



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**Exploring curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration
graduate employability: A case of the University of KwaZulu-
Natal**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Sphamandla Gumede, student number 214511747, declare that:

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Prof. Sybert Mutereko

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BAdmin	Bachelor of Administration
CFA	Commission for Administration
CHE	Council of Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOE	Department of Education
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EAPAA	European Association for Public Administration Accreditation
GSP	Graduate Studies Programme
HE	Higher Education
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
IT	Information Technology
NAPA	National Academy of Public Administration
NCHE	“National Commission on Higher Education”
NDP	National Development Plan
NPAI	New Public Administration Initiative
NPM	New Public Management
PA	Public Administration
PAPASA	Post-Apartheid Public Administration in South Africa
QEG	Quality Enhancement Group
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SAIPA	South African Institute for Public Administration

SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
US	United States

ABSTRACT

This study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the public administration curriculum and how it is responding to the needs of both the students and employers. The study further establishes the extent to which graduates produced at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in the Discipline of Public Governance, are skilled enough and meet the requirements of the employer. Data from several studies reveal that a university that fails to produce qualified graduates does not offer its graduates the opportunity to compete with the outside world which then leads to a high unemployment rate. The literature review revealed that graduates need to possess qualities that assist them to take adaptive, proactive approaches to 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 for the process to become successful.

A mixed-method approach was employed to collect, analyse, and interpret the qualitative and quantitative data, which included the administration of questionnaires to UKZN academic staff, and to students/graduates at all study levels at the UKZN particularly those who are enrolled in the Public Administration course at the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance. The study conducted seven online in-depth interviews, and one online focus group discussion involving first-year students and undertook an online survey involving fifty-seven students from the Public Administration discipline. Parametric inferential analysis was used to provide a detailed understanding of the study population through the study sample, it helped generalise the results. The findings reveal that the discipline of Public Administration curriculum 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 space for improvement in all challenges that were posed during the study. The study further recommends that the input of public sector employers will make the Public Administration curriculum more effective. The study also recommends that the allocation of sufficient resources is necessary to achieve the skills development of students/graduates in the Public Administration discipline.

Key words: Curriculum responsiveness, employability, higher education, lecturer, student.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Universities are a key to the success of many students and to the communities they live in. Citizens nowadays are dependent on higher education institutions for their development which contributes to them getting occupations that help to alleviate poverty. Higher education institutions work closely with employers since they are the ones who require skilled and competent personnel for the improvement of their economic competitiveness. The *Skills Development Act* provides that employees must be well-capacitated to perform their duties effectively and in ensuring that services are delivered timely and in the most effective manner. Furthermore, institutions of higher learning in attempting to ensure that both societal and employer's needs are met, need to make sure that their curriculums are up-to-date and that students' requirements that they seek from the university are met through the courses they are enrolled in.

Failure to provide a responsive curriculum leads to high rates of unemployment and poor service delivery and, as a result, this leads to incompetent employees. A university that fails to produce qualified graduates does not offer its graduates the opportunity to compete with the outside world which then leads to high unemployment rates. Effective curriculums respond directly to the needs and the demands of the employers, and this should help students/graduates to get employment opportunities. Likewise, an effective relationship between higher education institutions and the labour market makes it easy for students to know what kind of skills are expected from them and, on the part of the university, it makes it easier to structure their curriculums in a manner that will satisfy the needs of both students and employers.

This study will discuss the research problem and highlight the objectives of the research and the research questions for the study. The study further provides the significance of and rationale for the study. Different concepts will be explained. The limitations of the study will be discussed. Ethical considerations will also be explained. The study will further conduct a literature review of works covering Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. The study will also explain the theoretical framework that will be adopted, the paradigm of the research, the research design, and the research methods. Sampling procedures will also be discussed together with the recruitment strategy. Tools for collecting data will be explained.

The study measurements will also be discussed. The data analysis technique used in the study will be declared, and lastly, data quality control will be discussed.

1.2 Background of the study

In the South African public sector, developing human capacity is vital to coping with the work environment. The government priorities stated in the *National Development Plan Vision 2030* supports the statement above. Therefore, Public Administration is of paramount importance in ensuring that the skills and the abilities that the employees need are developed. The Public Administration education/curriculum should prepare the students in higher education institutions for the outside world of employment. Creativity and critical thinking, as well as learning, should be the factors developed by tertiary institutions, through its procedures, and curriculums (Babbie & Mouton, 2014). Recent studies have revealed that capacitating employees contributes to the successful achievement of goals and objectives of any public sector institution, and it also contributes to effective delivery of services to the public.

However, building capacity is still an issue in the public service in South Africa it is, therefore, paramount that the students who have qualifications in Public Administration should be well trained to behave professionally when performing their assigned duties. The study, therefore, aims to explore Curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration Graduate Employability at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in promoting the employability of the graduates in the public sector institutions. The UKZN's School of Management, IT and Governance is based in both the Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses. The school offers several programmes of undergraduate and postgraduate studies in different disciplines which include among others; Management and Entrepreneurship, Marketing and Supply Chain Management, Human Resources Management, Information Systems and Technology, and Public Governance.

Moreover, one needs to consider the perceptions and views of students about the Public Administration curriculum. Public Administration education at UKZN is a three-year full-time qualification that promotes the study of governance at all levels and many graduates from this discipline work in the public sector institutions while others take up positions in the private sectors. Likewise, the capabilities in human resources are mostly in demand for investment purposes in the public service as this helps to develop the society and the economic development of South Africa.

The results of a survey which was conducted with the graduates of UKZN in 2014 by the School of Management, Information Technology (IT) and Governance regarding the overall quality of the degree, show that 86 per cent of the graduate participants were happy with the education they had received. Moreover, 87 per cent of graduates stated that they gained some generic skills while they were studying at the UKZN School of Management, IT and Governance, whereas 72 per cent and 69 per cent of graduates from the disciplines of IT and Governance respectively, found materials and the whole infrastructure conducive and of high standard and that the student support facilities helped them during their studies. From this one could conclude that the curriculum had catered for improvement in the student's, analytical, communication and computer skills. Therefore, it is important to determine to what extent of graduate's employability in the work environment is being taken into consideration bearing in mind that the core function of the university is teaching and learning (Ahmed Ezzat Othman, 2014).

1.3 Problem statement

The institutions of higher education should have a curriculum that responds directly to the needs and expectations of the society and the employers in the work environment, since the higher education has the responsibility of developing and providing skilled students whose capacities will enable them to be recognised in the work environment and worldwide. Using Moll's multi-faceted or stratified model of a responsive curriculum one can determine how the universities should structure their curriculums to meet the demands of the students and that of the labour market (Moll, 2014). Moll is of the view that universities must consider the economic responsiveness of a curriculum, the cultural diversity, disciplinary responsiveness, and the learner's needs (Moll, 2014: 15). The responsive curriculum in higher education is that which will produce the graduates with skills, knowledge, and the ability to perform the duties assigned to them by the employers. The universities provide students with the ability to adapt to changes and to solve problems and to perform their duties with integrity and accountability.

Public Administration curriculum responsiveness in higher education institutions plays an important role in ensuring that the university produces a number of skilled and competent graduates who will hold positions in the public sector with an aim of promoting effective service delivery (Wraga, 2009). However, the major problem is that universities are not

adapting to the modern methods of teaching and learning, and the academics are not well capacitated with what is expected of them which then leads to students leaving the university without the skills and the competencies required to them by the employers (Ogude et al., 2005). This is due to lack of skilled academics, lack of resources and poor commitment on the side of the management which then leads to employers and students' needs not being addressed.

Most studies in the field of Public Administration curriculum have focused on providing different ideas about curriculum responsiveness and the challenges faced by the universities as they are institutions for providing the students with the skills required by the employers. A study by Kiguli-Malwadde et al., (2006) concludes that the universities in South Africa are still having a challenge regarding the implementing the policies that enable them to respond easily to societal needs. The Public Administration curriculum has become a major concern in the public sector as it is the curriculum that is expected to produce qualified public servants.

However, it is evident in a study by Dabalen et al., (2001) that most employers are experiencing challenges with the employees that have graduated and that have been given an opportunity to secure positions in the workplaces because those employees do not possess the skills and knowledge required to them. According to Smith-Sebasto & Shebitz (2013), the needs of the students and those of the employers rely on the quality of education offered to the students during their enrolment at the university and the skills they get depends on the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum. Unfortunately, not so much has been studied about the factors that hinder the implementation of the Public Administration curriculum, hence this study will seek to identify those factors.

1.4 Research objectives

Drawing from the Stratified model by Moll, (2014) the research objectives are formulated as follows:

1. To investigate the nature of the Public Administration curriculum at UKZN.
2. To determine factors that are considered for the curriculum of PA at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

3. To examine factors that enable or hinder the effective implementation of a responsive public administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal; and
4. To determine ways in which the implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum can be improved.

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the nature of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?
2. What are the factors that are considered in the curricula of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?
3. What are the factors that enable or hinder the effective implementation of a responsive public administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?
4. How can the implementation of a responsive public administration be improved with regard to academic development and support, curriculum monitoring and evaluation.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study should contribute a great deal to the (DHET), the society and to the academics. The study should help DHET in answering questions relating to the reasons why curriculum responsiveness is important and what role it plays in meeting the constitutional requirements. The findings can be used in improving the capacity of higher education curricula to meet the societal and organisational needs. Therefore, the Department of higher education will use the data that was collected in this study to view the perceptions of students in terms of public administration curriculum, and whether it meets their needs or not. Engaging with both students and employer will enable the department of higher education to deliver the curriculum that addresses the needs and expectations of the students and the employer and thus providing skills necessary for employment. This should also help to detect the curriculum that is out-dated, and which needs to be amended. For the students who are the ones experiencing challenges in their academic journey, the study should help the university and academic leaders to address those challenges because of qualitative information presented in the study. Furthermore, the study will also look at other scholar's findings based on a similar issue. This could be a way of adding new knowledge to previous findings. The study limitations provide an opportunity for further research to improve the findings.

1.7 The rationale of the study

This study is essential and should be undertaken to examine how a responsive curriculum promotes the employability of UKZN graduates enrolled for Public Administration. The study should help the university to get an in-depth understanding of why it is essential to have a responsive curriculum that provides students with skills and competencies required by the employers. However, if the study were not to be conducted the issue of unemployed graduates will continue to manifest itself and the students will still have a problem of getting employment opportunities. Therefore, it is important that the study takes place to obtain reliable and sound conclusions.

1.8 Definition of concepts

For this study the following concepts will be clarified:

Curriculum

The Department of Education (1997a) explains curriculum as a planned activity that helps the students/learners to enhance their potential. Similarly, Malungu (2018) defines curriculum as content areas that are taught in a school or university with the aim of providing an understanding to students of a particular subject matter. Moreover, Dezure (2010:1) states that a curriculum must be formal in nature and should bring about learning experiences for students. A curriculum in this study means a document which consist of the module's aim, the study outcomes, content, the strategies for teaching and learning as well as how assessments will be conducted.

Higher Education

Higher Education (HE) refers to the system of education that is offered at the university, college, institutions of technology as well as the career colleges that award academic degrees or certificates to the candidates after the completion of their studies (CHE, 2002b; Forest & Kinser, 2002:3) and the DHET (2013) defines HE as the level of education that the student/s undertake after the completion of their secondary education such as high school. The concept

includes both undergraduate and postgraduate education, and the vocational education and training. The key activities in HE includes among others, research, teaching, as well as social activities (*Higher Education Act no.101 of 1997*).

Lecturer

The DHET, (2013) defines a lecturer as the person who reads, give instructions, and delivers the course content to the students. The position of a lecturer indicates an academic rank, as it is mostly held by the academics, whose responsibility it is to teach, conduct research and to provide supervision to students (Boughey, 2009). In the study the term lecturer will be used as a preferred concept that means a person who teaches students in a particular discipline and who conveys the curriculum.

Responsive curriculum

A responsive curriculum refers to “a most adaptive and open curriculum which responds effectively to the needs and expectations of the students and the employers” (*The Education Group, 2006:1*). It provides an opportunity of development and learning to students to increase their morale and potential. Behrmann (2001:5) notes that curriculum responsiveness means that the curriculum meets the students’ preferred approach to learning, and it caters for their uniqueness. According to Meyer & Rose (2005:1) a responsive curriculum refers to:

“A curriculum that meets the needs of all students, it focuses on the development of accessible interactive curriculum materials. These materials would engage the student in new and empowering ways that align their unique approaches to learning and ultimately to maximise their human potential.”

Student

A student refers to a person who is studying a particular course in an institution of higher learning to get a qualification (*Department of Education, 1997c*).

1.9 The dissertation structure

Chapter One

The overall study has 6 chapters. Chapter one highlights the overview of the study. Other areas that are discussed are the study background, the problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study as well as the rationale of the study. This chapter concludes by providing this outline of the chapters for the whole study.

Chapter Two

Chapter two begins with the literature review obtained from several sources. This chapter will provide a broader conceptualisation of public administration education in higher education. The theoretical framework is also discussed in this chapter. The theory that is used in the study is Moll's stratified model of curriculum responsiveness.

Chapter Three

Chapter three discusses literature focussing on the South African Public Administration curriculum offered in tertiary institutions. The chapter provides the background to the development of the Public Administration curriculum in SA. It also discusses the various items of legislation that govern Public Administration in South Africa.

Chapter Four

The fourth chapter outlines the methodology used in the study to gain an in-depth understanding of a responsive Public Administration curriculum. It starts by explaining the research design, followed by the research paradigm. Furthermore, it explains the approaches that were used to create the Public Administration curriculum. Moreover, the chapter discusses the target population, the study sample, the recruitment strategy, and data collection tools that were employed to collect data. This chapter also discussed the ethical issues to be considered for the study.

Chapter Five

Chapter five gives an interpretation of the research findings for this study. In this chapter, the researcher will draw inferences from the data that were collected from the surveys, focus group discussion and interviews. The results will be explained and interpreted according to the objectives of the study. The chapter presents data using figures, and tables comparing the views of the respondents from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Chapter Six

In chapter six, the researcher examines findings, proposes recommendations, and draws conclusions. A summary of the research objectives and questions will be given in this chapter, followed by the summary of the study findings and then the general conclusions of the study. Based on the results recommendations will also be offered and then a conclusion to end the chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a broader conceptualisation of Public Administration education in higher education. The chapter further outlines the distinctive relationship of the Public Administration with the private sector and examines the determinants of a responsive curriculum particularly for Public Administration education. This will be followed by a global perspective on the administration of public education. The administrative and managerial functions of Public Administration will be explained. The chapter also discusses the attributes associated with Public Administration education and graduateness. The link between employability and graduateness will also be discussed, and the attitudes of Public Administration education students regarding the labour market will be explained. This chapter further provides a conceptual overview of a responsive curriculum in a higher education institution context. This is important to gain a better understanding of the challenges that relate to curriculum responsiveness to explore the context of the study. Lastly, this chapter explores Moll's stratified model of curriculum responsiveness which is the model relevant to this study.

2.2 Defining Public Administration Education

Public Administration education can be better understood in the context of Public Administration itself. Chapman (2017) is of the view that Public Administration education follows a curriculum that equips its students to be the planners, organisers, directors, coordinators, and controllers of government operations as well as implementers of government policies. It is worth noting that as much as Public Administration education targets the public sector, in recent years its graduates have been witnessed also infiltrating the private sector. With this definition of Public Administration education, it then becomes paramount to understand what Public Administration itself entails following the fact that it is the end result of Public Administration education.

Public Administration refers to a study of public service and the aim of public service is to ensure effective delivery of public services to the citizens (Dye in Naidoo, 2005:64). PA deals with the solving of the issues raised by the society based on the services delivered to them. It also includes individuals working within a society with an aim of adopting and implementing policies which will guide society on the way in which they can exercise their rights (Schwella

et al., 2011:19). Public Administration requires its own contextual analysis as it differs from the private sector.

