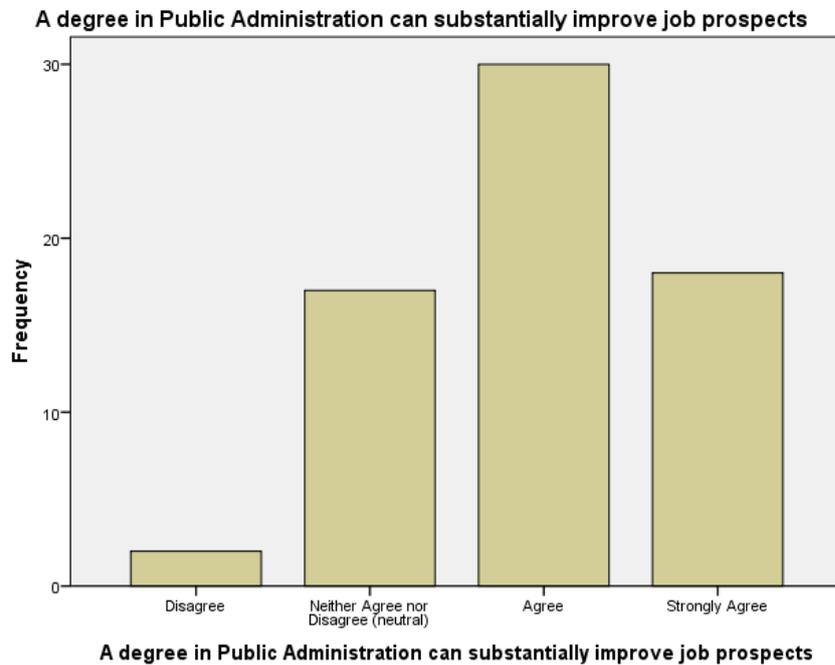


**Table 5.8: Awareness of how public administration and management works**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Disagree	5	7.5	7.6
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	5	7.5	7.6
Valid Agree	34	50.7	51.5
Valid Strongly Agree	22	32.8	33.3
Valid Total	66	98.5	100.0
Missing System	1	1.5	
Total	67	100.0	

The results show that 50.7 percent of the respondents agreed, while 32.8 percent strongly agreed. About 7.5 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, followed by 7.5 percent of those who disagreed. The results clearly show that respondents are aware and understand the importance of Public Administration and its role in South African government. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1997: 13) state that, public administration is concerned with handling public matters and the management of public institutions in such a way that resources are used efficiently to promote the general welfare of the public.

**Figure 5.11: A degree in Public Administration can substantially improve job prospects**

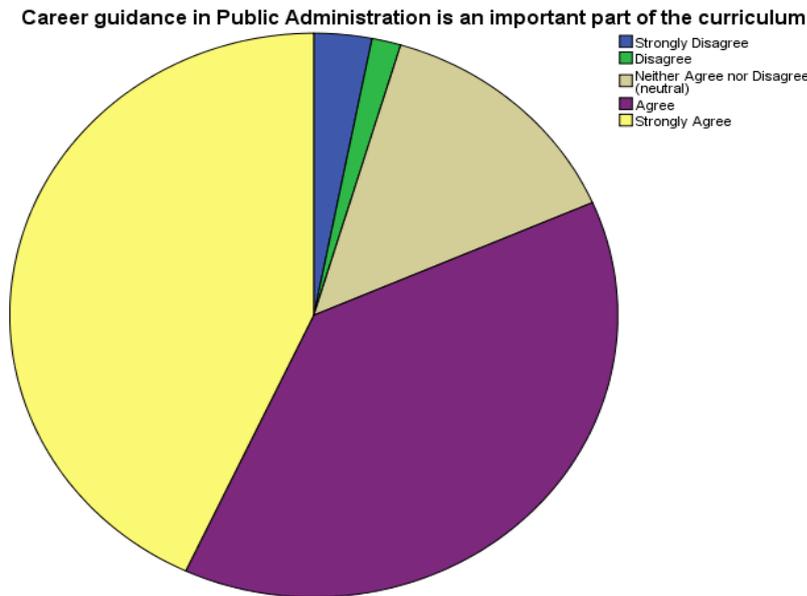


**Table 5.9: A degree in Public Administration can substantially improve job prospects**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	2	3.0	3.0	3.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	17	25.4	25.4	28.4
Valid Agree	30	44.8	44.8	73.1
Strongly Agree	18	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that 44.8 percent of the respondents agreed, while 26.9 percent strongly agreed. About 25.4 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, followed by 3 percent of those who disagreed. Public Administration is ever-changing and requires new professionals. Public Administration careers come in private, public and non-profit sector positions. Therefore as stated in the literature respondents also need to learn how best to research the job markets to see what opportunities are available to them, how to present themselves effectively to prospective employers, and how to make considered decisions about their careers.

**Figure 5.12: Career guidance in Public Administration is an important part of the curriculum**



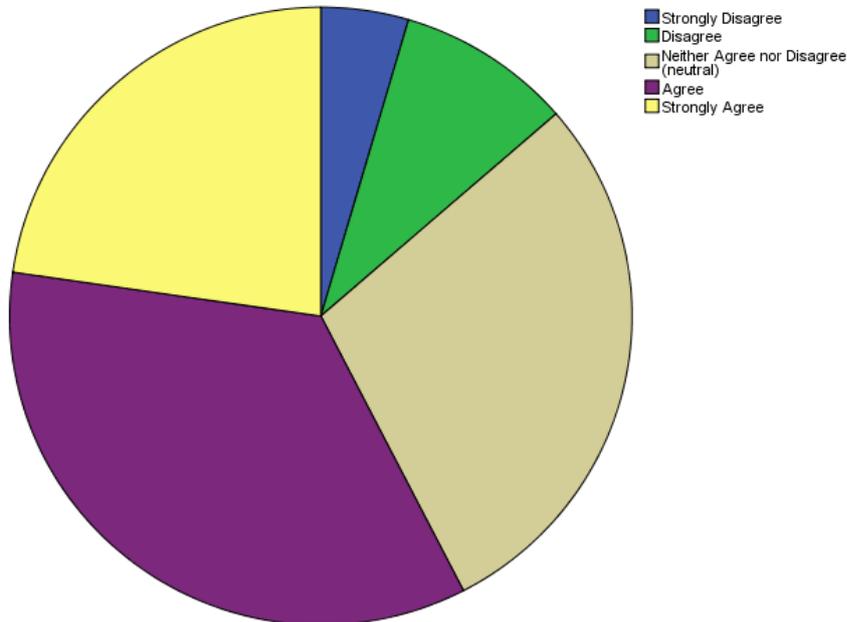
**Table 5.10: Career guidance in Public Administration is an important part of the curriculum**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	2	3.0	3.1
Valid Disagree	1	1.5	1.5
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	9	13.4	13.8
Valid Agree	25	37.3	38.5
Valid Strongly Agree	28	41.8	43.1
Valid Total	65	97.0	100.0
Missing System	2	3.0	
Total	67	100.0	

The Figure show that 37.3 percent of the respondents agreed, while 41.8 strongly agreed. About 13.4 of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, followed by 3 percent of those who strongly disagreed and 1.5 percent who disagreed. Career guidance is imperative and is the responsibility of the student/graduate to understand the industry, the skills required to advance their own career development so as to manage their career planning successfully (May, 2005:346). In essence one could say that, career guidance provides students/graduates with direction, to explore the routes available within the field of Public Administration.