2.3 Background of PAE

The history of Public Administration dates back further than one expects even though it seems to be a novel concept. Public Administration has been practiced in the early years of creation and this is evident enough that there has been public administration training and education. Public Administration has been found suffering from identity crises. In the early 1950s to 1960s it was considered as a sub-field of political science (Khan, 2010). It was not until more recent times that the importance of PA as a separate discipline was acknowledged or recognised by academics and practitioners in developed countries (Azizuddin & Hossain, 2020). However fully recognising Public Administration as an independent discipline is still an issue and it continues to be affiliated to other departments.

The practice of PA dates back to ancient civilisation, with administrative systems and practices prevalent in different cultures around the world (Azizuddin & Hossain, 2020). This means that Public Administration training must have existed at a comparatively early date. In the Bible there is talk about administrative hierarchy and management structure. With the Greeks as well as the Romans there was division of work to run their administration in conquered areas (Azizuddin & Hossain, 2020). This again would have required the existence of public administration training or education.

The America and Europe, contributed to the popularity of Public Administration. Although Public Administration history dates back centuries, however, in the academic field of study it still appears to be new. The term ‘administration’ was regarded as synonymous with political science until the 1890s, following the emerging of the works of Goodnow, (1900) and Wilson, (1887). The scholars emphasised the importance of separating the field of Public Administration from the other disciplines. Hence the end result to some extent was the creation of a discipline independent with its own special knowledge (Ahmad & Hossain, 2015; Hossain, 2018). Academically, Public Administration education started taking shape in 1952 with America establishing the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) at the University of the Philippines. However it did not make much of an impact until years later (Azizuddin & Hossain, 2020).

In many African countries since the 1980s, they have been undertaking reforms in the public sector as a way to establish effective and efficient public sector management and capacity (Agwanda, 2019). This was a move to make Africa experience growth through its improved public management structures along with good governance. Thus, the recognition of Public Administration as a discipline grew. PA education was seen as the key as it produced most of the public sector employees who were to rectify the problems in this sector.

Makinen (2013) argues that there is still a debate among scholars when it comes to Public Administration as they are divided between those who believe that PAE should emphasise more scientific rigour and research methods and those scholars who advocate for a better understanding of the government, the public services and the public administration's interdisciplinary nature. This debate about science versus profession can be traced back to the 1960s and the argument persists that Public Administration as a discipline has been influenced by many traditions and cultures at regional, national, and even on a global scale. Thus, although Public Administration education is well grounded as a department debates always erupt around it.

2.4 Public Administration education and employability in the public sector

This section is based on the employability of students who graduated in PA. The relationship between the employers in the labour market and the institutions of higher learning closely relate to graduate employability. The focus is on the competencies that the graduates need to gain the opportunity of being employed in the labour market. It is of paramount importance that the university produces candidates that possess the skills needed to ensure their employability. The public sector needs well-capacitated employees to maximise effective customer service. Therefore, this is the duty of higher education institutions to ensure that the graduate hits the ground running when they complete their studies.

The field of Public Administration teaches students about managing the government as distinct from operating from within the for-profit sector. With the passing of years the government has become the largest employer in various countries which has seen the need for the Department of Public Administration to expand to be able to fill the many vacancies in the public sector. It should be noted that the graduates in Public Administration have got a wide range of departments to choose from which include the government itself, law enforcement, education, criminal justice, and public health,

just to mention a few among the many (Farell, 2018). The field of Public Administration offers careers and different jobs like urban planners, education administrators, and executive managers, and many more. Thus, it provides a large pool of employment prospects.

PAE targets both the current and future civil servants of countries, and it can serve and promoting national development. It also adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to manage the public sectors more effectively. These multi-disciplinary approaches consist of three main disciplines, that is politics, social science, and management (Azizuddin, 2018). This makes the employability of Public Administration graduates higher as they would have covered most of the disciplines in the different work and social environments.

Public Administration education produces public administrators, who will contribute to solving social problems and to informing government decisions. In Public Administration education there is the study of a variety of subjects and the choice to work in the private or public sectors. Career paths are paved in both non-profit organisations and in the government's public administration. This undoubtedly increases the employability after the study of Public Administration education.

2.5 The importance of Public Administration education

The study presents the most significant aspect of Public Administration by showing that for the administration of the public to be effective it should achieve some specific objectives. Marx in Cayer & Weschler, (1988:12), states that government institutions or Departments have the responsibility of delivering the services as required by the public and this must be done under the rule of law. It is essential that Public Administration and its significance are focused on its ability to provide for the citizens within the framework of regulations. The regulatory framework stipulates that when there is a provision of service, the officials working for the government must ensure that there is respect and consideration for all the human rights which are based on the *Constitution* of the country by treating every individual in a fair manner and equally, and the public official must act as per the requirements of the law. All this starts with a well formulated Public Administration curriculum.

Based on the above, it is evident that the administration of the public has the vital role in both internal and external environments. In relation to the internal environment, Public Administration aims to ensure the compliance with the regulations and policies by the government institutions when performing their duties. With the external environment, Public Administration needs to respond to

the social, political and economic environments, and this is outlined by Moll in his theory of curriculum responsiveness which will be discussed later in the chapter. In addition, Public Administration depends on the effectiveness of its officials in delivering services and on the economic use of scarce resources. Therefore, it is important that the officials possess the necessary competencies required to perform all the duties assigned to them. Moreover, Public Administration has to respond and account to the public it serves.

In Africa there is the demand for graduates in Public Administration. Over the years, for welfare and economic growth to be witnessed there is the need for effective and efficient governance. However many countries' administrations are characterised by incompetent bureaucracy, mismanagement and this is coupled with corruption which is harmful to education (Duerrenberger & Warning, 2018). The solution was then found in Public Administration education and the need to give recognition to its existence and importance. This in-turn created more employment prospects for many people in the field.

Moreover, Public Administration benefits are enormous. As alluded to earlier, studying Public Administration prepares one for growth in the public sector in which the government is the largest employer in many countries. Though some professionals may not have the need for studying Public Administration since they may have no interest in working in the public sector, however in the event of being contracted to the public sector Public Administration knowledge becomes essential. Thus, Public Administration education is paramount as it creates employment opportunities mainly in the public sector.

2.6 Determinants of a Public Administration education (PAE) curriculum in higher education.

Universities and other higher education institutions in most countries such as South Africa offer several academic programmes such as undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees in Public Administration. A group of these academic programmes are those that offer postgraduate degrees such as honours, masters, and doctoral degrees. These postgraduate programmes are also offered to those students who are already having the experience of working for either public or private institutions. Therefore, this section is based on the factors that determine a responsive Public Administration curriculum to ensure successful employability of graduates and to develop the skills of those officials who are already in the working environment.

2.6.1 Influence of Accreditation of theme PAE curriculum

There is no single curriculum that can be taught in universities if it is not accredited. The concept of accreditation is recognised by the institutions of learning that offer or wish to offer different programmes of study. Accreditation was firstly recognised in the European countries as the most important aspect to be considered when the institutions of higher learning want to offer a programme for Public Administration. According to Brans & Coenen (2016:338) accreditation is referred to as a concept that helps to enhance the standard of university programmes especially those which related to Public Administration. Furthermore, the authors say that the programmes offered must be of a high standard and must be accessible to everyone.

The accreditation promotes and encourages the quality of the programmes particularly PA programmes. Moreover, the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA) is the body responsible for accreditation in European countries. It is responsible for the receiving of applications for programmes to be accredited and the requirement is that these programmes must have Public Administration as a core subject. In addition, this includes all other key areas of management that are affected by Public Administration. The recognition of professionalism and values is part of Public Administration. In addition to what Brans & Coenen state, accreditation is also a process that begins with a request by a university for a programme it wants to offer and the EAPAA is the board that is responsible for the accreditation. However, for the programme to be accredited by this board it must be at a degree or at a master's level.

2.6.2 Employer demands as determinants of the Public Administration education curriculum

Over and above completing a qualification there are still factors such as lack of information on the skills that are possessed by the graduates which then makes it difficult to compare with other contexts. Therefore, there is a need for studies that can assess the views and perceptions of the students/graduates based on the university quality and their own expectations. "It is important also to understand the current students' perspectives as these are the ones who need to get the employability skills required by the employers" (Pütz & Mundt, 2018). Moreover, one can say that the relationship between the higher education institutions and employers/government and the students' needs to be effective in ensuring that the graduates

that are produced in the Public Administration field are well capacitated graduates who will gain employability opportunities easily.

The employability of graduates who have graduated from a Public Administration curriculum is mostly affected by the competencies and skills that are possessed by the graduates and this has an impact on the organisational performance. Therefore, it is important that institutions of higher learning build an effective relationship with the public sector so that the curriculum is designed to satisfy the needs of the students and employers. For example, the graduate's employability and actions of managers are linked together. Employability means that there is an understanding of the ever-changing work environment by universities which requires them to shape the students/ graduates to meet the employer's requirements successfully.

However, employability is more than just about important and core skills, but it consists of two parts. One is the capacity of a student to have a job after he/she has graduated from the university. The other part has to do with improving the student's skills and knowledge in order to compete with other graduates from other universities for employment opportunities and also gain a competitive edge over other graduates (Iovu & Demian, 2019). Employability allows individuals to improve in their employment status and also to improve their standard of living which decreases poverty (Motene, 2017). Studies by Knight & Yorke (2004: 9) have revealed that the employment of graduates is based on the way they are being taught.

The authors further state that some of the academics turned to ignore the fact that employability is one of the curriculum goals rather they are likely to acknowledge that curriculum can enhance the probability that graduates will gain when it comes to employability. However, employers are expecting higher education institutions to deliver skilled and knowledgeable graduates since higher education institutions have the onus to prepare students for work and by doing so they are developing employability opportunities for the graduates (Mbhele, 2014). In a nutshell, one can argue that the relationship between the universities and that of employers is essential and it also allows for effective monitoring and evaluating of the public administration curriculum and the development of graduates who will serve the public effectively.

2.6.3 Legislation influence

The legislation put forward by Governments of different countries also shapes the educational system and what is to be learnt. Government policies are put in place as a method to guide every implementation and evaluation of objectives and to check that they are to the specifications of the government. Government legislation acts as control measure that oversees the formulation, implementation and evaluation of government's intentions (Wessels, 2012: 163). Therefore, it is the educational legislation of countries that determines what is to be taught or learnt. Taking the example of South Africa, it is governed by various items of legislation and policies which include, but which are not limited to the *Skills Development Act*, *Skills Development Levies Act*, *Public Service Act*, *National Qualifications Framework (NQF)* and the *South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)*. Hence no institution can operate out of the bounds of the needs of the policies and legislation of its country.

2.7 Global perspectives on the Public Administration curriculum

The key aspect of international trends which have an impact on the university's curriculum need special attention to make sure that the curriculum is implemented in the correct manner to ensure that the needs of the society and those of the students and of the employers are well addressed. As Barnett (1994), stated the increasing demand for skilled labour worldwide has led to the shift in the relations between the higher education sector and the society. However, before the higher education had a right to enforce its own explanations of knowledge on the society, recently the public requires higher education to give more operating explanations of the concept of knowledge. The researcher argues that a diverse curriculum may result in providing a competitive edge for students by giving them an opportunity to learn and to develop the work competencies and knowledge.

As universities and the public institutions are put into a close relationship the effect and the impact of the Public Administration curriculum provided must focus more on the teaching and learning of the transferrable skills which are seen to increase the graduate's employability and to ensure that they are able to enhance their learning for a longer period. Several studies have revealed that in Australia there is an undergraduate programme that offers the students the core generic skills with some of the subjects that are considered as being electives.

Some scholars who are experts in education maintain that the generic skills can be transferred from one specific area to another (Luckett 1999). Moreover, it is argued that some skills and knowledge differ from discipline to discipline as they are specific to that discipline which cannot be transferred to another, and these are culturally and socially determined.

However, some of the skills such as basic computer skills can be transferable from one discipline to another but other skills such as the communication skills may differ because of the jargon used in the various disciplines. Producing skills needed in the workplace is one of the most challenging demands facing the public sector which this study seeks to address. The economic challenges facing many developing countries such as South Africa require vast knowledge and skilled graduates who have the competencies needed for the jobs. The institutions of higher learning should ensure that they offer the programmes that will help to improve the country and to enhance socio-economic development. The programmes offered by the institutions of higher learning should not concentrate on one area only, but they must be broad to allow for development opportunities (CHE 2000:23).

Globalisation has posed both challenges and benefits to different spheres of life, including the work environment. Different countries have undergone various transformations and changes in the Public Administration sector (Mitchell, 2019). The theory and practices of Public Administration have been challenged over the years in almost every country. This has fostered to some extent international collaboration to tackle major policy issues, with some domestic issues included. Hence in the words of Mashima (2017), for public administration's theory to be relevant or for it to be put into practice there is a need for global collaboration in education, and for a global public administration community responsible for academic exchanges.

The United States, for the past few decades has experienced change in the Public Administration sector. As the government's challenges increased so there was a need to adapt to these social, economic, technological, and cultural changes (Mitchell 2019). This has prompted the public sector to improve its operations to be able to tackle the new problems. In 2018 the *Grand Challenges in Public Administration* initiative was launched by the National Academy of Public Administration. The fourteen-member steering committee which represented the fields diversity aimed to find the significant challenges that the government would encounter in Public Administration during the 2020s (Mitchell, 2019). The year which followed witnessed input from both the public and the steering community, which was analysed

to identify the Grand Challenges and with the Academy Board's final say and with their expertise the Grand Challenge list was finalised.

In addition, the twenty-first century is characterised with many problems which have been found to be beyond the capacity of a single government agency to address. The democratic process requires all levels of government to work together (Mitchell, 2019). However, prioritisation has not been given to building capabilities to develop and implement effective policies and programmes across all the levels of the government and sectors of the society. This neglect can be attributed to the *Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations*, which failed to deal with these governance issues (Lloyd, 2019). So, unless there is a stop to the competing objectives, overlapping programmes and conflicting rules, the public sector will continue to experience these global incompetence and impediments to addressing the public's needs.

Nowadays the public is demanding more services value for their money. Public Administration education and training have become more important. Ohemeng (2014) has notice that in developing countries, and with special emphasis on Africa, developmental challenges require knowledgeable public servants to meet these needs. As in the case of Ghana, it has seen the need to put the government under scrutiny to assess if it is meeting the rising developmental challenges (Ohemeng, 2014). The need to have an academic-practitioner link has also been identified as this should result in effective public policy-making, where both parties also learn from each other (Cairney, 2015). This integrates the theory, research, and practice (Godwin & Meek, 2016).

Public Administration education is negatively impacted where the largest employer is generally the government. Nigeria has vast natural resources but these did not provide significant financial returns (Meyer, 2019). The lack of communication and corruption among the responsible parties in the public sector has been identified as being responsible for such a scenario (Nwokorie (2018). The Brazilian scenario seem to be a bit different for since the military regime ended (1964 to 1985), the public administration adopted political and economic decentralisation. This was an attempt to offer a solution to the lack of economic activities and lack of accountability associated with the governors and bureaucrats of the old regime (Santos et al., 2017). This process proved fruitful as it brought recognisable autonomy to the local governments and improvement in social participation opportunities.

The UK government has devised mechanisms which give the people a say in matters that affect them. Decision-making is carried out in a transparent manner and not left to the discretion of the public sector representatives (Williams, 2016). Despite these efforts to empower citizens, the most difficult decisions were discussed and deliberated upon within or between political groups. The public only came into the picture to endorse these already agreed on resolutions. Thus, the UK government gave the general population an illusion of empowerment whereas most of the important matters of public service and service delivery remain in the domain of the government. Hence the curriculum in Public Administration was based on such circumstances.

With regard to Public Administration in the future, the majority of commentators agree that countries have to adopt a new perspective, which supports or addresses international connectedness, interdependence and which acknowledge the world's complexities (William, 2016). Hence the need for the Public Administration Department to study socio-economic transformation, and to analyse history to recall the lessons and experiences learnt to capitalise on past achievements and to improve on the perceived shortfalls.