**Figure 5.13: The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) does offer career services and guidance to students**

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) does offer career services and guidance to students



**Table 5.11: The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) does offer career services and guidance to students**

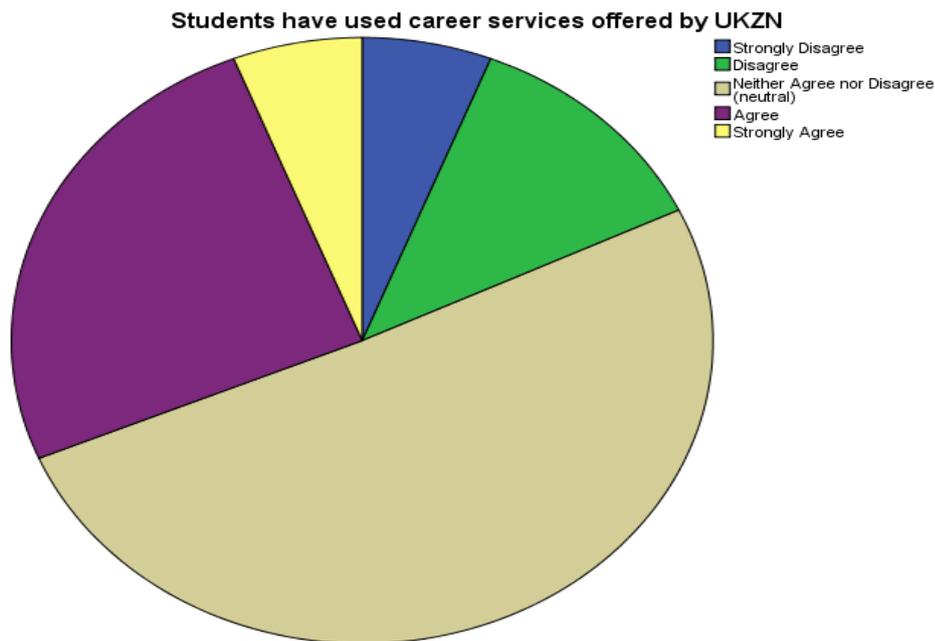
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	4.5	4.5
Disagree	6	9.0	9.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	19	28.4	28.8
Agree	23	34.3	34.8
Strongly Agree	15	22.4	22.7
Total	66	98.5	100.0
Missing System	1	1.5	
Total	67	100.0	

The Figure shows that 34.3 percent of the respondents agree, while 22.4 percent strongly agree. About 28.4 percent of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, followed by 4.5 percent of those who strongly disagree and 9 percent who disagree. The University of KwaZulu-Natal, Student Support for the College of Law and Management Studies (Department of Public Administration falls under this College) offers career counselling and assessment of students to assist them with their study and career choice, career planning and career development while studying at the university. Student employment services offered are as follows:

- Graduate Recruitment seminars and presentations;
- Careers/Employer Exhibition;
- Guest presentations by Top 100 companies;
- On campus promotions;
- Part-time and full-time employment;
- Trainee and internship positions;
- Training and development in the job search process including online application;
- Workshops on job market skills and branding;
- Mock interview programmes; and
- Resource materials on company profiles and access to employer booklets and publications.

These services have been made available therefore it is up to the student/graduate to utilise these services to better equip them in their careers.

**Figure 5.14: Students have used career services offered by UKZN**



**Table 5.12: Students have used career services offered by UKZN**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	6.0	6.0	6.0
Disagree	8	11.9	11.9	17.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	34	50.7	50.7	68.7
Agree	17	25.4	25.4	94.0
Strongly Agree	4	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The Figure shows that 25.4 percent of the respondents agree, while 6 percent strongly agree. About 50.7 percent neither agree nor disagree, followed by 6 percent who strongly disagree and 11.9 percent who disagree. A reason why 50.7 percent of respondents neither agree nor disagree could suggest that they are not familiar with the kind of services offered by the University.

**Figure 5.15: Vocational work is important as it enhances employability**

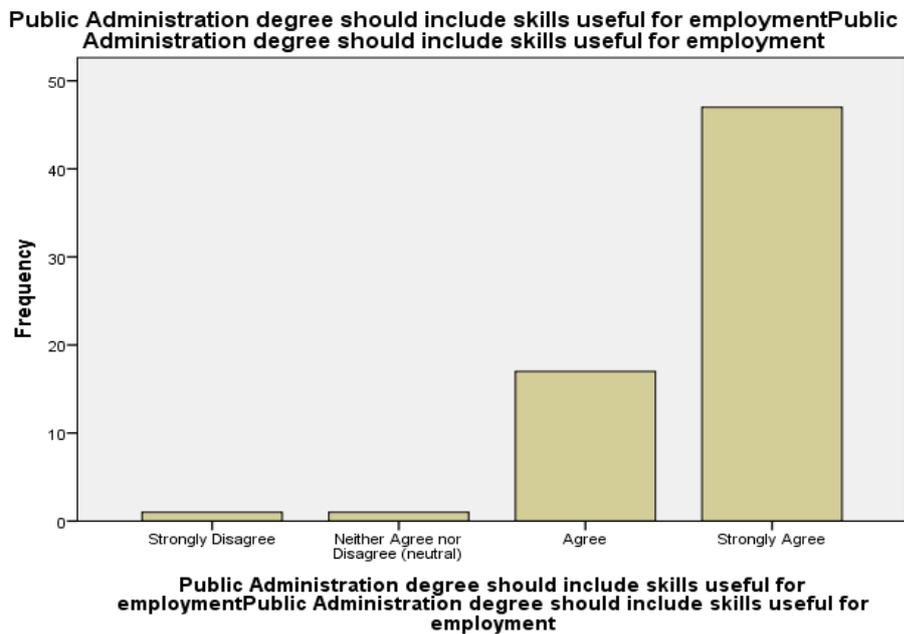


**Table 5.13: Vocational work is important as it enhances employability**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	3	4.5	4.5	6.0
Agree	23	34.3	34.3	40.3
Strongly Agree	40	59.7	59.7	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that 34.3 percent of the respondents agree, while 59.7 percent strongly agree. About 4.5 percent neither agree nor disagree and 1.5 percent who strongly disagree. As submitted in the literature review, employers value people who have undertaken work experience, been able to reflect upon that experience and then go on to articulate and apply what they have learnt (Work Experience Group, 2002).

**Figure 5.16: Public Administration degree should include skills useful for employment**

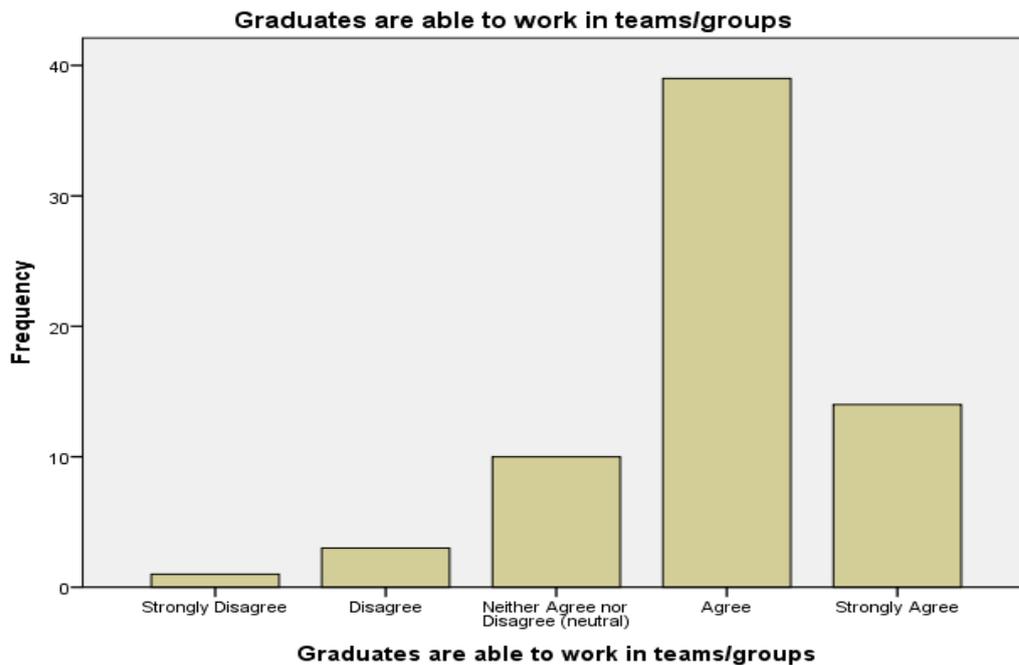


**Table 5.14: Public Administration degree should include skills useful for employment**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	1	1.5	1.5
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	1	1.5	1.5
Valid Agree	17	25.4	25.8
Valid Strongly Agree	47	70.1	71.2
Valid Total	66	98.5	100.0
Missing System	1	1.5	
Total	67	100.0	

The Table shows that 25.4 percent of the respondents agree, while 70.1 percent strongly agree. About 1.5 percent neither agrees nor disagrees and 1.5 percent strongly disagrees. As outlined in the literature study, public administration graduates are the main focus of this study, one can deduce that, public administration as a programme sets the foundation for equipping students/graduates with the skills and competencies that assist graduates so that they become employable. This can be done by allowing employers to be able to use graduates as a tool, as the knowledge gained from the university is universal.

**Figure 5.17: Graduates are able to work in teams/groups**

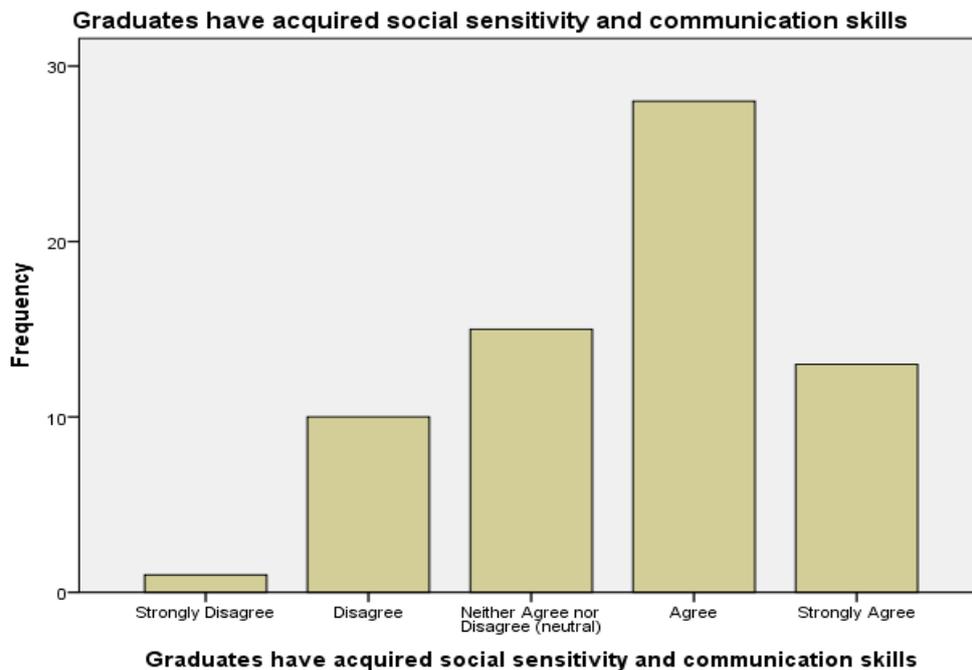


**Table 5.15: Graduates are able to work in teams/groups**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
Disagree	3	4.5	4.5	6.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	10	14.9	14.9	20.9
Agree	39	58.2	58.2	79.1
Strongly Agree	14	20.9	20.9	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that 58.2 percent of respondents agree while 20.9 percent strongly agree. About 14.9 percent neither agree nor disagree, followed by 4.5 percent who disagree and 1.5 percent who strongly disagree. As indicated in the literature review, employers want graduates with relevant subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, but in addition to this they are looking for well-developed generic skills in a number of areas (Harvey et al., 1997). In this case graduate ability to work in a team/group falls under generic skills. In essence one could say that graduates working in a team allows for one to understand the dynamics and the diversity of other graduates or employees in a working environment and in ensuring that goals are achieved.

**Figure 5.18: Graduates have acquired social sensitivity and communication skills**

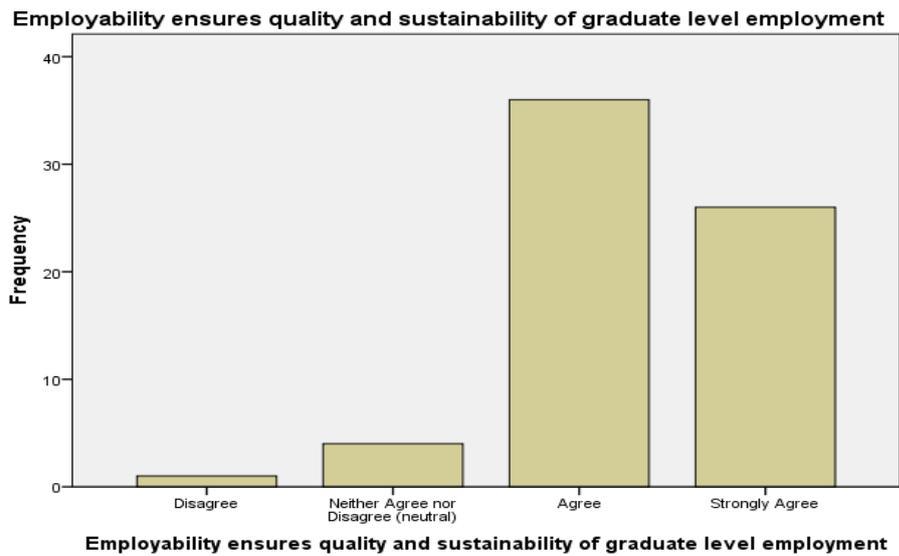


**Table 5.16: Graduates have acquired social sensitivity and communication skills**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
Disagree	10	14.9	14.9	16.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	15	22.4	22.4	38.8
Agree	28	41.8	41.8	80.6
Strongly Agree	13	19.4	19.4	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that 41.8 percent of respondents agree, while 19.4 percent strongly agree. About 22.4 percent neither agree nor disagree, followed by 14.9 percent who disagree and 1.5 percent who strongly disagree. Goleman (1998: 317), who has done much to make emotional intelligence/social sensitivity accessible to a wide audience, defines it as, the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. Therefore the way in which we communicate with each other is essential, as indicated in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 5.19: Employability ensures quality and sustainability of graduate level employment**