2.8 The nature and the understanding of the PA curriculum

The nature of Public Administration can be perceived in the scope of the academic discipline and in professional practice. By trying to understand the nature of the Public Administration curriculum, this segment tries to understand what public administration entails, what role Public Administration plays in society, how it is expected to operate as a department and what is expected of a public administrator or what the outcome is of the Public Administration curriculum.

Various views have been alluded to before of what Public Administration entails. So public administration can simply be identified as a peculiar and comprehensive field of activity, which consists of various activities or functions, mainly performed by officials in the public institutions or sector. As Lowlie (2015), states, the aim is to render services and to produce goods which benefit the community. Hence institutions of higher learning offering a curriculum to do with public sector operations have a significant role to play in educating the next generation of public sector employees to ensure there is a continuity in the good service delivery to the people or communities (Mitchell, 2019).

Public Administration plays many roles which include but which is not limited to the following: maintaining or enforcing law and order, promoting human welfare and the public administration also controls all the essential welfare services that are provided by organisations and agencies managed by public administrators. So Public Administration entities are tasked with providing communities with access to what is basic to them, like education, shelter, and public utilities (Norwich University, 2017). This can only be realised if competent public administrators are efficiently groomed from the institutions of learning and through various training programmes in Public Administration.

Literature has revealed the necessary attributes of a competent public administrator that would equip them to encounter the dynamic twenty-first century public field environment (Mitchell, 2019). Public administrators are expected to have a clear and precise understanding of governing issues, and to act in the best interest of all involved parties, addressing existing social and economic challenges. These range from specific governmental requirements to public issues (Mandla, 2016). Public administrators also exist to draft public policies that are acceptable to the public. These policies determine how organisations should serve and interact with the community. The public's expectations of the government will also be derived from these policies (Mandla, 2016). Hence a public administrator should be an effective policymaker as well as being knowledgeable of the governing issues.

The public administration field also aims to produce graduates who are strategists and good planners. When it comes to drafting public policies, many decisions may require public funds meaning it impacts directly on the tax-paying citizens. Hence this needs proper planning and strategising so that whatever policy-making initiative is to be embarked on it should be communicated in a language that is understandable to the taxpayer, leaving him/her understanding the essential need for the proposed changes (Mandla, 2016; White, 2013). Public administrators should also be able to interact at various levels to ensure that the policies to be implemented do not disadvantage a certain section of the community over another, but that a balance is struck. A skilful public administration professional should create and implement policies that help to develop everyone in his or her community.

With the constant social change public administrators are expected to be flexible enough to accommodate and to tackle these changes at a global, national, or local level. This enables the public officials to have a positive relationship with their communities and to understand how

the changes are affecting them (White, 2013). The Public Administration curriculum should then be designed to equip the future public administrators with the skill sets to be flexible and not to be rigid when it comes to managing change in the public sector.

2.9 Employability of graduates and Public Administration education

The functions within any organisation are mostly affected by the competencies and skills that are possessed by the graduates and this has an impact on the organisational performance. Employability means that there is an understanding of the ever-changing work environment by universities which requires them to shape the students/ graduates to meet the employer's requirements successfully.

2.9.1 Defining employability in the context of PAE

Employability of Public Administration graduates is most important, and it is not just about the core skills only, but it also consists of two parts. One is the capacity of a student to secure a job after he/she has graduated from the university. The other part has to do with improving the student's skills and knowledge to compete with other graduates from other universities for employment opportunities and to gain a competitive edge over other graduates (Harvey in Weligamage, 2009:116). Employability allows individuals to improve their employment status and it improves their standard of living which decreases poverty (Garrido, 2012:17). Thus, employability in the context of PAE is when graduates are sufficiently equipped for the public administration environment and more than qualified to be employed in the field.

2.9.2 The formation of employability

Studies by Knight & Yorke (2003:9) have revealed that the employment of graduates is based on the way they have been taught. The authors further state that some of the academics tend to ignore the fact that employability is one of the curriculum goals. Instead they are likely to acknowledge that the curriculum can enhance the probability that the graduate will gain employment. However, employers are expecting higher education institutions to deliver skilled and knowledgeable graduates since higher education institutions have the responsibility to prepare students for work and by doing so they are developing employability opportunities for the graduates (Tymon, 2011:846)..One then can argue that the relations between higher

education institutions and that of employers is essential and it also allows for an good monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and the development of graduates for the labour market. In Public Administration education, the curriculum is set to cover all the aspects of the public sector and of people's social life. The field in general and curriculum is broad following that a Public Administration graduate upon entering the work environment would be dealing with a diversified network of people who are also facing different social problems. Hence the need for the diversified and broad public administration curriculum.

2.10 PA education and training

Public administration curriculum has been defined in several ways to provide a meaningful understanding of what it entails. Initially a curriculum is defined as that which has an impact on the development of students in order for them to contribute to the body of knowledge and to the economic development of their country successfully (Ameyaw et al., 2019). The curriculum also helps students to be well-prepared for the future and to be well-capacitated for the employment (Taylor, 2000). An effective curriculum is diverse and relevant to the needs of the students and it should help them to become better people in the future and it should assist them in problem solving. Therefore, this study looks at the Public Administration curriculum and how it responds to the needs of the students and to the needs of the employers. This study defines Public Administration education as the most relevant curriculum that helps public officials to gain skills and knowledge that will help them to execute their duties effectively in the workplace (Peters, 2000). Moreover, several studies have revealed that a responsive Public Administration curriculum needs to put emphases on how student's competencies can be developed and how students need to perform their functions in the world of work (McFadden et al., 2011; Kouwenhoven, 2009).

In addition, the learning process of a university student is shaped by the influence of a curriculum as well as the structure of the university (EL-Khowas 2007:241-248). Furthermore, Azzi et al., (2007) states that the curriculum offered (in this case it is the Public Administration curriculum) must allow students to adapt to the university diversity easily and it must also be flexible to allow students to enjoy and to understand it better. The author further states that the education of Public Administration needs to relate to the development and teaching of necessary skills to improve graduate employability. The DHET (2012), states that most

universities teach students the essential skills such as computer skills, research skills and communication skills to allow students to benefit not only from the curriculum offered but from the university environment at large. *The National Commission on Higher Education* (NCHE) further highlighted that Public Administration education must respond to social, economic, political, and cultural changes that are taking place gradually.

Another study by Moll (2011:3) defined a responsive curriculum as that which ensures that whatever the university is doing is of benefit to the student and that it will determine whether the university offers what is required or not. Curriculum responsiveness was firstly used in 1997 to bring about changes to the global perspective in Africa (Ekong & Cloete 1997). It was further stated in a systematic way to ensure that the experience of Africa is at the basis of the curriculum (Gamble, 2003). Epistemologically, Public Administration education requires a movement from being a closed knowledge system to a more open system to allow all potential stakeholders to have a say in the curriculum planning and development (NCHE, 1996:4). A study by Butler (2010), raised the point that most students come to a university under-prepared, and this requires a university to apply the curriculum in a way that students understand it and are able to respond to it effectively.

A primary concern of Manathunga (2011:1) is that “in order for Public Administration education to be responsive lecturers need to encourage students in the classroom and allow them to engage in activities such as group discussions that help students to gain more knowledge by learning from others”. Moll (2011:3) suggests that a Public Administration education needs to consider the environments in which it operates to promote its success. This then requires a level of teaching and learning that is of a high standard. Meyer & Rose (2005:1) are of the view that a responsive Public Administration education must have all the materials that will help students to develop their level of competence to enhance their human potential. It also develops students socially and intellectually by also providing the support that the students need during their studies at a university (Moll, 2011). A responsive Public Administration curriculum needs to encourage the student and lecturer interaction and problem-solving. The main point is to understand the students and who the lecturer is (Glatthorn et al., 2000:93).

2.10.1 PA education as a process

Taking Public Administration education as a process helps to understand better the relationship between a student, lecturer, and knowledge. The training programme should take into consideration all the relevant stakeholders and their needs and expectations. Students and the employers have the important role in the process of developing the programme since they are the ones that are affected by it. Furthermore, as part of the process of Public Administration education learning should be taken as a priority and not teaching, this helps the students to think critically about the events that are taking place around them. Effective communication between students and the lecturer contributes to the success of curriculum implementation (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006:280).

2.10.2 Public Administration education as a product

The curriculum is also better understood from the technical point of view, in this regard curriculum defines the way in which a student should learn, and it also controls the learning process (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006:279). This means that the university curriculum developers should put more focus on setting the outcomes of a curriculum, drafting a plan to implement the curriculum and they should also measure the set outcomes (Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2000:92). Most academics in a university that uses this approach are more concerned about how the results will be and how the learning outcomes are going to be met rather than looking at how the curriculum is implemented (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006). Students in this sense are expected to produce the desired outcomes that will ensure how well they've learned the curriculum content during their academic year/s. Therefore, it is the duty of the university to ensure that students' desires are assessed and achieved. The focus of the curriculum as a product is that it assists in the formulation and well defining of the learning outcomes when the curriculum is developed such as public administration curriculum (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006; Glatthorn et al., 2000). After the curriculum has been developed, it then becomes available to everyone and any lecturer that is skilled and has competencies to teach it then becomes the implementer of the curriculum (Fraser and Bosanquet, 2006:280).

2.10.3 Public Administration education as a practice

This is a model that focuses more on the needs and experiences of the student and a lecturer and then recognizes them as a predicament (Grundy, 1987:105). This is when a Public Administration curriculum is developed in ensuring that the needs of both the lecturer and student are addressed, this is done through the interaction and sharing of ideas during the learning process (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006:280). Moreover, the curriculum is an integrated process which consists of proper planning and ensuring that the needs of the stakeholders are addressed by a university curriculum rather than being a sequence of plans to be adopted. In this sense, the lecturers as well as the students are expected to face real life challenges of their own existence. This will help them to face more challenges that oppress them (Pandey, 2015:136). The idea is that the knowledge that has been developed because of this is better identified as being socially constructed (DoE, 2013). For this study a Public Administration education/curriculum moves from the process to the outcomes and then to the practice model. Furthermore, this model gives the students and the lecturers an opportunity to interact with one another and to use the learning materials that the university provides to them.

2.11 Conceptualising graduateness

In the first instance, the word 'graduateness' normally means the number of characteristics that are possessed by the university graduates. On more mature reflection, 'graduateness' is a concept that is a great deal more complex, and it needs a thorough understanding. The literature review on this issue shows that there are a number of aspects that summarise the concept of 'graduateness'. Many discussions about this concept include the following elements: 'graduateness' is understood as a set of traits a graduate need during their university life. There must be an effective relationship between employment requirements and 'graduateness'. The relationship between the higher education institutions and the employers has to do with understanding and defining employability in relation to graduateness, the type of competencies that are required in the labour market, and the expectations and the needs of the employer. The graduate's attitudes to the work environment are also a factor. These elements each of them will be explained in more detail below.

2.11.1 Public Administration education graduate attributes

The fact is that there are several skills and competencies that are expected from Public Administration graduates. The skills are classified either as hard or soft, where hard skills are

mostly linked to an understanding of a subject matter and soft skills are also known as generic which provides an individual with an ability to perform something with a good attitude and good behaviour. Soft skills cannot be obtained in a similar manner to the hard skills (Allan, 2006). The *Quality Enhancement Group* (QEG) of the *Higher Education Quality Council* (HEQC) was tasked with a responsibility to articulate the number of characteristics that are expected from the university graduate after they have completed their studies in different qualifications. Moreover, their task was also to understand how these characteristics may be defined and assessed. According to the HEQC (1995) the title of work by QEG was given as the *Graduate Studies Programme* (GSP).

The aim of the GSP initially was to identify the main characteristics that are needed in a graduate which are assumed by the academic professionals. The primary concern of the GSP therefore was to state the characteristics/ the attributes that a student should obtain in an institution of higher learning. This includes the basic knowledge that a student did not obtain in a university such as the understanding of general aspects and their level of understanding of the technology as well as the ability to deal with numbers (*Higher Education Quality Council*, 1995). The input by different universities about the different attributes needed in a graduate helped the GSP to compile them and I listed them as follows:

- Having discipline and the capacity to absorb grounding content.
- Participation in research projects so that students become aware of research, and this should be part of teaching and learning.
- If necessary, the teaching of skills for professional practice;, and
- The understanding and the improvement of practical skills and communication skills. (HEQC, 1995).

A few competencies that are also important and should be emphasised are based on the individual transferable skills and they are listed as follows:

- The ability to solve problems and to manage work duties (the focus here is on critical thinking and the gathering of information that will assist in problem-solving and in making rational fact-based decisions).
- The ability to work in teams and with diverse people (this involves better communication with other people in a workplace and understanding the perceptions and views of others and the capacity to convince other people, creating a conducive

environment for others, and easy identification of the values and needs of the team members).

- Effective communication skills (verbal and written communication); and
- Adapting to changing environments, developing your own career and the ability to deal with workload (*Higher Education Quality Council, 1995*).

According to Bowden et al., (2000) the attributes of graduates are a set of skills and competencies that are deemed by the university that offers different qualifications to be important. The student will need these skills during their development in the academic environment and when a student leaves the university for work. These skills should assist the student to be a better person at work and as a citizen of the country. The author's definition is two-sided firstly, it speaks about the attributes that an individual should have to contribute as a citizen, and this includes the recognition of human rights, and the participation in democratic processes (Bridgstock, 2009:32). The second aspect raised by the author's definition looks at the attributes that an individual needs for the workplace to ensure effective realisation of organisational goals. An individual in a workplace should have the capacity to deliver the services with the aim to develop the standard of living for the citizens and contributing to the development of the economy of the country.

2.11.2 The link between employability and graduateness

Higher education should prepare students for employment. A number of researchers such as Elias & Purcell (2004) reported that besides the high percentage of graduates, having a qualification that increases the chance of being recognised by the employers and it also enhances individual's career development. For a graduate to be employed they need to gain all the necessary skills and traits that are needed by the employers which then brings about the relationship between graduateness as well as employability. The number of the attributes that are important for Public Administration graduate to possess to secure employment that several authors highlight, helps the academic community to teach accordingly and these attributes will be explained shortly. More in-depth analysis of the relationship between employability and graduateness is further understood by explanations of employability. Whereas the concept of graduateness is regarded as the knowledge and the competencies that the graduates have, employability on the other hand has to do with the capacity that the graduate has in order to compete locally and international for work opportunities (Glover, Law, & Youngman, 2002).

To elaborate more on the definition above Yorke (2004:410), defines the term 'employability' as a list of activities and achievements answer to the needs of employers but which are not enough to get the job. Implied by this is that there are other aspects that can have an impact in getting employment of that the person cannot influence.

A further difference lies in the way employability is understood by different authors such as Gracia (2009) who presents an overview of the concept of employability and reveals that not much has been said about it and what has been said is not enough to guide a person's skills improvement. The author acknowledges that the higher education institutions have been able to respond to the challenge of making students ready for employment, and she provides two ways. The first way is that the skills for employability have been put into the curriculum that is being offered by the institutions, and the other one has been to add the skills not covered by the curriculum through independent training.

Moreover, several studies revealed that the concept of employability is broad and not that easy to define. There are debates and criticisms about employability and there are also several agreements and disagreements about it. Despite many criticisms about the link between the skills required of an individual and employability, the sad reality is that the skills that the person needs to possess are a key characteristic for gaining employment and the graduates must understand these requirements thoroughly. Several studies on employability such as that one of Andrews & Higson (2008) have revealed that there are some competencies that are vital to student employability. These competencies include among others the following: The capacity to manage time; self-responsibility; communication skills (both verbal and written); adaptability; technological skills; critical thinking; the ability to deal with difficulties; professionalism; and reliability.

Moreover, the graduates must be active in developing their careers (Glover et al., 2002). Furthermore, this sequence of critical thinking is supported by Tomlinson (2007), who raised a point that for the economy of any country to develop it needs skilled people who can adapt to changes and who are aware of the socio-economic issues of the world economy. Several authors stress that there is no job for life, where an individual can do one job until retirement; rather most individuals nowadays are developing their careers for the sole purpose of getting newer and better opportunities in other organisations.