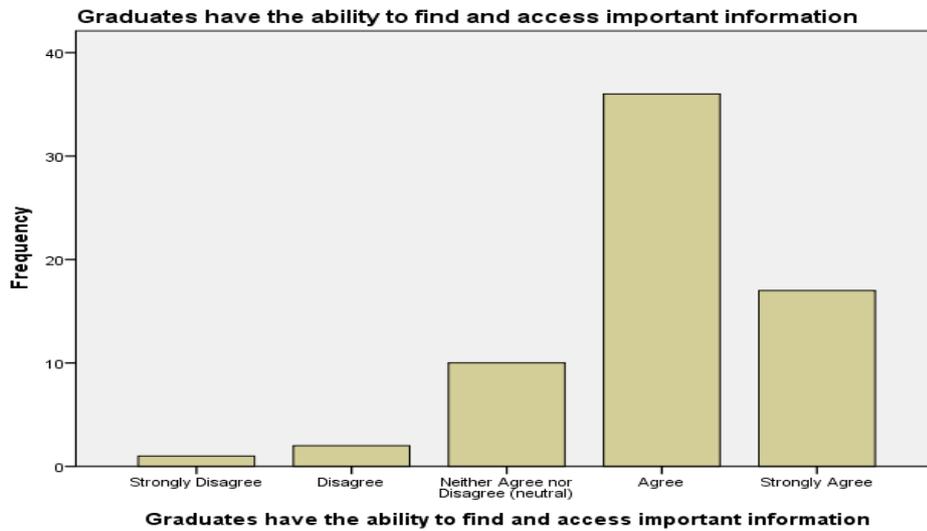


**Table 5.17: Employability ensures quality and sustainability of graduate level employment**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	4	6.0	6.0	7.5
Agree	36	53.7	53.7	61.2
Strongly Agree	26	38.8	38.8	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that 53.7 percent of respondents agree, while 38.8 percent strongly agree. About 6 percent neither agree nor disagree and 1.5 disagree. As indicated in the literature above, employability is a combination of factors and processes that enable people to progress towards employment, to remain employed, and/or to advance in the workplace (Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2003; Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth, 2004; Houston, 2005). According to Garrido (2012: 17) as persons enhance their skills, develop experience, and become more competitive job applicants, their employability improves. Even if their position in the labour market never changes, their employability may have been enhanced. In essence one could say that, employability ensures quality and sustainability of graduate level employment.

**Figure 5.20: Graduates have the ability to find and access important information**

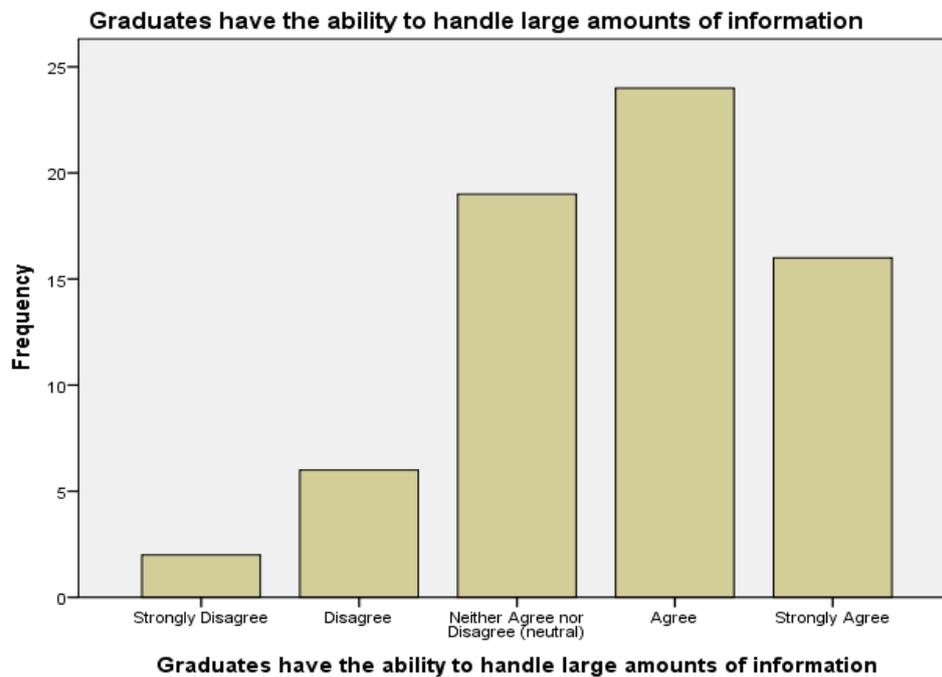


**Table 5.18: Graduates have the ability to find and access important information**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	1	1.5	1.5
Valid Disagree	2	3.0	3.0
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	10	14.9	15.2
Valid Agree	36	53.7	54.5
Valid Strongly Agree	17	25.4	25.8
Total	66	98.5	100.0
Missing System	1	1.5	
Total	67	100.0	

The Table shows that 53.7 percent of respondents agree, while 25.4 percent strongly agree. About 14.9 percent neither agree nor disagree, followed by 3 percent who disagree and 1.5 percent who strongly disagree. The American Library Association cited in Breen and Fallon (2005:179), states that to be information literate, an individual must recognise what information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the information needed. Ultimately information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how information is organised, how to find information and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. In essence one can deduce that this is a skill that graduates need to develop in order to succeed in the work place and societal context.

**Figure 5.21: Graduates have the ability to handle large amounts of information**

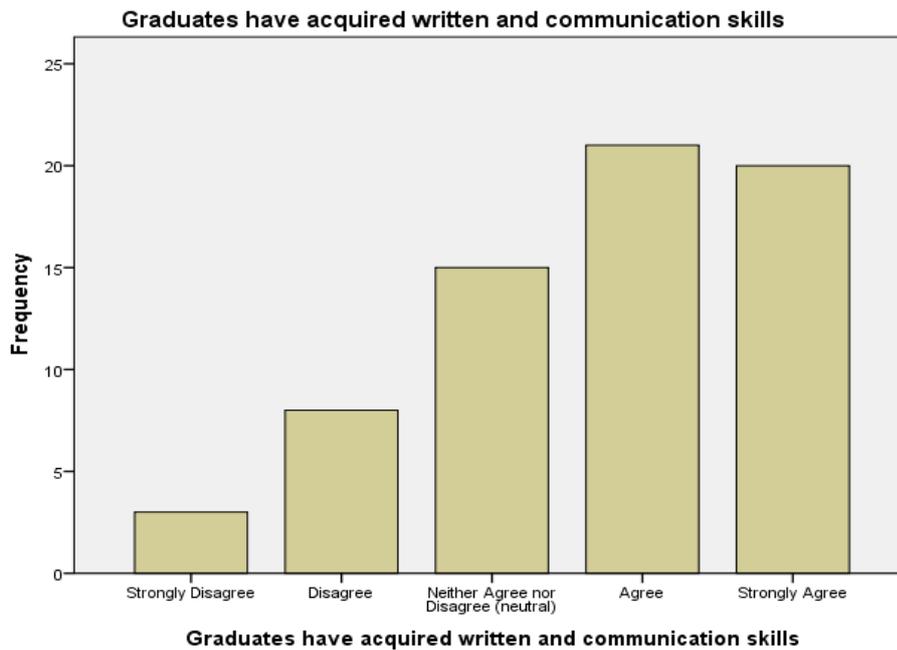


**Table 5.19: Graduates have the ability to handle large amounts of information**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	6	9.0	9.0	11.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	19	28.4	28.4	40.3
Agree	24	35.8	35.8	76.1
Strongly Agree	16	23.9	23.9	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that 35.8 percent of respondents agree, while 23.9 strongly agree. About 28.4 percent neither agree nor disagree, followed by 9 percent who disagree and 3 percent who strongly disagree. According to Breen and Fallon (2005: 179) too much information is a challenge for students. Therefore it is essential that the academic staff and University Library staff work together in providing graduates/students with the necessary support to ensure that graduates are able to handle large amounts of information.