2.12 Theoretical framework: Moll's Multi-faceted or stratified model of Curriculum Responsiveness

This research draws on Moll's stratified model of curriculum responsiveness to explain that the Public Administration curriculum must respond to the needs of the students and to those of employers (Moore & Lewis, 2004). Moll's model is significant for the study of a responsive curriculum in Public Administration because the needs of the society are changing each day, therefore, institutions of higher learning should develop a curriculum that is flexible enough to respond directly to those needs.

Curriculum responsiveness is used as a tool to determine whether the educational programmes are meeting society's needs. Responsiveness is needed in both higher education and in further education training (Moll, 2014). He (Moll) made suggestions about various ways that can be used to interpret and define curriculum responsiveness. "A responsive curriculum according to Moll needs to look at the economic responsiveness, the cultural responsiveness, learning responsiveness as well as disciplinary responsiveness of the curriculum" (Moll:2014:3). Curriculum responsiveness means that the university could produce qualified graduates/students and could meet the demands of the employers by providing them with those qualified graduates who can help their organisations to improve their economic competitiveness. On the other hand, cultural responsiveness has two purposes one which has to do with students and the performance of the academics and the second purpose is the way in which the academics conduct lectures and undertake research in their own knowledge disciplines (Moll, 2014).

However, a responsive curriculum in a university also denotes that academic teaching in a university will keep up to date on the developments that are taking place in the different disciplines. (Khosa, 1996). Curriculum responsiveness can start with economic responsiveness of the curriculum (Moll, 2014). This raises the debate about whether or not the universities are successfully in developing the required numbers of experienced individuals in each key sector of the economy.. According to Bitzer & Botha (2011), the term curriculum responsiveness takes account of the constantly changing demands of employers (the public sector) and the need to provide them with individuals who are up to date and who will bring about economic competitiveness.

Secondly, the cultural responsiveness of the curriculum is also taken as a concept which means that a curriculum is responsive to diverse students from different communities with different cultures and beliefs as well as the society's diversity and it develops various alternative learning routines for students (Moll, 2014: 5). The third way that characterises a responsive curriculum relates to the discipline and this type of responsiveness is of paramount importance in a university. In universities like the UKZN the curriculum is informed by several communities of scholars who are motivated by research and who also produce new knowledge and ideas about specific problems in their fields of enquiry. (DHET, 2012). Furthermore, disciplinary responsiveness means that the university has the responsibility of giving students effective inductions to the concepts as well as the techniques that have been developed by other scholars in the academic field. Lastly, the learning responsiveness of a curriculum is also regarded as being a concept which means that academics in a university must apply the research that relates to activities that are taking place in lecture rooms and this requires an academic to support students and to take account of student diversity. The students should get knowledge that will help them to understand better the content of what they want to study. This also requires a balancing of teaching and assessment strategies with the needs of the students. Learning responsiveness also requires academic staff to put more focus on how the curriculum should be taught as distinct from what is being taught (Moll, 2014: 8).

2.12.1 Strengths and the weaknesses of Moll's stratified model of curriculum responsiveness

Moll (2004) is of view that "curriculum responsiveness is the one that is able to address the needs of the students as well as societal demands when taught in a university classroom". Moll's theory emphasises the importance of knowing what you have learned in the classroom as a student, and it focuses not only on what happens in the classroom. As a result, a responsive curriculum enables the university to address the issues such as economic responsiveness, the diversity of students in a university and in the classroom, the employability, the knowledge of the discipline and the learning responsiveness (Moll, 2004). These four categories of responsiveness speak directly to SA higher education and how responsive the curriculum should be. It is also tailored and determined by the kind of curriculum encounters students and teachers, or lecturers have within the context of higher education. Moll's theory also aims to ensure that a responsive curriculum is adopted in a university programme. This is especially

necessary in a nation such as South Africa with a past that has been discriminatory and segregated

The weaknesses of Moll's theory are that it does not consider all the aspects that have an impact on the effective implementation of a curriculum. These aspects include amongst others, the lack of the students' voice on how the curriculum should be implemented, and the provision of sufficient resources needed to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively. Moll's theory does not talk about funding for the students as the students are the main stakeholders in ensuring that the curriculum is implemented. For a curriculum to be more responsive students need to have funds to enrol in a programme therefore, if the students do not get to pursue their studies it won't be feasible to implement the curriculum.

2.12.2 Theory justification

Despite the stated weaknesses, this study recognises the work of Ogude et al., (2005), former researchers in the same field whose argument was that viewing curriculum applicability to students and its importance or relevance to the external world is more feasible from the perspective of Moll's multi-faceted or stratified model of curriculum responsiveness. This follows the theories taking into cognisance various aspects which have got a bearing on responsive learning which include, the economic responsiveness, institutional responsiveness, and cultural responsiveness. Another scholar, Gallagher, (2001) proposes substantive responsiveness which sees the need to clarify the graduate's attributes, which are embedded in the institution's curriculum, which is important for opening up employment opportunities. The teaching and assessment practices that are part of the institution of learning's culture is especially useful in this study's analysis as it allows one to think through the attributes that Public Administration graduates should possess that would enable them to enter the employment environment without many challenges. Despite the different facets of Moll's theory regarding curriculum responsiveness it is economic responsiveness, at a policy level appears to be the dominant idea of what should shape universities. It is here also that Ogude et al., (2005) draw attention to the need to lessen the tensions between the various elements specific to institutional, as well as to broader cultural practices, in contemporary South Africa. There is need for these elements to be engaged systematically. Thus, looking at cultural responsiveness this takes account of issues that arise in the local context. So, through the above

is it evident that using Moll's theory there can be a better understanding of curriculum responsiveness and employability of graduates in the field of PA.

2.13 Reflections

This chapter has presented a few reflections on the above discussions, however there are other important areas that need to be contributed to. Looking at the higher education policies globally, it is evident that the issue of the shortage of skills is a concern for universities as well as for employers. South Africa is no exception. Having skilled graduates who will be able to fill in the gaps to move the country forward to contribute to the country's economic development is most significant and of major concern. While the universities are playing an important role in providing the skills necessary for employment and the growth of the economy, the *Further Education and Training* sector (FET) is also a vital institution for producing other essential skills.

However, the assumption cannot be made that the students will just track the areas of study as whatever area they choose could have an impact on their future. In this regard I stand to agree with Bowers-Brown & Harvey (2004). Within the South African education system, it is difficult to encourage the students to enrol in certain programmes that could lead to many job opportunities. This is the most challenging issue that the universities as well as the labour market is facing. Furthermore, students' understanding of their own skills and competencies and how they perceive work and how they see themselves fit into work is important, career goals can improve the discussions about the effectiveness of Public Administration education regarding their employability and gradueness. Most research on employability and gradueness needs to have a more student-centred focus. This is in line with what Tomlinson (2007) said in the discussion above. Graduate exit surveys, for instance can be a useful way of getting the views of the students and this can be useful for marketing courses in the institutions of higher learning.

2.14 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to conduct a literature review that related to Public Administration. Firstly, the chapter provided a brief background of Public Administration and it also conceptualised 'Public Administration'. The chapter offered a definition of Public Administration education, and its importance was discussed. The chapter explained the determinants of a Public Administration education. The global perspective of Public Administration was explained. The managerial and administrative functions of Public

Administration were discussed. The employability of graduates of Public Administration was also discussed. Education and training for Public Administration was also discussed. The conceptualisation of 'graduateness' was discussed, followed by a discussion on the graduate attributes. The link between employability and graduateness was discussed together with the student's attitude and orientation to the labour market. The theory underpinning the study was also discussed. Lastly the critical reflections by the researcher were presented.

CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXTUALISING SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature related to the concept of Public Administration education and employability. The main objective of the study is to explore the curriculum responsiveness for public administration graduate employability, using the University of KwaZulu Natal as the site for a case study. This chapter focused on the South African situation, and it started by looking at Public Administration education in the South African context. It then considered the institutions which offer PAE and then traces the development of the Public Administration curriculum in South Africa. The rest of the chapter unfolds as follows: understanding factors surrounding the PA curriculum in South Africa, roles of different stakeholders in Public Administration, curriculum development in South Africa, opportunities for Public Administration tertiary graduates, challenges of the Public Administration curriculum development or implementation and finally the legal framework for PA education in South Africa.

3.2 Public Administration education in the SA context

Education in SA is known for its racially segregated institutions and inequality. The country did not have a *National Curriculum Policy* during the apartheid era (Mandla, 2016), hence the curriculum was racist fragmented and sexist in nature. The apartheid era had schools divided according to race and the educational system of that time further cemented the inequalities and divisions which already existed (Mandukwini, 2016). The curriculum was biased serving more the interests of one race over the others. This was used by the National Party to consolidate bureaucracy, hierarchical practices, and segregation (Mandukwini, 2016).

Before the dawning of independence, segregation put various groups in different higher education institutions (HEIs), this lack of social inclusion in South Africa crippled the participation and learning of those individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds; from poor and under-represented social backgrounds (Mzangwa, 2019). Issues of Public Administration were emphasised to be those that related to those of the white minority and of the majority were, not given much recognition in the field of Administration. Hence it automatically meant that the

principles of Public Administration emphasised good service delivery to the white minority at the expense of the majority of the South African population.

3.2.1. The development of the PA curriculum in SA

In South Africa before independence, the Public Administration served the few, at the expense of the majority. However, the transformation the country went through from 1994, can be seen to have done away with some of these injustices to some extent. The then President FW de Klerk made the 1990, 2 February speech that was to lead to peace. This witnessed a shift in the established curriculum for PA as an academic study in South Africa's universities. A bridge was then created to separate worlds of progressive academics and the political activists. This approach made possible to separate politics and its apartheid values from Public Administration and the new curriculum (Mandla, 2016). However, some saw this as a move that neutralised the apartheid practices but did not do away with them entirely.

The PAPASA and its implications were to be explored as the ANC's view was that Public Administration practice was to be looked at from the perspective of developmental management. The paradigm of Public Administration needed to change and suggestions for a civil service college were made (Balepe, 2017). In August 1992, there was a team that was tasked to investigate the education and training of public administrators.

It must also be acknowledged that during the apartheid era initiatives had been taken towards establishing a Public Administration curriculum, though it was designed to serve the interests of the minority White population Public Administration at the time fell under the *Commission for Administration* (CFA). "The CFA effectively controlled the training, appointment, and promotion through a central administration. The CFA continuously engaged the white academics through forums like the *South African Institute for Public Administration* (SAIPA) and the SAIPA, *Journal of Public Administration*" (Balepe,2017:1). It can be noted that at that time the University of Pretoria, in particular, was responsible for training personnel in the public service.

The view that a new Public Administration paradigm took root in 1994 is debatable. It was the 1996 *Constitution* which certainly highlighted the important role of Public Administration in the development and support of all the citizens in the country. A range of policies emerged from the DPSA which were consistent with the articulated principles in the NPAI. The November 1999, second Mount Grace consultation noted that the Mount Grace I and the NPAI

had made a significant contribution to the focus on Public Administration and management, in South Africa. Donor agencies also supported these early initiatives and the new paradigm. These included the Hans Seidel Foundation, Royal Netherlands, and the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund Educational Trusts just to mention a few.

One of the reasons to change the South African curriculum was compelled by the need to fit into the dynamic new world and into the ever-changing world of academia. Hence the revision of the curriculum was essential to meet these needs, especially the principles stated in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996* (Mandukwini, 2016). It is worth noting that the governance system in South Africa is not completely free from political influence and the aftermath of racial segregation still lingers on. The Public Administration schools are then crippled by this as their survival rests on them being public sector players. Some government departments, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and The Presidency, for example, carry out research, on how to provide training and education to individuals who are interested in learning about government operations including those who are already working for the government in public sector institutions.

3.2.2. Understanding factors surrounding a PA curriculum in SA

Public Administration is of great importance in various communities hence the need for the Public Administration curriculum to be developed in a way that can bring out the best in the students who undertake it. There are many factors that must be considered in the development of the education for a discipline of Public Administration, making it important for strengths to be capitalised on and shortfalls to be averted.

Many students enrol for Public Administration as a career path into the public sector. The government has been identified as the largest employer in most countries, South Africa included, hence the available positions require staff who are trained in Public Administration or who are equipped with Public Administration experience. (Awaah, 2021).

Tshombe (2017) is of the view that since people have agreed to be governed by the government, it is entitled to govern even in the work environment. Hence the existence of the public sector. So, it all goes back to having a curriculum that can equip the right students to be public administrators, leaders, and controllers of the communities. The *Constitution of South Africa* has been enacted to enforce this and at the same time establishing principles, values, institutions, procedures, duties, and structures to be handed from one government to the next.

Governments have also introduced the *New Public Management* (NPM), whose objectives are to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to effect cost saving in the public sector. This can be accomplished by employing the marketing mechanisms and characteristics of the private sector (Tabrizi et al., 2018). It follows then that the Public Administration curriculum itself should be adjusted to meet these new strategies. Just like the private sector the public sector organisations strive to meet infrastructural stability and perfection, ensuring the timeous meeting of the people's needs. Therefore, this cannot just be introduced in the work settings only, but it starts in the institutions where all the learning takes place.

Moreover, every democratic country expects its government to be accountable. This also goes for institutions in the public sector who are expected to be ethical and morally bound and operating in a transparent manner. The ANC, as the government has been found to struggle to demonstrate this. Considering that the policies reflect the government, and the educational institutions are state owned, the behaviour of the public sector employees should be ethical, but they fall short of this. Public officials are expected to be accountable and bound by the ethical and cultural guidelines of the public sector or institutions. Friction has been found to exist between party members regarding the targeted goals, especially in assessing management policy and implementing school-based assessments. This friction impacts negatively on curriculum development instead of enhancing it.

In addition, the South African parliament have been found to make provisions which lead to the creation of professional boards and bodies that help in the monitoring of their own professions. All practising educators are compelled to register with the South African Council of Educators (Mandla, 2016). So, it means anything to do with the curriculum is dictated by individuals who would have been voted for by these bodies. There is need to enrich PA training to satisfy employer demands. There is need to evaluate the extent to which the students can apply the right course of action taking into consideration that training and the curriculum in Public Administration is important for public sector performance (Awaah 2021).

Previous academic records have been found to be important as they can act as predictors of the performance of the individual in the future (Stegers-Jager et al., 2015). Also to be taken into consideration is the students background that can act as a prediction of performance in the Public Administration course (Phan et al., 2016). The factor that leads to the existence of a Public Administration curriculum is utilising of the students' background and present

experiences to determine what is relevant in the Public Administration curriculum which will lead to employable students.

3.3 Institutions that offer Public Administration education in SA

There are various universities that offer Public Administration programmes in South Africa. These institutions of higher learning prepare students for public service at national, state, and local levels. Therefore, they prepare students adequately for the public sector as well as the private sector to those aspiring to venture there. It is worth noting that a single institution can offer a number of programmes in Public Administration from the general degree to the highest level of learning. The list of these institutions is as follows:

Table 3.1: Institutions in SA with Public Administration programmes

Name of University or Institution	Location	Programmes offered
University of Cape Town	Cape Town	BAdmin, Advanced Diploma in Public Administration, Master's Degree, PhD
University of Pretoria	Pretoria	BAdmin, BAdmin Honours, MAdmin, MPA, PhD
University of Johannesburg	Johannesburg	BA public management and governance, BA Honours, Post Graduate Diploma (PGDIP), MPA, PhD
University of KwaZulu Natal	Durban	BAdmin, BAdmin (Honours), MAdmin, MPA, PhD
University of the Free State	Bloemfontein	BAdmin, BAdmin Honours, PGDIP, MAdmin, MPA, PhD

University of Zululand	KwaZulu Natal	BAdmin, PA Honours, MPA, Doctor of PA
Durban University of Technology	Durban	Diploma, BTech, Master of Technology, Doctor of Technology
Mangosuthu University of Technology		Diploma, Advanced Diploma in Public Administration
Stellenbosch University	Stellenbosch	BAdmin, BAdmin Honours, MPA, PhD
UNISA	Pretoria	Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Honours Degree, Master of PA, PhD

3.4 Role of different stakeholders in Public Administration curriculum development in South Africa

Curriculum development is a very complex process which involves a variety of stakeholders. Many activities are undertaken in curriculum development. Institutions of higher learning have several stakeholders who play a role in the development of the curriculum. As Matkovic et al., (2014) state these stakeholders provide the invaluable feedback regarding their requirements, needs and educational processes. Stakeholders are thus important in addressing competencies of the graduates (Al-Jubran, 2020) and each stakeholder plays a significant role in Public Administration curriculum development.