**Figure 5.22: Graduates have acquired written and communication skills**



**Table 5.20: Graduates have acquired written and communication skills**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	4.5	4.5	4.5
Disagree	8	11.9	11.9	16.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree (neutral)	15	22.4	22.4	38.8
Agree	21	31.3	31.3	70.1
Strongly Agree	20	29.9	29.9	100.0
Total	67	100.0	100.0	

The Table shows that 31.3 percent of the respondents agree, while 29.9 percent strongly agree. About 22.4 percent neither agree nor disagree, followed by 11.9 percent who disagree and 4.5 percent who strongly disagree. As illustrated in the literature review, employers want graduates with relevant subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, but in addition to this are looking for well-developed generic skills in a number of areas (Harvey et al. 1997). Written and communication skills are included and are important in this regard to ensure well developed graduates are produced and that they are employable.

## **PART C**

### **5.4 PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS**

The following section provides the qualitative analysis, which is the result of analysing, five academic staff of UKZN in the Department of Public Administration, two public sector Departmental Heads and one Head of Student Counselling, self-administered interview questionnaires. The purpose of this qualitative response was to compliment the quantitative analysis and identify any gaps that University foresees from the programmes being offered. The following section discusses the responses.

The survey sought to discover how the respondents found the Public Administration programme, with special emphasis on employability, relationship between the Department of Public Administration at UKZN and public sector, graduates capacity to meet the requirements of the employer, intellectual abilities and conceptual depth to perform in a working environment and, the skills to enable graduates to cope in the labour market.

#### **Academic staff**

##### **5.4.1 Graduate meet requirement of employability**

Interviewee one (31 January 2014): the Academic Leader of the Department of Public Administration at UKZN stated that Public Administration is about people or graduates going out there to serve the people. Graduates in this field are employed to support the government mandate and to contribute to service delivery. Therefore graduates in this programme are trained to become holistic persons, must be ethical and non-discriminatory, knowledgeable; have innovative skills in solving problems without violating the code of conduct; and to serve citizens with compassion and integrity. Harvey et al (1997) contend that employers want graduates with relevant subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, but in addition to this, employers are looking for well-developed generic skills in a number of areas. Interviewee two (11 February 2014) stated that a well-rounded, knowledge based in terms of the subject matter and basic skills to execute basic tasks given in the work place. Interviewee three (12 February 2014) said commitment, dedication, work ethos, understanding the nature of the business, graduates should poses the

necessary skills, competencies and knowledge relevant to the field. Interviewee four (18 February 2014) highlighted a graduate who has acquired critical and analytical skills, the ability to work in a team, identify and solve problems, conduct research, oral and written communication skills. Interview five (20 February 2014), graduate that is able to apply theory into practice, and one that has personal attributes.

#### **5.4.2 Understanding Public Administration and its role in the Public Sector**

Interviewee one (31 January 2014) highlighted that public administration is all about how the government works, its policies, legislation and reality in the conditions of the country. Students need to understand that this field is about making the life of citizens better, as a graduate you are the change agent, where one can make an impact. Interviewee two (11 February 2014), understanding of how government works, responsibility and duties of the public sector, public institutions and individuals appointed to carry out tasks. Interview three (12 February 2014) adds that, public sector in general is ever changing; hence the demands of society will require people that understand the nature and extent of their demands. Therefore, the role of public administration is to attend to these problems. Interviewee four (18 February 2014) emphasised that public administration is a “calling” commitment to the public good, value orientated and concerned with socio-economic change. Interviewee five (20 February 2014), students/graduates need to understand the Public Administration is an applied science; these graduates need to have a clear perspective of what Public Administration is, as it is a complex field. Students/graduates need to take initiative to find out about the course to better equip them for their career in Public Administration and their future prospects. Van der Walldt and Du Toit (1997: 13) state that, public administration is concerned with handling public matters and the management of public institutions in such a way that resources are used efficiently to promote the general welfare of the public. One can conclude that, there is a significant linkage between public administration programme and the public sector. This result corresponds with the quantitative finding from the research questionnaire which revealed that majority of the sample deemed their understanding of public administration and its role in public management.

### **5.4.3 Graduate employability development**

Interviewee one (31 January 2014) stated that practical aspect of public administration is important. Graduates need to be aware of the issues that confront society and come up with solutions, problem solving approach, read, understand, communicate and engagement with other people is important. Course coordinators also invite guest lecturers to engage with students to give them a more practical perspective of the programme. Interviewee two (11 February 2014), committed and passionate students for the programme, develop personally and professionally so it will impact positively in service delivery and in communities. Interview three (12 February 2014) contends that, we need to rethink the pedagogic approach, promote active learning and create own perspective of reality. Interviewee four (18 February 2014) added that, constructivist teaching and learning strategies, the ability to conceptualise abstract theories and apply them in a practical aspect and come up with new theories, not adopt. In terms of Interviewee five (20 February 2014), the Department of Public Administration at UKZN must liaise and form relationships with government organisations, to expose students/graduates to the practical aspect of the field and how things work in the workplace.

### **5.4.4 Type of resources needed to develop skills**

Interviewee one (31 January 2014) admitted that, 21<sup>st</sup> century technology in running of government is important, and training in Information Technology is incorporated in the programme. Communication and writing skills need to be developed which are key issues within the programme as an English module is not incorporated in the public administration curricula. Issues of ethics and skills are crucial. Interviewee two (11 February 2014) adds that, adequate human and financial resources, reasonable amount of staff so that the enterprise is kept running, qualified lecturers which is a challenge as there are limited resources to fund academic staff. Interviewee three (12 February 2014), field trips for instance, project sites, Integrated Development Plan meetings, council meetings (where policies are debated) and guest lectures on site. Interviewee four (18 February 2014), e-learning, opportunities to stimulate work place experiences, sufficient staff and employment of post-graduate. Interviewee five (20 February 2014) emphasises that resources are available such as, tutorials; lectures; Academic Development Officers; Library; and computer labs. It is up to the students to use the resources available to them.

#### **5.4.5 Convert work learnt into working environment**

Interviewee one (31 January 2014) emphasised the practical aspect and that students' learning is flawed as they cram their notes, spill in the exam and forget afterwards. Students need to learn how to think and be able to put information down in their own words. Interviewee two (11 February 2014), students do have insight. Interviewee three (12 February 2014) submits that, students are not able to convert knowledge into working environment, as they don't engage themselves with literature. Interviewee four (18 February 2014), agrees, as students do engage themselves with literature and are encouraged to conduct independent research. Interviewee five (20 February 2014), this is a challenge. Students/graduates have not acquired those skills, for instance, internships are not available for everyone. Not everyone in the municipalities are capacitated enough to mentor a graduate because of the level of education and communication.

### **PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYERS**

#### **5.4.6 Graduate skills and competencies**

Interviewee one (10 December 2013) Head Career Development Officer at UKZN, outlines a survey conducted by the Career Development Officer with 62 (sixty-two) employers in South Africa, it was found that employers affirmed that graduates need to develop skills and competencies, part time work, community engagement to possess the necessary skills and competencies. Interviewee two (13 December 2013) the Head of the Human Resource Unit indicated that the main theories incorporated in the Public Administration curricula cannot be the fault of universities, and may not be enough to skill graduates. Some programmes offered in higher education institutions have become so saturated and that graduates need to explore how relevant are the courses they enrol in, in terms of what the government needs. Interviewee three (20 December 2013) admits that, graduates in general do not possess enough skills and competencies when entering the labour market. From an employer's perspective graduates personal capabilities, teamwork and educational background are essential aspects that enable a graduate to enter the labour market. Hence, the former Higher Education and Training Deputy Minister, Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize reported that, South African universities are producing graduates that could "hit the workplace running," yet it seems the exact opposite is happening. At a time

when graduates are increasingly being relied upon to add value and foster innovative practice in organisations, concerns for the impact of an endemic graduate skills gap are growing (bdlive Online:2011). This result corresponds with the quantitative findings from the research questionnaires which revealed that there are students who have not acquired the requisite skills and competencies.

#### **5.4.7 Expectations of Employer**

Interviewee two (13 December 2013) states that, many students enrolling for Public Administration as a field of study are of the assumption that it is an easy programme. Graduates need to understand that government is a complex environment and therefore knowledge and expertise are important to guide process of government and ensure that services are delivered to the public/citizens. Interviewee three (20 December 2013) stated that performance is a key component graduates need to understand this in order for them to become employable. For instance, there are cases where employers are sometimes unfair as they expect wonders from these graduates especially in cases where a particular department within an organisation is experiencing backlogs. Internships are therefore important to equip graduates with the skills and to ensure that they are capacitated to perform their duties. Interviewee one (10 December 2013), cannot comment as it is discipline specific. But as a University, graduates must be adequately prepared in interviews and preparing competent curriculum vitae's. Graduate must also demonstrate teamwork, planning, be analytical thinkers especially in their career path.

#### **5.4.8 Integrated learning**

Interviewee two (13 December 2013) and Interviewee three (20 December 2013) both describe the importance of making sure that graduates are equipped with the necessary skills in terms of experience so they are able to perform their duties. Interviewee one (10 December 2013), Work Integrated Learning will capacitate and equip students/graduates adequately and give them exposure in terms of work ethics, organisational culture, organisational vision and mission statement, teamwork and to work with a multi professional and diverse team.

#### **5.4.9 Skills, knowledge and understanding gained in public administration degree enhance employability**

Interviewee two (13 December 2013) and Interviewee three (20 December 2013) both agree that skills, knowledge and understanding gained in Public Administration degree will enhance graduate employability as these are the main attributes that the employer will look for especially when graduates are being considered for filling an internship post or any other post. Interviewee one (10 December 2013) adds that, students must go for Job Hunting Skills Training workshops. The theoretical component prepares them to work public/governmental institutions. Soft skills and competencies need to be developed.

#### **5.4.10 Graduates self-sufficient to execute a job search plan**

Interviewee one (10 December 2013) stated that, graduates cannot execute a job search plan currently. To navigate their career path they need supportive interventions, to develop skills such as confidence, self-esteem and attitude. Interviewee two (13 December 2013), graduates need to be able to plan and organise themselves in such a way that, graduates may become entrepreneurs by using the skills acquired and identify gaps in government where they would be able to specialise and render services to government and close that gap, as a result create employment for other persons. Interviewee three (20 December 2013) outlines clearly that, the rate of employment diminishes this, only when a graduate is employed and knowledgeable are they able to organise and execute a job search plan.

## **PART D**

### **5.5 INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The descriptive findings in the preceding section highlighted areas that the participants felt are affecting students and graduates in the Public Administration programme, its efficiency and effectiveness in ensuring a well-rounded and employable graduate is produced. This section will summarise the findings on the literature and the objectives of both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews from the participants.

#### **Findings based on Literature**

The following findings below are based on the literature review on the research study:

#### **Effective Public Administration and Employability**

According to Hendriks (2011:62), public administration practitioners are required to perform their functions in a rapidly changing environment. This means that, students enrolling in the public administration and management programme must be prepared to such an extent that they can add value to the employing organisations. Bester and Boshoff in Hendriks (2011:62) stress the importance of the integration of theory and practice to equip students for the demands made by the complexity of the modern work environment. Furthermore, Van der Walt (2013:75) states that this requires a Public Administration with high capacity that is well organised, effective and productive. On the other hand, Kruss (2004: 674) states that the direct link between higher education and the labour market is essential to ensure that graduate expectations are met.

Hence, in the public service, Section 195 (1) of the RSA Constitution of 1996, further provides other principles that ought to inform Public Service Delivery: 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 developmental-orientated; 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 practice, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated; and public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation. Thus employability of graduates produced at UKZN can then be attributed to the joint effect of public administration core skills and competencies in the labour market.

### **Barriers of Effective Public Administration and Employability**

Even though there are definite benefits, there are still challenges. For instance, the linkage between the Department of Public Administration at UKZN and the employer (public sector), the economic changes - the requirements of flexibility, adaptability and innovation, the development of information technology, have led to new education demands, argues Kruss (2004: 675). Higher education institutions are consistently blamed for soft skills deficiencies and are now pursuing policies on the development of generic skills (Jackson 2010: 29-58). The lack of graduate generic skills, in essence, public administration needs to ensure students and graduates produced are resourceful, enterprising, adaptable and possess a range of skills to become professional public servants. The education sector urgently requires continued emphasis and monitoring to ensure that learners are adequately prepared for entry into the labour force (Pauw et al., 2006).

### **Conclusion on Literature Review**

The relationship between higher education institutions and the public sector as an employer is essential so as to bridge the skills challenges faced that impact on graduate employability. The public sector departments need to play a developmental role to assist and expose students enrolled in the Public Administration programme to practice through learnerships and internship programmes.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION BASED ON FIELDWORK RESULTS**

### **Objective 1: Evaluating the perception of students and graduates regarding Public Administration Programme**

This objective sought to evaluate the perception of students and graduates regarding the Public Administration programme.

**Fieldwork:** Participants provided a level of understanding of public administration as most of the participants generally agreed and recognised its importance and its role in the South African government, as the vast majority (88 percent) of the participants totally agreed and are aware of the field of public administration. 83 percent of the participants also agreed that they are aware of how public administration works. A total of 71.1 percent of the participants agreed that a degree in Public Administration can substantially improve job prospects. This could mean that students and graduates understand and recognise that Public Administration is ever-changing and requires new professionals; therefore participants need to learn how best to research the job markets to see what opportunities are available to them, how to present themselves effectively to prospective employers, and how to make considered decisions about their careers. However, the study also revealed that less than 60 percent of the participants did not agree and lacked understanding of public administration. This may result in students and graduates in their final year of study in the Public Administration programme still do not have a clear perspective of their chosen field.