“Curriculum development has been found to involve both the academics and professional stakeholders and for the curriculum components to be easily detected it is essential to recognise the expectations of the stakeholders concerning the graduate’s competencies”(Al-Jubran, 2020).

According to Walz (2013:45)

The academics serves as the primary source of information, and they determine and shape the content, teaching and learning strategies, assessment and evaluation

processes into patterns which are logical, at the same time deciding the level of curriculum that qualifies for a certain profession.

Professional stakeholders focus more on the graduate's attributes, and these are usually cognitive and psychomotor skills (Erjavec, 2021). Previous studies have discussed the value of stakeholder involvement in the development of a curriculum (Matkovic et al., 2014). It was discovered that only when all the stakeholders acted towards the accomplishment of a single goal can the curriculum be effective (Khan & Law, 2015).

“Stakeholders involved in curriculum development are key informers and drivers of the content, methods of delivery, evaluation requirements and the scope of curriculum that qualifies for a certain profession” (Matkovic et al., 2014:2274).

Thus, it is essential to take note of the views of each and every stakeholder in the development of the curriculum so that their expertise is capitalised upon.

Stakeholders in the development of a curriculum are categorised into internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders entail those who are within the school or institution of learning system and who work there daily or are simply part of the day-to-day school system. These include the board of directors, the school or university staff, the university's research staff, students, the management of the university, departmental heads, school boards, lecturers, and state government. External stakeholders entail those outside the day-to-day work of the institutions but with strong interest in these institutions outcomes and these include students' parents, employers, employment agencies, competitors, donors, communities, former and potential students, and business partners (Matkovic, 2014).

The difference in stakeholders means they have varying effects on the operational action, according to their different strategies. “In the internal stakeholder groups, the academic staff is involved in every step of the curriculum design” (Erjavec, 2021). It is worth noting that in Public Administration some phases of curriculum development need experts with field experience. The analysis stage can be tackled by a few groups of academics led by the management or the vice-dean, however stages before that need field work, hence experts with field experience are needed, as they are the ones who bring practical aspects to the programmes or Public Administration curriculum.

Among internal stakeholders, administrative staff are important. They provide relevant information such as the guidelines that needs to be followed when applying for accreditation, these administrative staff members can include the quality management directorate and the student's affairs offices. Academic departmental Heads in liaison with the human resources

office also work towards analysing the staff's capacity during the implementation phase (Erjavec, 2021). Hence this allows only the capacitated staff to bring out the best in the curriculum.

The current students in an institution of higher learning also play a significant role in the Public Administration curriculum. Erjavec (2021) is of the view that student surveys are conducted at the end of each academic year, and they are used to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum and to make any relevant changes. Being part of the programme steering committee, enables students to give feedback about the programme when it's still at the phase of designing, development, and evaluation. Erjavec (2021) further notes that the "steering committee also includes those from the external stakeholder groups, that is, the employers, employment agencies, and professional associations". These stakeholders give the relevant feedback on what the employers are expecting in a particular domain hence they can also be consulted independently to gain the most from them.

It is important to acknowledge that students are not homogenous, and they come from different backgrounds and cultures which equips them with different knowledge. This diversity means that they have different educational expectations and experiences which can contribute to the design of the curriculum. Furthermore, several external stakeholders also influence the curriculum development. Governments as the greatest employers in the public sector enact policies which direct any entity in the formulation and implementation of a curriculum. If institutions disobey or go against this, they will be met with legal action from the government which is enforced through the various governmental agencies (Tshombe, 2017). Therefore, the government is the employer of most leaders even in universities, so it means that the selection of curriculum developers and those to educate the students rests on the policies which would have been introduced by the government, hence it plays a significant role in Public Administration curriculum development.

Studies have shown that to ensure the success of external stakeholders, it is important to create an environment in which they willingly participate. This can be achieved through guest lecturers, student projects and professional events. These events enable questions and answer sessions and one-on-one interaction to have in-depth feedback on some aspects of the curriculum, and this ensures a curriculum that incorporates practical ideas (Erjavec, 2021)

Other external stakeholder worth noting in the development of a curriculum are the parents, guardians, or any tuition payers. Though their contribution may not be directed it is paramount

to the development of a curriculum. Norman (2015) argues that “parents support and influence the implementation of the curriculum through financial resources, meaning the payment of school fees”. This allows the smooth running of an institution as resources for students and learning use are acquired. In some instances, parents may provide at their own expense resources needed but not available at the school. Thus, they are that unrecognised gap between the child and the curriculum.

All groups of stakeholders contribute positively to the effective development of a curriculum. There is need for continued collaboration and communication amongst stakeholders to have a different opinion concerning the delivery of the curriculum (Matkovic et al., 2014; Khan & Law, 2015). Thus, it is important to identify, understand, and manage stakeholders as they are also amongst the curriculum developers.

3.5 Opportunities for Public Administration tertiary graduates

The field of Public Administration is a broad one with many prospects for employment. The government is viewed as the biggest employer in most countries and the public sector accommodates most of the employees. The public sector has been identified as offering many advantages which include being stable in terms of jobs (Marlik, 2014). The public sector unlike the private sector has better job security and in the event of an economic meltdown, governmental jobs are generally more stable with minimum risks of employment termination. Hence this is seen as an advantage for a student studying Public Administration.

The field of Public Administration field also offers good chances of career advancement. Different countries have realised the need to develop and enhance their Public Administration fields to be more manageable and appealing considering that this the largest sector in most economies. Saleh & Rosli (2019) indicate that a strategy to increase graduate employability measured against the employer demand is to focus on the knowledge needed to ensure effective functioning of an organisation. Considering that this has become the stance of the Public Administration Department, it has increased the chances of employability of students who will be seeking employment.

Scholars have revealed that acquiring Public Administration education provides one with better employment prospects. Professionals with master’s degrees in Public Administration have a range of employment fields to enter from overseeing a city’s economic health to municipal

duties. Hence ample opportunities exist for employment. Such candidates have knowledge of what people need and have a better understanding of their requests; this is their strength.

Moreover, graduates in Public Administration are qualified to operate in many work settings. They can engage business administration and, in public and non-profit agencies Public Administration professionals can offer helpful policies for development and in management of teams of employees they have higher chances of becoming effective and reliable leaders (Makhulumo, 2013). Public Administration graduates can also make a great contribution to management of local and city services, considering that their services are there to deliver the best service to the people. In different governmental entities Public Administration graduates are the best fit and there are a variety of areas within the city's management system where graduates could find a place.

However, despite all the above, the public sector is characterised as having higher unemployment rates. Looking at different African countries, the government is the largest employer, but it is no longer able to cope with the demands of those seeking employment in the public sector. South Africa is failing to offer solutions to the increase in the unemployment rate of its youth especially in the public sector (Mandla, 2016). This scenario does not then prompt confidence in the Public Administration curriculum to provide for the vast of employment opportunities when the evidence point in the other direction.

Various scholars have tried to explain the high unemployment rates among the Public Administration graduates. Pearson & Ekundayo (2017) supports this claim revealing that in the modern world it is no longer an easy task to get people with all knowledge needed. This being the case there is need for the total transformation of the Public Administration curriculum to make its graduates competent enough to be employable.

3.6 Challenges in the Public Administration curriculum development/implementation

Public Administration education has become an extremely important issue, since the public sector is expected by the citizens to provide services that will enable them to meet their goals. Having several developmental challenges facing the country, there is a need for an effective training of public officials. Consequently, there a need to know what the government is doing to understand what the government intend to achieve. Bearing this in mind the various challenges faced in the development or implementation of the Public Administration curriculum will be explored.

Most of the African government's operations have been characterised by corruption. This has become a near normal phenomenon in African governments (Tshombe, 2017). Studies have noted that a decayed political economy ultimately needs sweeping reform measures. Taking examples of countries like Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa, corruption has hindered the effectiveness of the public sector. Instead of the right competent personnel being employed, the selection process is based on who knows who. This being the case, the scarcity of competent employers to provide the practical aspects of Public Administration to the students and their participation in committees or bodies to drive the goals of the Public Sector curriculum efficiently as anticipated is no longer an option (Tshombe et al., 2017; Weber, 2015).

Change has become a challenge in many organisations across all sectors. This can be due to globalisation, which also compels organisations to transform and to abandon their old ways of operation. The public sector suffers the same fate, and this has also impacted on the Public Administration curriculum design. Weber (2015) argues that change within an institution of learning whether due to retirement and replacement or due to the need to transform in line with the globalised world, usually causes the culture of an organisation to be lost, and in universities the way the curriculum is approached needs to be transformed. Policies and curriculum changes might be designed to meet a certain individual's interests now in position of influence, but these changes might not be in the best interests of the Departments. Hence there is the need to encourage and formulate policies that enforce the continuation of a curriculum despite a change of leadership.

There is also the danger of viewing the curriculum as a product rather than a process. Different views have arisen highlighting the educators lack of commitment in the formulation of a curriculum (Stevens, 2019). Participation by educators in curriculum development aims at completing the curriculum map swiftly, without patiently following the process involved in establish a working and beneficial curriculum for the students. This makes the relevancy of the curriculum questionable and defeats the whole purpose of re-designing the curriculum in the first place.

As earlier alluded to, the Public Administration field is broad, and it accommodates almost all facets of the employment environment. It needs time and commitment to gather data that is fully relevant and of use in Public Administration. Weber (2015) argues that time is the luxury that many institutions of learning do not have. Considering that there are lectures to be attended, assignments to be marked, workshops to be attended, the time-consuming process of

curriculum development, revision and implementation will not be given suitable attention. This means that the little time set aside for curriculum development mostly leaves the whole process incomplete.

Rigidity is another issue which affects the development of the Public Administration curriculum. The curriculum design teams should position themselves to be able to move away from tradition towards what the work environment is transforming into (Weber, 2015). Tradition does show how things have always been done, but with the new public sector demands tradition sometimes should be done away with, especially when it hinders progress. As Weber (2015) further notes if curriculum design and development begin with tradition, then preparing the students for the future will not be achieved.

Mandukwini (2016) identified that the failure to collaborate as stakeholders in curriculum development and in communicating the vision of a curriculum is a challenge which might cause the whole process to be fruitless. Leaders when implementing a curriculum change tend to forget to communicate this to the other stakeholders who might have been of help in the first place or who might have offered better resolutions. The whole curriculum development process may be successful, but the implementation part will meet with setbacks if the curriculum does not meet the requirements of the industry or employers. Hence it is paramount to have a culture of communication and collaboration between all the curriculum development stakeholders.

Lecturers are at the centre of the curriculum in the institutions of higher learning and for the most part nothing goes without their approval, especially in academic matters. As much as recognising this is essential, it has also been identified that they lack the constant development and training which keeps them abreast with the changes in their field or in their departments (Mandukwini, 2016). Changes in education regarding the curriculum, requires expansion of knowledge of the educators so that they will be able to stay on top of the changes (Kyahurwa, 2013). Thus, there should be an ongoing development of the educators so that they do not fall behind in understanding the on-going changes surrounding the educational sector and the work environment.

The main issue, however, is the lack of resources in institutions of higher learning to ensure constant curriculum development and its implementation. These resources can be physical resources or financial resources. Moosavian (2017), believes that resources are the most important support element in curriculum development. An institution of learning's resources shape the curriculum and if there are outdated books or literature, unfurnished classrooms,

computer labs scarcity and network problems the curriculum will be negatively affected (Okebukola et al., 2020). Curriculum change is good following the trend of changes in the twenty-first century, but lack of resources to support this change becomes stressful for an educator, causing low commitment and attention. It is good to note that most institutions in different countries allocate a big part of their budget to the educational sector, however in many African countries this budget is subjected to corruption and misuse.

3.7 The legal framework for Public Administration

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act of 1996

The government of the Republic of South Africa as the biggest employer has managed to control most of these departments and affiliates through the country's *Constitution*. The South African constitution is the highest and supreme law and any entity which wishes to oppose it will be very ill-advised. It contains obligatory provisions that are binding on everyone and it even sets terms for humane treatment. The *Constitution* guides the Public Administration on how they should operate and deliver the public service. The principles entail, achieving a higher standard of professional ethics, promoting the effective and economical use of the resources, management of the human resources in a humane manner, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. Therefore, the South African constitution is the main regulatory framework that directs the public sector and Public Administration.

The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service of 1997

The argument of the white paper is that the public service can be more efficient, effective and a less bureaucratic organisation if it moves towards a culture of customer care, recognising that customers are worth the respect they deserve. This should lead to better service delivery. It also serves as a tool for education and training, learning which is life-long, educational and training access to all, equity, and equality and for redressing the inequities of the past. According to WPTPS (1997:7), the key priority for this bill was to transform service delivery by: providing quality services; reducing poverty; being efficient and effective; and being consultative, transparent, accountable, and democratic.

To promote effective delivery of public services the *Constitution of South Africa* and the *Whitepaper on Transformation on Public Service* highlights several principles that public officials need to comply with when delivering services to the citizens. These principles are consultation; service standards; access; courtesies; information; openness and transparency;

redress; and value for money. These principles are significant for the transformation of the South African Public Administration.

Consultation - the public needs to be informed of the quality and quantity of services that is currently being rendered to them and the future possibilities of improved or new services. Consultation should be all inclusive, even involving those previously denied services. This should be executed publicly through surveys, questionnaires, public meetings, and suggestion boxes.

Service Standards - the government should be transparent concerning the standard of goods and services they will render to the people. The service rendered should also be measurable and the results or standards annually published.

Access – barriers to the access of services must be addressed, services should be made user friendly and open.

Courtesy – respect in addressing the citizens in a dignified manner should be always provided.

Information – citizens should be informed of how the government operates in a timeous manner. The information should be current and accurate, accompanied by references to make a follow up if required.

“Openness and Transparency” – the publication of an Annual Report to the citizens should facilitate openness and transparency.

Redress – Departmental heads should be able to respond to the citizens’ complaints urgently and remedy any mistakes or failures.

Value for Money – indulging in corruption and fraud should be avoided and the public Service working environment should encourage good performance and sound ethical behaviour.

With these principles it is essential that the current and future government employees be well trained so that the government policies can be implemented. These principles dictate how the government should operate.

Skills Development Act of 1998

The *skills development act* provides an institutional framework which aims to improve the skills of the South African workforce at national level and to provide learnership which could

lead to recognised occupational qualifications and financing skills development. The aim of the act is to also to:

Improve the quality of the workers life, their work prospects and labour mobility; productivity improvement in the workplace and employer competitiveness; promote self-employment; increase educational and training investment levels in the labour market and provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills (PMG, 2000).

Mbhele (2014) echoes the same sentiments of the *Skills Development Act* stating that it exists to enhance the workers quality of life, enhance the workers prospects in the workplace and to improve service delivery. Hence it is of pivotal importance in the public sector.

3.8 Critical reflection

The consulted literature has revealed that globally Public Administration is being recognised and this leads to the public sector being the largest employer. It was worth noting that across the world the local government is changing, including the work environment, and this is all attributed to globalisation. Simply providing a public service is no longer enough. Romen (2014) argues that there is now need for collaboration of all stakeholders in Public Administration.

Students are both the current and future of the public sector. They need to be recognised, given a voice and institutional resources should be made available for their upkeep academically. In this way the Public Administration curriculum can be moulded to be efficient as knowledgeable individuals will be passing the information from one professional to the other. However, it should be taken into consideration that Public Administration as a discipline was introduced late in the development of African states and they are still behind compared to the European states (Romen, 2014). It can then pose problems for the developing countries if they try to follow the developed nations traits, or ways of providing service delivery. This may result in the lack of a context-driven teaching approaches on the part of the developing countries.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter's aim was to provide a literature review in relation to Public Administration. Global perspectives and experiences regarding Public Administration were explored. The scope of Public Administration was also explored. The chapter also explored Public Administration in the context of South Africa, looking at the development of the curriculum

and factors which surround the South African curriculum. The different stakeholders' responsibilities in the development of Public Administration were also discussed, including their importance for curriculum development. Opportunities available for Public Administration tertiary undergraduates were outlined. The chapter ended with the legal framework governing Public Administration in South Africa with some critical reflection. The following section will then present the methodology adopted

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher reviewed several items of literature that reported on Public Administration Curriculum Responsiveness and Employability of the graduates at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The methodology that was used by the researcher to get a better understanding of Public Administration curriculum responsiveness is explained in this chapter. This chapter will cover the research methodology employed; research paradigm; research approaches, and research strategies; the site of the study; target population; methods of sampling; tools for data collection; data quality control, techniques for analysing the data; ethical considerations of the study, as well as the limitations of the study.

4.2. Research Paradigm

Researchers have their own beliefs and methods while conducting research. Therefore, the way in which research studies are conducted varies. However, there are standard principles called research paradigms that act as a guide to the researchers' actions and beliefs. A paradigm is defined as a group or number of beliefs that serve as guidelines for an action. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:47), research paradigms are the beliefs or assumptions about the basic aspects of the real world which lead to a certain world-view as well as to the research approach when responding to a research question. Similarly, Kuhn (1977), defines research paradigm as a research culture which includes assumptions shared by various scholars about the nature of research and the ethical conduct of research.

According to Creswell (2007:6) , there are three major research paradigms which are the interpretivist research paradigm , the positivist research paradigm and the pragmatist research paradigm. Each research paradigm has its own strengths and effectiveness based on their unique features which are specific to their particular approach, and they all have weaknesses.

These paradigms can be further categorised by examining their ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Basically, ontology is the nature of reality whilst epistemology describes the relationship the investigator has with their version of reality, and methodology refers to the different techniques and tools used to analyse their research (Creswell, 2007).

Choosing a research paradigm is based on the three philosophical assumptions outlined above. These philosophical assumptions have an impact on the researcher's sense of reality, and it is of paramount importance to understand these assumptions. For this study, the researcher adopted the pragmatic paradigm. Creswell (2014:11) notes that pragmatism is not only based

on one system of reality and philosophy but rather it also applies to both qualitative and quantitative assumptions when research is conducted. The pragmatist paradigm provides the researcher with information which allows the researcher to explore areas of enquiry by using the appropriate approaches which will help to gather valid information about the study (Hill, 2014). The pragmatist paradigm was appropriate for this study since the researcher used a mixed methods approach to gather evidence of the experiences and perspectives of individuals affected by the Public Administration curriculum. "It applies to mixed methods research in that researchers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when conducting research". Pragmatists according to Creswell (2014:11) "do not see the world as an absolute unity and they also agree research always occur in social, historical, political and other contexts". This paradigm was useful to the researcher, since a mixed method was employed in approaching the research, to understand the views and experiences of the students studying public administration curriculum at UKZN.

4.2.1. Epistemology of pragmatism

Epistemology is a study of knowledge and is concerned with what we accept as being a valid knowledge (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Thus, an epistemological issue concerns the question of what is regarded as acceptable knowledge in a study (Bryman,2004). This study utilised the pragmatist research paradigm to explore the experiences of participants in relation to the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The pragmatic approach acknowledges that individuals within social settings have different experience of change and action, and this encourages pragmatists to be flexible in their investigative techniques (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Consequently, this study assumed that the experiences and values of the students were different given the diversity of students and that these values or experiences are not fixed and can change over time. The researcher understood that the perceptions of the participants had an impact on the research as this study interest focused on the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness in an institution of higher learning, namely the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

The aspect of the pragmatic paradigm was key in influencing the researcher's choice of research approach as it ensured that the results of the study would be valid, reliable, and free from bias (Kelemen & Rumens, 2012). Mixed method was used in this study to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This allowed the researcher to formulate

follow-up questions with individual participants after initially conducting a survey and this provided the study with an in-depth understanding of the research question and enabled exploration of the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Morgan (2007:33) emphasises this idea of:

“Complementarity where qualitative and quantitative approaches can be combined in order to compliment the strengths and weaknesses present within each of them”.

The pragmatist research paradigm places emphasis on research questions, communication, and shared meaning-making. “Pragmatism focuses on communication and shared meaning-making to create practical solutions to social problems” (Du Plooy-Cilliers et.al ,2014:22).. This aspect supports the qualitative component of this study which will require interaction, communication with and between participants for the researcher to acquire an in-depth insight into the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the UKZN.

This study aimed to explore the experiences of participants in relation to the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. The researcher employed the pragmatic paradigm to guide the project and utilised a mixed methodology that integrated both qualitative and quantitative methodology.

4.2.2 Ontology of pragmatism

Ontology according to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., (2014:23) is the:

study of reality, what reality is and how one knows what is real.

Though it is the most ignored aspect in pragmatic philosophy, Lohse (2016) commenting on the principle of ontology notes that there is need for a researcher to have a clear view of reality or wrong methodological choices will be embarked on. The study explores the reality of curriculum responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum to employment prospects. This search for reality again influences the choice of research approach considering the studies search for what is real and comparison of the link between two variables, that is the responsiveness of Public Administration and the employability of the graduates undertaking this field of study. Also, in mixed methods it is paramount to have a better understanding of both the objective and subjective views of the presented reality. This in ontology of pragmatism is referred to as intersubjectivity.

4.2.3 Axiology of pragmatism

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., (2014:23) view axiology as:

the study of values, value judgments and it gives the researcher an insight into what is valued within a particular paradigm

The assessment of the role of the researcher's personal values on all the stages involved in the research process is what axiology is based on. Patel (2015) is also of the view that axiology focuses on what is valued in the research. Different people, with the same objective may employ different values and by the passing of time each generation bestows its own values and solutions on the new problems. Experience is also recognised as the basis of value creation and human beings predetermine the values (Patel, 2015). For this study, it is the participants in their different environments and with different experiences that create values.

4.3. Research Design

Research design refers to the procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting on data in research studies. The research design provides the overall strategy that may be used to link conceptual research problems of the study with the relevant empirical research. Therefore, the research design guides the study in terms of the procedures, methods of collecting and analysing data and how these processes can respond to the research question (Grey, 2014). According to Robson (2002), there are three types of research design: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. These research designs are classified according to the purpose of the research area.

This study adopted an exploratory approach as the study aims to explore the experiences of participants in relation to Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. This research design corresponds with the objectives of the study as it seeks to investigate phenomena in a field which has not been researched thoroughly. Saunders et al., (2007), state that exploratory research is conducted when little is known about a phenomenon and a problem that has not been clearly defined.

“Exploratory research simply explores the research topic, but it doesn't go further to provide the final and conclusive answers to the research questions, its aim is to confront new problems in areas where no research has been done” (Brown, 2006:43)

The research drew on statistical, quantitative results and further sought to provide justifications on the established relationship through a qualitative study. The research design for this study was exploratory and addressed both the how and the why aspects of the fundamental research question.

4.4. Research Approach

Creswell (2003), states that there are three approaches or methods to conducting research: qualitative methods, quantitative methods and mixed methods. This research study implemented a mixed method approach which involved collecting and analysing data using quantitative and qualitative data to address the research questions.

4.4.1. Mixed methods

In a mixed method study, the data are gathered and integrated at one or more phases of the research process, and both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed for the same study. The strategy is used to help the researcher respond to inquiries that cannot be addressed by just one qualitative or quantitative technique. Mixed methods allow the researcher to explore both the trends and the generalisations through empirical analysis and in-depth knowledge of participants' perspectives to provide a clear picture of the phenomenon being explored.

A quantitative approach was applied using surveys to explore the experiences of participants in relation to Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. Findings on the quantitative research were then complemented by a qualitative approach aimed at providing an in-depth explanation on the quantitative result.

4.4.2. The quantitative approach

Aliaga & Gunderson (2000), define quantitative study as a research approach explaining a phenomenon by collecting numerical data that will be analysed using statistical approaches. When using the quantitative approach, the researcher employs strategies of analysis such as experiments and surveys and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (Creswell, 2003).

The quantitative method was applied in the study to confirm or to disprove the key research questions. The quantitative method was used to address central research questions such as the

employability of UKZN graduates which required conducting statistical analysis of rates of employment and related measurable quantities. Thus, the quantitative approach was appropriate in providing answers to the central and supplementary research questions of this study which were mostly quantitative. Surveys were used as a quantitative method to collect the data needed for this study.

4.4.3. The qualitative approach

The qualitative approach helps the researcher to understand a phenomenon by observing or interacting with the participants of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Qualitative researchers are concerned with exploring and explaining the occurrence of phenomena in a natural setting. Thus, “qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings and attempt to interpret them in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Newman & Benz, 1998). The advantages of qualitative methods include the ability to generate rich descriptions of the participants’ thought processes and it tends to focus on reasons ‘why’ a phenomenon has occurred (Creswell, 2003). This method thus complements the quantitative approach which does not address variables related to conduct and personal experiences of the participants. Empirical studies are largely dominated by the quantitative approach and fail to address the participants experiences and perspectives explicitly. This lack of information on variables related to participants views and experiences limits the generalisation of the quantitative studies and requires that a qualitative approach be adopted to complement the quantitative results.

The qualitative component of this study involved conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with university students and staff members at UKZN to provide responses to the research question relating to the experiences of participants in relation to Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. Students were essential participants in the study as they had first-hand knowledge and experience of studying under the curriculum and attempting to seek employment with the related qualifications. Moreover, staff members are the ones who guide the design of the curriculum. Therefore, by collecting data through interviews and focus groups, the qualitative component complements the empirical data and provides a comprehensive picture.

4.5. Research strategy

Creswell (2014) defines research strategy as a step-by-step approach that is within the quantitative and qualitative as well as mixed methods methodologies that provides a researcher

with the direction and efforts to conduct the research in the most systematic way so as to produce quality results. The research strategy enables the researcher to stay focused and to improve the quality of research findings and more importantly to save resources and time. The mixed method consists of several strategies that include the convergent mixed method, transformative, and exploratory mixed methods (Creswell, 2014:14). This study used an exploratory mixed method to collect, analyse, and interpret the qualitative and quantitative data.

The aim of using the mixed method is to better understand the research problem by getting different but complementary data. This method analyses qualitative and quantitative data equally and independently to ensure validity, reliability and to avoid bias in the results (Creswell, 2014:15). Therefore, to better understand the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at UKZN, the researcher collected data through surveys while at the same time conducting in-depth interviews with the research participants.

4.6. Study site

This study was conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in KwaZulu-Natal in Durban. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has a total of five campuses in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. These are in both Pietermaritzburg and Durban with an estimated population of 47 000 students and 1300 staff members. The research was mainly conducted at the School of Management, IT and Governance in the College of Law and Management Studies at the Westville Campus.

4.7. Target population

The target population is defined as the complete set of cases or group of members that is the focus of the research inquiry, and from which a sample will be drawn (Saunders et al., (2016: 729). The target population for this study was students in the College of Law and Management Studies who were full-time Public Administration students at UKZN, Westville Campus at the time this study was conducted. These students included both undergraduate students and the postgraduate students. The target population also included academics who are lecturing the Public Administration curriculum at UKZN Westville Campus and who are staff members at the university. For this study, the target population consisted of 970 people. Out of the 970 people, 300 were the undergraduate students who were doing their BAdmin first year, 280 are

the second year BAdmin students, 270 are the third year BAdmin students, 50 are the students who are doing BAdmin Honours, 30 are the postgraduate students doing their master's degree in public administration and 30 are the postgraduate student who is doing doctoral studies in public administration. The population also included 10 academics or lecturers from Public Governance Department particularly those who are responsible for teaching the Public Administration curriculum.

4.8. Sampling strategies

Sampling strategies refer to the methods utilised by the researcher in selecting the sample of the research from the population (Datta, 2018). According to Saunders (2016), the sample selected is critical to the study, as it will impact on the generalisability of the research findings. According to Saunders (2016), techniques for sampling can be either probability sampling and non-probability sampling in nature.

In probability sampling, the probability of a participant being selected is the same for all participants (Datta 2018).

This study used non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling provides a range of alternate techniques to select a sample where the probability of each participant being selected is unknown. Saunders et al. (2016), describes the non-probability techniques available to the researcher as quota, purposive, volunteer, and haphazard. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was used, as the researcher was guided by Cooper & Schindler (2012: 152) who explain that the researcher utilising purposive sampling uses their judgement and selects participants for their 'unique characteristics, experience, attitudes or perceptions' to provide the best responses to the research questions to meet the research objectives.

This study used the purposive sampling technique to collect data from students and staff members from Public Administration Department. Judgmental or purposive sampling relies on the researcher's judgement in selecting those individuals who will participate in the study. Thus, this sample is based on individuals having relevant information about the study and who can provide an in depth understanding to the research. According to MacMillan (2001: 326), this technique of sampling deals with a group of individuals who are most likely to have knowledge about the phenomenon being studied. Purposive sampling helps the researcher to understand and to discover new information and it is assumed that the

researcher needs to choose a sample from which this knowledge can be obtained and learned. This study also used the convenience sampling technique which provided the sample for this study based on their availability and readiness of the target population to participate in surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. This technique of non-probability allows the researcher to identify participants who can be accessed easily.

The aim of this study was to investigate whether the Public Administration education is responsive to student needs and, to the demands from the public sector (employer) and whether employability opportunities are available to the graduate students after they have completed their qualifications specifically in Public Administration. The sample for this study consists of the graduates and lecturers from the Public Administration Department at UKZN.

4.8.1. Sample size

Quantitative Sample Size

The sample size for quantitative participants was reached using an online Raosoft sample size calculator with a margin of error of 10% and 90% confidence level. Hence, from the population of 970 students, using the equation below, the sample size reached was 70 participants. The equation is as follows:

$$x = Z(c/100)^2 r(100-r)$$

$$n = \frac{N x}{(N-1) E^2 + x}$$

$$E = \text{Sqrt} \left[\frac{(N-n)x}{n(N-1)} \right]$$

The sample size n and margin of error E are given by where N is the population size, r is the fraction of responses that you are interested in, and $Z(c/100)$ is the critical value for the confidence level c . Though, the intended sample size was 70, due to the Covid-19 pandemic only 57 participants responded to the survey and the researcher had no other way of getting more participants. Thus, the sample size of participants that responded to the survey was 57 in total.

Qualitative Sample Size

The qualitative sample size for the interview and focus group participants was reached based on data saturation. The sample size for interviews was 7 while for the focus group discussion there were 6 participants.

The sample size in total for both quantitative and qualitative participants consisted of 70 participants who participated in the study. The sample size is illustrated in the Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Sample size description

UKZN Westville Campus	Population	Sample	Sampling Method	Data collection tool		
				Interview	Focus Group	Survey
BAdmin First year	300	20	Purposive		1(6)	20
BAdmin second year	280	15		1		14
BAdmin third year	270	15		1		14
Honours Degree	50	5		2		3
Master's Degree	30	6		2		4
Doctoral Degree	30	5				1
Academics	10	4		1		1
Total number of participants	970	70			7	6

4.9 Recruitment strategy

After the researcher had received the permission (Gate Keepers Letter) from the UKZN research office which permitted the study to proceed the potential study respondents were invited via phoning and by emails to ask for their participation in the study. The list the students as the respondents was obtained through the assistance of class representatives since they were the ones who communicate with their classes regularly. Having a list of students helped the researcher to have a pool of respondents who were approached as per their availability and without using any method of selection. The researcher balanced the respondents in terms of their gender; however, it was not easy to do so because of Covid 19 restrictions which prohibited the researcher to meet the respondents physically. The participants were selected randomly, and all the potential respondents were invited three weeks in advance, and they were reminded five days in advance before the in-depth interview started.