**Conclusion:** Based on the responses it is clear that students and graduates are aware of public administration and understand its complex environment in which South African government is run. However, the Public Administration department intervention of revisiting the way in which the programme is promoted so that students and graduates enrolling in the programme make sound decisions about their careers.

## **Objective 2: Assessing the employability of UKZN graduates**

This objective seeks to assess whether UKZN graduates are employable.

**Fieldwork:** Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful (Pool and Sewell, 2007:280). The study reveals that 54 percent of the participants lack generic skills; this is supported by qualitative results where the vast majority (32 out of 67) indicated that students and graduates lack interpersonal communication skills. The results also revealed that in the Public Administration programme a total of 61.2 percent of the participants agreed and have acquired written and communication skills, 22.4 percent participants neither agreed nor disagreed, 11.9 percent disagreed and 4.5 percent strongly disagreed.

In essence, the study reveals that there is a lack of generic skills which in turn compromises the quality of students and graduates produced. In fact the introduction of more presentations, dialogues in class and public-speaking, should ensure the enhancement of a well-rounded graduate and therefore employable. Encouraging students to improve their interpersonal and communication skills ultimately produces a high calibre graduate that is effortlessly introduced to the dynamic work environment.

**Conclusion:** Pop (2010: 75) states that communication, self-motivation, teamwork and directedness are the most important soft skills for graduate employability. Over and above lecturer-to-student academic conferences, it is imperative for students to partake in educational extramural activities to strengthen their discourses and fluency in professional robust communication i.e. debating clubs and entrepreneurial clubs.

### **Objective 3: Assessing enterprising capacity of students and graduates**

This objective sought to assess enterprising capacity of students and graduates.

**Fieldwork:** Graduates need to have consolidated their intellectual ability and knowledge foundation in order to engage effectively with workplace demands and benefit from workplace opportunities (Griesel and Parker 2009:12). A total of 78.4 percent of participants agreed and have the ability to find and access important information. Graduates have the ability to handle large amounts of information, results revealed that, a total of 59.7 percent agreed, 28.4 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, 9 percent disagreed and 3 percent strongly disagreed. These results are supported by qualitative results where academic staff emphasised students ability to think, understanding and to convert knowledge acquired into the work environment.

The study revealed that there is a lack of enterprising capacity which according to the study results, a total of 31.4 percent of students agreed and utilise career services provided at the university. 50.7 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, 11 percent disagreed and 6 percent strongly disagreed.

**Conclusion:** Based on the responses, there is a gap that needs to be bridged in equipping students and graduates with knowledge; understanding and skills to be employable. Therefore students and graduates also need to utilise the career services provided by the university to explore and to help them sustain career paths also in their chosen field of study, which is Public Administration.

#### **Objective 4: Evaluating the resourcefulness of students and graduates**

This objective seeks to evaluate the resourcefulness of students and graduates.

**Fieldwork:** it is suggested that a graduate who could be defined as resourceful would be imaginative, creative, adaptable, a willing learner – in effect, they would have most of the skills already listed under the “generic” category (Pool and Sewell 2007:280-281). This study reveals, as mentioned and emphasised in objective 1, that 54 percent of students and graduates lack generic skills. This is also supported by qualitative results as, in this field graduates are there to advance the employers mandate and to contribute to service delivery. Therefore graduates in this programme are trained to become holistic persons, must be ethical and non-discriminatory, knowledgeable, skilled and innovative in solving problems without violating code of conduct; and to serve citizens with compassion and integrity. In essence these results may also be a contributing factor of students and graduates lacking interpersonal communication skills. The ability to be flexible and adaptive in the work place is critical in capacity building of graduates so that they are able to sustain themselves efficiently and effectively when entering the labour market (Greisal and Parker 2009: 16).

**Conclusion:** Providing students with the opportunities to gain the necessary skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes is obviously important, but so too is providing opportunities for reflection on and evaluation of the learning experiences that have already taken place (Pool and Sewell 2007: 284). Based on the responses, it is clear that students and graduates have evaluated and reflected on the attributes that need further development, to ensure that they become employable and meet the expectations of the employer.

#### **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided an overview of the most significant findings obtained from the empirical analysis of the data. It is quite evident that students and graduates in the Public Administration programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal are engulfed with the challenges of equipping students and graduates with generic skills and building of relations with the public sector employers to ensure needs of the labour

market are met. The quantitative results show that the Public Administration Department at UKZN has not established formal relations with the public sector employers to ensure that the products that walk out of HEIs must meet the needs of the economy. This is supported by the qualitative results. The vast majority (32 out of 67) of the participants indicated that generic skills are a constraint which hindered graduates from becoming employable. In this regard, it is critical that the Department puts in place measures that can gear towards developing relations with public sector employers and improve skills development that will ensure competent and capacitated graduates in the public service profession. The next chapter (Chapter 6) will present the conclusions of the study as well as make pertinent recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The public service is in need of educated, trained and professionally qualified public servants to foster and transform public service delivery. In essence, graduates produced in universities need to be capacitated and professional enough to ensure that public services are delivered economically, efficiently and effectively to the South African citizens. The complexity of the ever-changing environment at university in shaping graduates to meet requirements of employers and or become employable are essential, but ultimately, what really matters is the maintenance of employability within the Public Administration programme in developing graduates skills and competencies to ensure graduates become employable that will determine the successful attainment of this objective.

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn and recommendations made based on the finding of the study. It is supposed that the recommendations made will allow UKZN Department of Public Governance to examine the implications and implement the recommendations made for effective service delivery.

#### **6.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study were to:

- Investigate the linkage between Public Administration programme and the public sector organisations;
- Establish whether graduates produced are capacitated enough and meet the requirements of the employer;
- Ascertain whether there are any innovative provisions of work experience opportunities within, or external to, programme of study; and
- Examine whether students graduating have attained the required employability skills to participate meaningfully in the graduate labour market.

### **6.3 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research attempted to answer the following key questions:

- How do students/graduates feel about Public Administration as a field of study?
- What skills are needed by Public Administration graduates to meet the requirements of the public sector?
- How do new recruits/graduates show intellectual ability and conceptual depth to perform well?
- What suggestions can be proposed to ensure that graduates are adequately skilled to cope with workplace tasks?

### **6.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

A literature review was undertaken to meet the objectives of the study. Themes that are related to employability and their influences on institutional success and failures were located in the existing Public Administration and Management literature in salient theories and other social research studies. The study aimed to build on the conceptual framework of Public Administration and employability concept, locating the UKZN Department of Public Governance graduates within the framework.

The following discussion highlights the focus of various chapters presented in this research.

Relevant information was obtained with regards to objectives that are mentioned in Chapter One and key concepts were defined. The Chapter emphasised the significance of building human capacity and professionalism of public servants will ensure South African citizens receive services efficiently and effectively. It also explored the background and created the context in which employability of graduates and Public Administration in UKZN was discussed.

Chapter Two provided insight into the conceptual and contextual framework of Public Administration as related to employability in the Department of Public Governance at

UKZN, including legislative framework. Based on the rationale of employability, the linkage of higher education with the labour market is closely related to the employability of graduates. Therefore the Department of Public Administration at UKZN is firmly guided by the legislative mandate and the development of graduates skills and competencies to ensure employability.

In Chapter Three, an overview of employability, organisational change, leadership and administrative management were highlighted in detail as theoretical perspectives. Employability signifies a web of understanding and the complexity of the ever changing environment at university and in shaping students/graduates to meet the requirements of the employer. The influence on leadership impacts on the development of students/graduates as new cadres, especially in the Discipline of Public Governance at UKZN where the main objective is to develop a new cadre of competent, professional, effective and efficient managers critical to transformation of South African public and non- governmental sector. Organisational change will therefore be a critical element in attaining and embedding this change.

Chapter Four focused on the empirical study of on employability of graduates at UKZN, a public administration perspective, was outlined in detail and the reasons for the methodology chosen. This chapter also highlighted the research design, data collection procedures and layout of the study. The researcher described the target population or sample population. The statistical procedures that were used for data analysis as well as appropriateness are also presented in this chapter.

Data was presented and analysed in Chapter Five by using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and various statistical tools and methods of analysis. The interpretation of data was enhanced by the use of tables and graphs which provided concise summaries of the results of the empirical study. This chapter also presented the calculated values of the test statistics and the levels of significance.

Chapter Six draws conclusions from the literature review and the empirical survey and relevant recommendations are proposed. The statistical results presented in Chapters five inform the recommendations to the research problems presented at the beginning of this research study. One of the key aspects of this Chapter is the

conclusions that were justifiably drawn from the empirical research. The results of the research show that students have not acquired essential attributes to meet employability requirements with high level of students/graduates lacking generic skills. The Department of Public Governance at UKZN has no relationship with public sector employers as all that is imparted to students/graduates is theory and no practical experience. Furthermore, the evidence of limited resources offered within the Department of Public Governance hinders skills development of student performance especially in terms of writing skills. The findings of this research raise new areas for future research, particularly exploring the pedagogy strategy to enhance the development of skills of students/graduates within the Department of Public Governance at UKZN. The research sets out to examine the employability of UKZN graduates with a Public Administration perspective, and from the research undertaken and analyses of data collected, several recommendations are proposed.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

This study has highlighted the education of public servants and its importance, particularly in South Africa, where there is a definite need for skilled, educated and trained public servants. Jenvey (2012: 121) emphasises the evident gap between higher education systems and the workforce, which hinders skills development and employment of youth. On the other hand, Ponge (2013: 80) contends that graduates are experiencing difficulties entering the labour market, hence any university seeking relevance today must produce graduates who would employ people rather than search for employment. Therefore, there is mounting pressure on universities to become more receptive to society and its economic needs.

Sudha (2013: 152) argues that employers' expectations are changing day by day and graduates have to obtain skills for their sustainability. Knight and Yorke (2011: 111) highlight the concept of employability for advancing graduates and developing skills of students which in turn promotes lifelong learning. University students should have knowledge, thinking skills, personal attributes and practical experience (Weligmage 2009: 166). According to Tucker (2000: 336) key to employability as educators is for students to graduate with a solid foundation in knowledge and skills they will need to be productive managers and effective leaders. In essence, the purpose of this

research study explores employability of graduates at UKZN, a public administration perspective, to evaluate whether students within the public administration programme have attained employability and met the public sector employer requirements.

The following section highlights **key findings** of the study.

- Employer input that will enrich Public Administration curricular

The involvement of public sector employers within the Public Administration curricular is important to achieve quality of graduates and world class service delivery. This should be seen within the framework of its widest possible meaning all of which can contribute to the realization of the production of graduates that hit the workplace running. This will ensure students/graduates receive the necessary exposure and are capacitated with well-developed skills that meet and add value to the public sector as an employer.

To realise this relationship, organisational change would involve more than just the implementation of engaging with the public administration curriculum of UKZN and providing material. Real organisational change must be informed by examining various theories, models, frameworks and strategies and move away from this perception that graduates don't know anything. Employers need to be able to make use of graduates as the knowledge gained from university is universal.

The creation of an enabling environment that develops people for their profession is crucial. This would then support and enhance a positive and conducive environment that would focus on student and staff attitude and behaviour to promote employability

- Resources that are necessary to achieve skills development

Employability needs to be supported at senior management level in higher education institutions and reflected in the policies that are translated into action across all levels (Lowden, Hall, Elliot and Lewin, 2011: 5). Furthermore, Lowden et al. (2011: 5) state that encouraging institutional culture supportive of employability must be matched by the provision of resources to foster graduate skills development.

This means that there needs to be:

- A correct number of qualified and trained staff to attend to students;
- An adequate and conducive learning environment for workshops, seminars or professional student services that will allow students to engage through practical application; and
- A need to promote student career service and guidance to assist students in compiling a job search plan.

The provision of these resources would create an enabling environment for staff and students and would go a long way to producing well rounded graduate and cooperation. This would then support and enhance a positive and conducive environment that could focus on staff and student attitudes, values and behaviours to promote an ethical work climate.

- Enterprising capacity of students and graduates in Public Administration

In terms of enterprising capacity, graduates need to have consolidated their intellectual ability and knowledge foundation in order to engage effectively with workplace demands and benefit from workplace opportunities (Griesel and Parker 2009: 12). This component is linked to both leadership and employability; in essence student ability to think, understand and convert knowledge acquired into the working environment is essential to ensure graduates are able to sustain themselves.

The handling of information and how to use it is imperative, as the results revealed in this study show that there is a performance deficiency by graduates. Therefore a programme should be developed to strengthen the capacity to execute their responsibilities as students with regards to managing information, to increase student motivation, to manage performance and their transformational role which can improve organisational change and staff motivation.

- Resourceful and innovative students and graduates

Resourceful would be imaginative, creative, adaptable, a willing learner – in effect, they would have most of the skills already listed under the “generic” category (Pool and Sewell 2007: 280-281). According to Greisal and Parker (2009: 16), the ability to

be flexible and adaptive in the work place is critical in capacity building of graduates so that they are able to sustain themselves efficiently and effectively when entering the labour market. Therefore, this is relevant particularly in Public Administration programmes where innovation is needed to respond more adequately to the demands from the society and in providing solutions to deal with emerging issues.

Generic skills in this regard may have a major effect on the employability of graduates which may compromise the quality of students and graduates produced. The Department of Public Governance would need to ensure that the teaching and learning, and skills development is facilitated effectively to ensure employability requirements are achieved.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

These recommendations emanating from the literature review and from the empirical study address the findings of the research with a view to finding solutions. The following recommendations are outlined.

- Introduction of more presentations, dialogues in class and public-speaking, should ensure the enhancement of a well-rounded graduate and therefore more employable.
- The correct number of qualified and trained staff must be employed to attend to students/graduates.
- Promote student career service and encourage students to utilise services offered by the university.
- Creating adequate and conducive learning environment for workshops to equip students and graduates with skills to improve their performance.
- Initiate out-reach programmes that will also allow students to engage with their communities. This can be through the formation of a club or public administration association that deals with small community projects.

- UKZN Public Administration department should have solid relations with public sector employers to ensure expectations of the employer are met, and ensure that they are flexible and adaptive to the ever-changing labour market environment. Hence this relationship is of great importance.
- Organising of field trips and inviting public sector employers to conduct seminars and present the practical aspect and the strategies used in government department operations. This will expose student to the working environment and give students and graduates an understanding of the complexity of public administration in dealing with public issues.
- There is still a need for further research into this area, with the aim of suggesting tangible solutions that can assist in the continuous production of quality graduates

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has briefly given the conclusions and recommendations. The conclusion and recommendations emanated from the data analysis and interpretation of findings.

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