4.10. Data collection tools

Data collection tools refer to the different methods that a researcher can use to collect data for their research, and these may include observation, surveys, focus group discussions, case studies etc. This study used surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, and case studies.

Therefore, this study used both primary and secondary data collection tools. According to Creswell (2003), the primary data is the data gathered by the researcher for their own purposes whilst secondary data is data collected by other researchers from government statistics, website articles, research studies, evaluations conducted by other agencies, and community records. The secondary data was collected from university and official government documents or reports.

4.10.1. Survey questionnaires

This study used a survey questionnaire as a data collection instrument. According to Burns & Grove (1993), a questionnaire is a printed self-report form designed to generate information that can be obtained through the written responses of the participants. The information obtained through a questionnaire is similar to that obtained by an interview, but the questions tend to have less depth (Burns & Grove ,1993:368). Survey questionnaires were used to collect the data with the purpose of providing the researcher with simple and quantifiable responses from the participants. These survey questionnaires included both open-ended and closed-ended questions relevant to the study.

Surveys were employed to collect data to explore the perceptions of the participants towards the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at UKZN. The questionnaires were employed for the following reasons:

- To ensure an effective response as the questionnaires were distributed to respondents to complete and were collected personally by the researcher.
- They required less time and energy to administer.
- There was less opportunity for bias as they were presented in a consistent manner.
- The questions in the survey made it easy to compare the responses; and
- They offered anonymity to participants.

However, questionnaires have their weaknesses particularly with respect to validity and accuracy (Burns & Grove ,1993:368). Participants in a study may not reflect their honest opinions and may choose to offer responses that they think will please the researcher, and valuable information may be lost as answers are usually brief. A single questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted mostly of closed-ended questions and a few open-ended questions, as these provide more diverse detail.

The questionnaires were administered in English. The survey questionnaire had two sections, A and B. Section A aimed at gaining demographic data such as the level of education. This information later assisted the researcher in interpreting the results. Section B aimed at determining the perceptions of participants regarding the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at UKZN. This section included questions assessing the experiences and employability challenges faced by the participants. The questionnaire also included instruction guidelines to guide the participants as to whether to circle or to tick the chosen response.

The researcher's aim for the survey questionnaire was to get the real views of the participants in the study particularly the students. In addition, they guaranteed the anonymity of respondents which is crucial in obtaining honest and reliable responses (Creswell, 2014). For this study, surveys were conducted with 58 respondents from the UKZN, Westville Campus. The researcher handed out hard copies of survey questionnaires to participants and made sure that they read and signed the appropriate consent forms. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants when handing out these copies and assured participants that their participation would be voluntary and that their confidentiality and anonymity would be guaranteed. The researcher provided his contact details and encouraged participants to make contact if they had any queries or questions regarding the questionnaire. The researcher personally distributed and collected these questionnaires from participants on completion. The data were also collected over a period of six months from surveys conducted over online google surveys.

4.10.2. Focus group discussions

A focus group interview was used by the researcher to understand in depth the attitudes, views, perceptions, and the behaviour of the participants who were interviewed together at the same time. The researcher designed a focus group discussion to explore the perceptions of participants regarding the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These focus group discussions were conducted with six (6) undergraduate students from the discipline of Public Governance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher adopted Krueger's (2002) guidelines for designing and conducting focus group discussions. The researcher followed these guidelines as follows:

Krueger (2002) recommended careful selection of participants in the design process and that focus group discussions are conducted with at least six to eight people who share similar

characteristics. The researcher designed focus group discussions of six (6) undergraduate students from the Department of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher conducted a total of five (5) focus group sessions over a period five weeks with these students. Each interview session was conducted for a duration of 50 minutes.

The researcher chose a comfortable venue in which to conduct the focus group discussions, with minimal disruptions and privacy. In this study, the interviews primarily took place in campus facilities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal mainly in the library and lecture theatres. In this study, the researcher started each focus group session by welcoming and thanking the participants for taking the time to participate in the research. The researcher introduced himself and explained the aim of the interview and why the participants were selected for the study. The researcher then briefly described the topic of discussion to the group and how the study results were going to be used. The researcher also established ground rules for the discussions which included turning off cell phones during the sessions and for participants to be respectful of one another. A copy of the informed consent letter was provided to each participant at the beginning of the first session and this was signed by each participant

The researcher mainly employed a set of pre-determined questions in trying to understand the participants' perceptions of the responsiveness of their curriculum. The researcher explained that these interviews would be audio-recorded and transcribed after the interviews for the purposes of accuracy and to allow the researcher to participate fully in the discussions. Participants agreed and signed the informed consent form, which had a tick-box to permit audio recording expressly. The researcher also took care in ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected. The researcher explained to the participants that their details were confidential. The researcher explained that quotes from the interview might be used in the preparation of the final report.

4.10.3. In-depth interviews

The researcher also carried out in-depth interviews with seven (7) participants that included six (6) students and one academic staff member. In the interviews, the researcher used an interview guide which had questions on the perceptions regarding the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum and the employability of graduate students holding this qualification. The interviews were guided by the work of McNamara (2009), who provides

vital points when preparing for an interview in order to keep the interview focused and intentional. The researcher followed these guidelines as follows:

The researcher chose a comfortable setting, with minimal distractions. In this study, the interviews took place primarily in campus facilities which included the library and lecture theatres. The researcher made sure to clearly explain the objectives of the interview to participants at the start of each interview. In this study, the researcher started each interview by thanking the participant for taking the time to participate, and the researcher explained the aim of the interview. A copy of the informed consent letter was provided to each participant at the beginning of the meeting which was then signed.

The researcher also took care in ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected. The researcher explained to the participants that their details were confidential. The researcher explained that quotes from the interview might be used in the preparation of the final report. However, assurance was given that the data would be cleaned so that their anonymity would be guaranteed. Furthermore, the researcher explained to the participants that only the researcher and the research supervisor would have access to the data.

The format of the interview was also clarified, and each interview began with an explanation of the research aim which was to explore the experiences of participants in relation to the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum. The researcher also informed the participants of the anticipated duration of the interview at the start of each interview. The initial communication with each participant explained that the interview would take approximately 40 minutes.

The researcher made sure to share his contact details with each participant and encouraged them to contact the researcher or the researcher's supervisor with any questions or concerns that they may have about the study. The researcher explained the need to make audio recordings of the interviews so that accurate records could be transcribed later. Furthermore, the researcher explained that audio-recording would help the researcher to participate in the exchange fully and not be distracted with taking notes. Participants agreed and signed the informed consent form, which had a tick-box to permit audio recording expressly.

A total of five (5) interviews sessions were conducted with six students from the Department of Public Administration and one staff member.:

4.10.4. Document analysis

Document analysis is an important tool for gathering information. In this study, document analysis was used to collect data from literature. Bowen (2009:28), states that:

“document analysis is the analysis of documents with the aim of providing research with the direction and an understanding in order to provide factual knowledge”.

The researcher reviewed the following relevant documents: journal articles, books, survey data, institutional reports as well as newspapers (Bowen, 2009: 28). For the purposes of this study, document analysis was used because it is effective and adaptive. Data analysis is data selection rather than data gathering and hence it is less time consuming (Bowen, 2009). The main documents that were used for data collection were the *Annual Report for the College of Law and Management Studies (2021)*, the *Department of Higher Education and Training strategic planning (2021)* and *The National Development Plan Vision 2030*. These documents contain relevant data on the structure of the Public Administration curriculum at UKZN and employability of post-graduates in the public sector. *The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)* framework will also be used in the analysis phase.

4.11 Measurements

This study used interviews, survey questionnaires, focus group discussions and document analysis as data collection tools. Interview questions, focus group discussions and survey questionnaires were designed to understand the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at UKZN. Some broad themes were covered in the questionnaire such as the nature of the Public Administration curriculum at the UKZN, the respondents' views on what determines the Public Administration curriculum, the factors that enable or that hinder the effective implementation of the Public Administration curriculum and what should be done to improve the implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum at the UKZN. The research probed the perceptions of participants regarding the Public Administration curriculum at the UKZN. The data collection instrument included a five step Likert Scale where respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement in terms of a responsive Public Administration curriculum in which 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat agree/neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly agree. The survey questionnaire also consisted of open-ended questions which allowed respondents freedom to further express their views regarding the Public Administration Curriculum at the UKZN.

Data analysis

After the data were collected, they were organised and analysed. Data analysis is a process of grouping and organising data and finding the relationships among identified data elements (Ngulube, 2015). This study used a mixed methodology approach. This section describes how data were analysed in both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The researcher used thematic analysis and descriptive analysis. The closed-ended questions in the survey were analysed using a computer programme called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This data was analysed by using descriptive statistics. Frequency tables were drawn up and from these the data were presented in pie charts and bar graphs. Open-ended questions were analysed through quantitative content analysis with the aim of quantifying emerging characteristics and concepts. The researcher also used thematic analysis to analyse the data collected from interviews and focus group discussions with participants.

4.11.1 Thematic analysis

The researcher utilised thematic analysis to analyse the data collected from interviews and focus group discussions with participants. According to Braun & Clarke (2006: 79), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting on patterns (themes) within the data. Braun & Clarke (2006: 79) recommend thematic analysis and they argue that it is an adaptable and valuable method in qualitative research that provides a:

recipe for people to undertake thematic analysis in a way that is theoretically and methodologically sound.

Table 4.2 below details the 15-point checklist below:

Table 4.2: A fifteen-point checklist of criteria for proper thematic analysis

Process	No.	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data has been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for accuracy.
Coding	2	Each data item has been appropriately coded.

	3	The coding process has been thorough, inclusive, and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
	6	Themes are internally clear, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis	7	Data has been thoroughly analysed and interpreted.
	8	Analysis and data match each other and the extracts support the analytic claims.
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic.
	10	There is a balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts provided.
Overall	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete data analysis
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and the specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explained.
	13	The research method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The researcher actively participates in the research process; themes are not fabricated.

Source: Adapted from Braun & Clarke (2006: 96).

Informed by the above steps, the researcher read and re-read the interview transcripts multiple times to become familiar with the data and to identify themes. The researcher concentrated on listening to the audio-recordings multiple times to check the accuracy of the transcription against the recordings.

The data were categorised and coded into main themes and sub-themes regarding the perceptions of undergraduate and post-graduate Public Administration students regarding the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Thereafter, identified themes were related to each other and across the entire data set to name, define and present as findings in this study.

4.11.2 Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to analyse data that was collect through survey questionnaires. The researcher made use of SPSS to produce graphs and tables to address the research

questions. This involves the transformation of raw data into a form that will make them easy to understand (Loeb et al., 2017). The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to explore the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the UKZN. Descriptive statistical analysis took place on the data from sample groups to obtain a clear understanding of the attitudes of the population. Measures of central tendency (means, medians, and other percentiles) and dispersion (standard deviations, ranges) were computed. Parametric inferential analysis was used to provide a detailed understanding of the study population through the study sample, it helped in generalised the results.

4.12 Data quality control

To ensure the quality of data collected for a research study the reliability, validity, and trustworthiness of the data collection method needed to be considered. Reliability and validity in a qualitative study constitute trustworthiness. Reliability is the degree to which the tools for collecting data are consistent (MacMillan, 2001: 28). The data that were collected by a researcher must be the same as the data collected by other researchers using the same sample especially when similar data collection tools were used (Saunders et al., 2012). Validity on the other hand refers to the degree to which the conclusions are consistent with reality (Merriam, 2009:213). According to Tracy (2010) research quality can be achieved in qualitative research through following the big-tent criteria. Table 4.3 below provides the criteria, together with the means, practices, and methods through which these can be achieved.

Table 4.3: Eight ‘big-tent ‘criteria for excellent qualitative research

Criteria for quality (end goals) **Various means, practices, and methods through which to achieve goals)**

Worthy topic The topic of research is relevant, timely, significant, and interesting

Rich rigour The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex

- Theoretical constructs
- Data and time in the field
- Sample(s)
- Context(s)
- Data collection and analysis processes”

Sincerity	The study is characterised by self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher. The study is transparent about the methods and challenges.
Credibility	<p>The research is marked by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick description, concrete details, explication of tacit (non-textual) knowledge and showing rather than telling • Triangulation or crystallisation • Multivocality • Member reflections
Resonance	The research influences affect or move readers or a variety of audiences through evocative representation, naturalistic generalisations, and transferable findings.
Significant contribution	<p>The research provides a significant contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptually / theoretically • Practically • Morally • Methodologically • Heuristically
Ethical	The research considers procedural, situational, relational, and existing ethics
Meaningful coherence	<p>The study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves what it purports to be about • Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals • Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings and interpretations with each other.”

Source: Adapted from Tracy (2010: 840)

This study applied the above-mentioned criteria as follows:

- Worthy topic – the topic of this research study was significant as it raised awareness about the employability challenges faced by university graduate students mainly associated with the responsiveness of their curriculum, which is a topic that is of relevance to anyone considering enrolment in the courses offered by the Public Administration Department and when students consider their career options.

- Rich rigour – the researcher exercised due diligence and care in ensuring that effort was put into developing the contextual framework, adequate time was spent in the field, the sample size was suitable, and the data were collected and analysed proficiently.
- Sincerity – the researcher acknowledged that there were challenges in the research process, the goals and biases affecting the present study and that these impacted on the choice of methods for the study.
- Credibility – the researcher ensured the trustworthiness of the findings by using the member-check method. Participants were encouraged to check and comment on the accuracy of the transcribed data.
- Resonance – the research report indicates the study's potential to inform people considering their career options at tertiary level including practitioners involved in designing university curriculums. The findings help raise awareness and make people think critically about career planning.
- Significant contribution – the study aimed to explore the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The knowledge gained is useful as it sheds light on a significant employability challenge faced by graduate students.
- Ethical considerations – these are dealt with in the paragraphs below.
- Meaningful coherence – the research design meaningfully connected the design to the data collection, and analysis with the conceptual framework.

4.13 Ethical Considerations

Kuper, Lingard & Levinson (2008: 93), state that ethics ‘pertains to doing good and avoiding harm.’ During this research study, the researcher took responsibility for complying with the ethical guidelines that protect participants by paying attention to the following:

- Voluntary participation - Kuper et al., (2008), emphasise that volunteers are autonomous and they are allowed to accept or refuse to participate in a study. In this research study, university students and staff members as research participants at the University of KwaZulu-Natal were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. The participant information sheet was given to participants before the interview.

- Informed consent - The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the study and what the researcher hoped to derive from the study. In this research study, participants were given an introductory letter and asked to sign the consent forms, indicating that they understood the purpose of the study and that their consent was based on being fully informed about the study
- No harm to participants - The researcher ensured that no harm was caused to participants by clearly explaining the purpose and research processes of the study. The researcher avoided asking irrelevant questions that could embarrass or compromise participants.
- Confidentiality and anonymity - Participants were informed that only the researcher and the research supervisor would have access to the collected data which included recordings and transcripts. Anonymity was ensured using code-names instead of real names in reporting the findings of the study. Participants were informed that neither their names, departments, nor job titles would be mentioned in the research report.
- Ethical clearance - The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal before the commencement of the study. The researcher ensured that the study was conducted ethically. A copy of the Ethical Clearance Certificate provided by the University of KwaZulu-Natal is included as an appendix.

4.14 Limitations of the study

This research was confined to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus where Public Administration education is offered and therefore its results cannot be generalised to any other institution of higher learning in South Africa. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the researcher couldn't get hold of other study participants because of various reasons. However, the study should contribute to the impact and the effectiveness of curriculum responsiveness in ensuring that graduates can access employment opportunities in the public sector specifically Public Administration graduates.

4.15 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the methodology that was used by the researcher to explore the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This chapter discussed the research methodology employed, the research paradigm, research approaches, and research strategies used in the study. The following chapter will present a discussion of the findings of this study.

Chapter 5: Presentation & Discussion of the Findings

5.1 Introduction

The key findings of this study were discussed in this chapter in relation to the existing literature, theory and previous studies. The study's main objective was to explore the Public Administration curriculum of the University of KwaZulu-Natal to determine whether the employability needs of the students are addressed or not. Tables and bar charts were used in this chapter. An insight into the main themes which included the nature of the Public Administration curriculum, determinants of the Public Administration curriculum, factors that either enable or hinder the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum and ways to improve the curriculum's responsiveness were declared.

5.2 Level of Study Qualification

The researcher engaged respondents who are at different levels of the Public Administration qualification at the university. In this context, soliciting the qualification levels of respondents is essential towards understanding the way students at a particular level think pertaining to the subject in question. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to gain insight into and to be able to decipher the way students at a specific level of study think regarding the curriculum responsiveness to Public Administration graduate employability. Figure 5.1 clarifies the respondents' level of study.

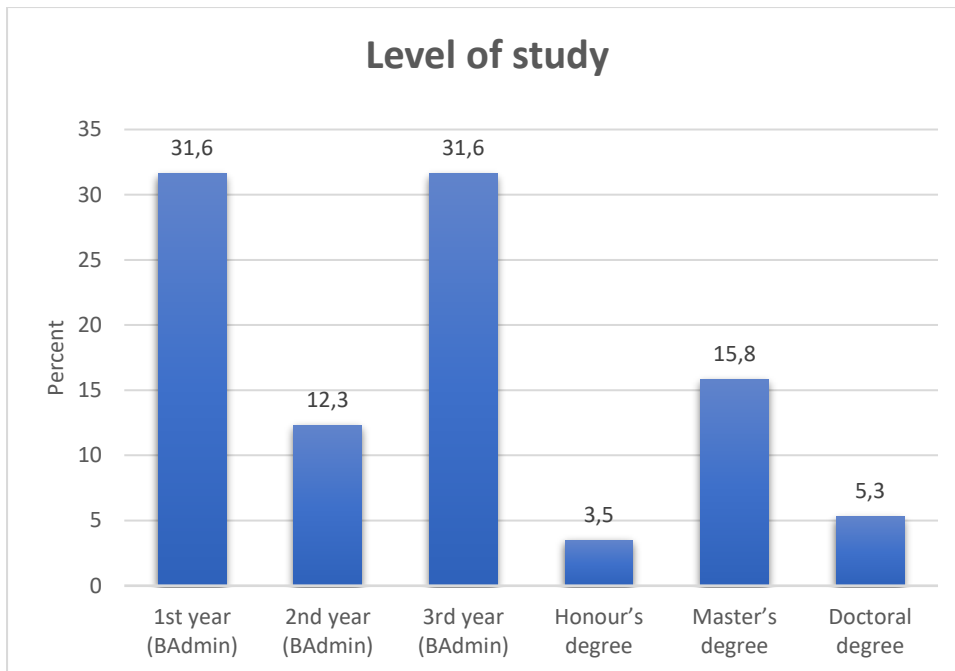


Figure 5.1: Level of Study

Figure 5.1 above reflects that most of the respondents are in the 1st year and 3rd year of study with 31.6 per cent respectively. These were followed with Master's degree respondents with 15.8 per cent, and then the 2nd year respondents with 12.3 per cent. The level with the lowest number of respondents was the Honour's degree with 3.5 per cent. It is highly likely that most of the respondents who are 1st year and 3rd year students in the Bachelor of Public Administration are keener to understand the employability of the degree qualification. While the low participation from respondents in other levels of study might be due to low enrolment in the particular level of study. It is important that having more respondents at Master's level as compared to those in 2nd year and Honours degree level, might be due to a better understanding of the discipline having been exposed to different work environment and other challenges and limitations that might be associated with the curriculum responsiveness of Public Administration graduate employability.

5.3 Skills required from a public administrator

The participants were surveyed through survey questionnaires to find out the skills that they thought were required of a public administrator. Table 5.1 shows the skills identified by participants.

Table 5.1: Public administrator skills

	Percentage Rating			
	Never required	Rarely required	required	Mostly required
Communication skill	0	5.3	43.9	50.9
Problem -solving and analysis	1.8	7.0	52.6	38.6
Research and report writing skills	5.3	12.3	45.6	36.8
Change management	5.3	31.6	47.4	15.8
Good presentation skills	1.8	7.0	47.4	43.9
Self-management skills	5.3	14.0	57.9	22.8
Strategic capability and leadership	1.8	10.5	45.6	42.1
Knowledge management	0	1.8	52.6	54.4
Policy articulation skills	0	17.5	38.6	43.9
People’s management and empowerment skills	1.8	17.5	45.6	35.1
Teamwork	3.5	3.5	54.4	38.6
Planning and organising skills	1.8	5.3	52.6	40.4
Technology and learning skills	3.5	7.0	56.1	33.3
Initiative skills	3.5	15.8	52.6	28.1

N=57

Table 5.1 shows that when it comes to change management 47.4 per cent of the participants revealed it was required of Public Administrators with only 5.3 per cent arguing it was never a requirement. This may be because the participants realised the need for and importance of any leader or office bearer to be able to cope with change to be able to survive in the dynamic industry.

More so with regards to good presentation skills the highest percentages of participants, 47.4 per cent, were of the view that public administrators required this skill, with 43.9 per cent stating it was the most required skill for a public administrator and only 1.8 per cent arguing

this was not a requirement for a Public Administrator. This again reflects on the need for any person of position to have presentation skills considering the public sector is an environment characterised with many things to be presented and accounted for every now and then.

Knowledge management was also identified by the majority of the participants as mostly required by the administrator with 54.4 per cent, another 52.6 per cent stating it was a requirement and none of the participants were in doubt regarding the requirement of a knowledge management attribute of a public administrator. The most likely reason for participants to say this is the realisation by many of the participants that there is no better leader than one who is knowledgeable and able to put that knowledge to good and appropriate use. People's management and empowerment skills were also revealed to be a skill required of a public administrator a majority of 45.6 per cent arguing that it is a requirement and only 1.8 per cent were of the view it is never a requirement and 17.5 per cent advocated that it was rarely a requirement. The public sector works with people so it is understandable that the need for people management and be ability to cater for their needs professionally are considered as important.

In the interviews which were carried out some of the respondents had the same views as those portrayed by the participants in the survey questionnaires. The results below are from six participants from interviews, five students (Respondent 1 to 5) and 1 lecturer (Respondent 6). The results also include five participants from focus groups (FGR1 to FGR5). Some of the responses reflect the views from the participants from surveys, interviews and focus groups on instances where they share the same identified theme.

5.3.1 Communication skill

Table 5.1 shows that when it comes to communication skills the highest percentage 50.9 per cent stated that Public Administrators mostly required this skill, with only 5.3 per cent arguing it was rarely required. This may be a reflection of the importance of communication skills in every organisation.

Turning to interviews on the same theme, Respondent 4 was of the view that communication is an important skill a public administrator should possess. The argument was that as an administrator working with people, it would be difficult to resolve most of the issues if one is not a good communicator. Respondent 4 had this to say:

Communication skills is important since we are serving the public. You cannot be able to solve any of the problems of the general population if you cannot talk to them effectively. Interpersonal skills, conflict resolution and adapting to change is also required of a public administrator. (Respondent 4)

On the same note Respondent 6 revealed that among the many skills, communication skills are the target of many employers. This is highlighted below:

Employers are looking for communication skills, interpersonal skills, and ability to deliver services as expected (responsive students). (Respondent 6)

Hence, the argument of the participants is that communication skill be it verbal or written communication should be part of a public administrator's skill set.

5.3.2 Problem-solving and analysis

In response to the question of the requirements needed of a public administrator, Table 5.1 from survey participants again shows that problem-solving and analysis are skills required of a public administrator with most participants 52.6 per cent arguing for this. Such results would not be surprising following that every organisation has problems which need solutions. If the leader lacks problem-solving skills the organisation would be going nowhere.

The interviewees on the same theme expressed the view that the public and private sector desires people with the skill to solve organisational problems as well as to analyse any situation and to offer the appropriate solution. Respondent 3 highlighted that public administrators as leaders were expected to be problem-solvers. Below is what Respondent 3 had to say:

A public administrator should have problem-solving skills and at most times be above the problem, not stressed out by it or made to be appear incompetent in the face of any challenges which may arise.

It is this skill which a public administrator should also be associated with.

5.3.3 Research and report-writing skills

Table 5.1 shows that 45.6 per cent of the participants agreed on the fact that research and writing skills is a requirement that a Public Administrator needed with 36.8 per cent stating it

is mostly required, 12.3 per cent noting it is rarely required and a smaller percentage of 5.3 stating research and report-writing skill is never a skill required of a Public Administrator.

The interviewees sharing the same sentiment indicated that research and report-writing skills were prerequisites of a public administrator. A public administrator should keep abreast the changes around the organisation through research. Researching for what is new and what is needed to be done and at the same time the ability to write a report on the findings and recommendations should be a requirement. The participants expressed this as follows:

The organisations are transforming almost every day, one afforded the post of a public administrator should have the skills to research and compile relevant reports so as not to be overtaken by the changes. Through constant research and reports to fall back on s a public administrator excels.

Expectations are high you need to be a Researcher, publisher, producing more papers and attend research seminars/ conferences, and as an academic one needs to be more involved in community participation. (Respondent 6)

The above is not a surprising finding due to the fact that, since the participants were learned individuals there is a greater chance, they are now aware that the office of the Public Administrator comes with much paperwork to be done hence the need for research and report-writing skills.

5.3.4 Strategic capability and leadership

Regarding strategic capability and leadership, results from the surveys show that the highest percentage, of 45.9 per cent of the respondents were of the view that Public Administrators required these skills with only 1.8 per cent arguing that public administrators never required these skills.

The same sentiments were observed with the respondents that were interviewed with a total of 4 participants agreeing that leadership and strategic qualities made for a skilled public administrator. Strategic management is also the new trend of the twenty-first century industries, and it is a prerequisite for every leader to have such skill. The respondents had this to say regarding the subject matter:

A public administrator should be organised, punctual, strategic and someone who can lead. Without these qualities the whole aspect of public administration is questionable. (Respondent 5)

A public administrator is a leader in his/her own capacity, but he/she should also display leadership qualities and knowledge of strategic management. The public sector needs such leaders in its ranks..(FGR4)

This again reflects the need for any person of position to have leadership qualities and to be a capable strategist considering the need for strategic leadership in the now ever-changing world or work environment.

5.3.5 Policy articulation skills

Table 5.1 further shows that more than half of the participants acknowledge that knowledge management and policy articulation skills were mostly required and required by an administrator with 54.4 per cent and 43.9 per cent respectively.

The interview respondents also upheld that policy articulation skills were a requirement of the Public Administrator. The courses in Public Administration were found to be designed along these lines to equip the students for their future role in the public sector. Respondent 4 noted that the Public Administration curriculum,

It gives students a better understanding of government operations within a political space and how government provides goods and services. It also gives students a better understanding of how government formulate policies and how these policies are to be implemented by various institutions. (Respondent 4)

Some of the participants on the same note had this to say:

The public sector and politics are inseparable. Therefore, it means there are many governmental policies which are passed to these organisations and its leaders are expected to be up to date with these policies and to have knowledge of the political environment. (Respondent 5)

This was an anticipated result considering that the public sector is government governed so it is characterised by many policies, legislation, and acts. It then becomes paramount that a Public Administrator should be well versed in the official policies and how to articulate them. Another probable explanation for this result may be because the majority of respondents had more than a year at the university and so had passed through the introductory course to know that policy making moulds a competent Public Administrator.

5.3.6 Teamwork

Looking at teamwork as a requirement for a Public Administrator, again Table 5.1 shows that most of the participants, that is 54.4 per cent believed that Public Administrators were required

to have this skill, with only 3.5 per cent stating it was never a requirement and rarely a requirement respectively.

Turning now to the interviewees and to those in the focus group the same question was asked about what was required of a Public Administrator. All the interviewees stipulated teamwork as one of the attributes of a Public Administrator. as a Public Administrator one is expected to be a team player and one who values team work as with-it novel ideas can be shared to the advantage of the organisation. Respondent 6 reflected that:

Teamwork is characterised with mingling of a diversified workforce, meaning ideas and knowledge of people from different cultural backgrounds, educational qualifications and competences contribute towards a common cause. A public administrator should be able to encourage and be part of a team to harvest the benefits it presents.(Respondent 6)

Another participant from the focus group on the same vein highlighted that:

Working as a team can bring those fragmented ideas into one fruitful one. Look at us as a group there are many thoughts presented which would have just been lost if we had stuck to individualism. If one as a leader cannot influence and emphasise teamwork, then he/she lacks the qualities of a leader already. (FGR3)

Teamwork is thus reflected as being important and one of the core skills a Public Administrator is expected to possess, and it is not surprising considering the various ideas locked within teamwork. This also is not a novel result especially from students who have experienced the advantages of working or discussing in groups.

5.3.7 Planning and organising skills

The survey participants also identified the skill of planning and organising as another requirement of a Public Administrator, with the majority constituting 52.6 per cent of the

participants acknowledging it as a requirement and only 1.8 per cent stating it is never a requirement of a Public Administrator.

Turning to the interviews carried out on the same theme, the participants indicated that planning and organising is a common picture in most of the organisations. The participants went on to reveal that a Public Administrator should know how to plan and organise within the bounds of the public sector. No organisations have been known to thrive without effective planning and organising. This takes someone with the right skills and competences as a planner to drive an organisation forward. Respondent 4 noted that:

Planning, organising, controlling, staffing, budgeting, coordination is important to an administrator and should be part of his/her skill set.

In the same vein Respondents 1 and 3 concurred that planning was the starting line of every organisation and being organised ensured the plan was going as anticipated.

A public administrator is in a people environment and needs to have everything planned to attain good service delivery. He/she should be an organised individual to lead the organisation effectively. Planning and organising are skills a public administrator is encouraged to acquire somehow.

5.3.8 Technology and learning skills

The participants reported that technology and learning skills also are attributes a Public Administrator should possess. As illustrated in Table 5.1 more than half of the participants, that is 52.6 per cent were of the view that technology and learning skills were a requirement for a public administrator, with 28.1 per cent stating it was strongly required, 15.8 per cent arguing it was rarely a requirement and a small percentage of 3.5 noting that technology and learning skills were not a requirement for a Public Administrator.

Results from interviews on the same theme revealed that a Public Administrator should be computer literate, technologically knowledgeable and flexible enough to learn new skills. It is common knowledge that technology has taken over even the industries and they are compelled to live by its principles. As a result, a public administrator is also not spared from this. The participants had this to say:

The need to have technological skills should be on top of all the core skills required of a Public Administrator. The work setting is now digitalised and every corner you turn to is just technological advancement. This is one fact one cannot run away from or choose to neglect. (Respondent 2)

Imagine having a leader who does not know how a computer is operated., How can he/she keep up with the various technological requirements which accompany it. A Public Administrator should have basic computer skills but learn more as the industry continues to transform and new technological requirements set in. (Respondent 4)

These results suggest that the participants are now aware of the technological age and the need for leaders to be up to date with technology. Considering that it is now the Fourth Industrial Revolution almost every employee is required to be technologically competent and not afraid to take that initiative. Thus, it is understandable that the majority of participants indicated the need for a Public Administrator to be technologically well-versed.

5.4 The determinants of a Public Administration curriculum.

The second research question in this study intended to determine the factors that were considered in the curriculum of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Views from the respondents were solicited using surveys, interviews and focus group discussions. This section will present their responses. The participants from the survey questionnaires brought out the following as the determinants of the Public Administration curriculum.

Table 5.2: The determinants of the Public Administration curriculum

	Percentage Rating			
	Never used	Sometimes used	Often used	Very often used
Accreditation	5.3	22.8	52.6	19.3
Students needs and expectations	5.3	24.6	50.9	19.3
Employer demands	7.0	26.3	43.9	22.8
Lecturer skills and qualifications	0	15.8	42.1	42.1
Higher education policies e.g., SAQA	3.5	12.3	50.9	33.3

N=57

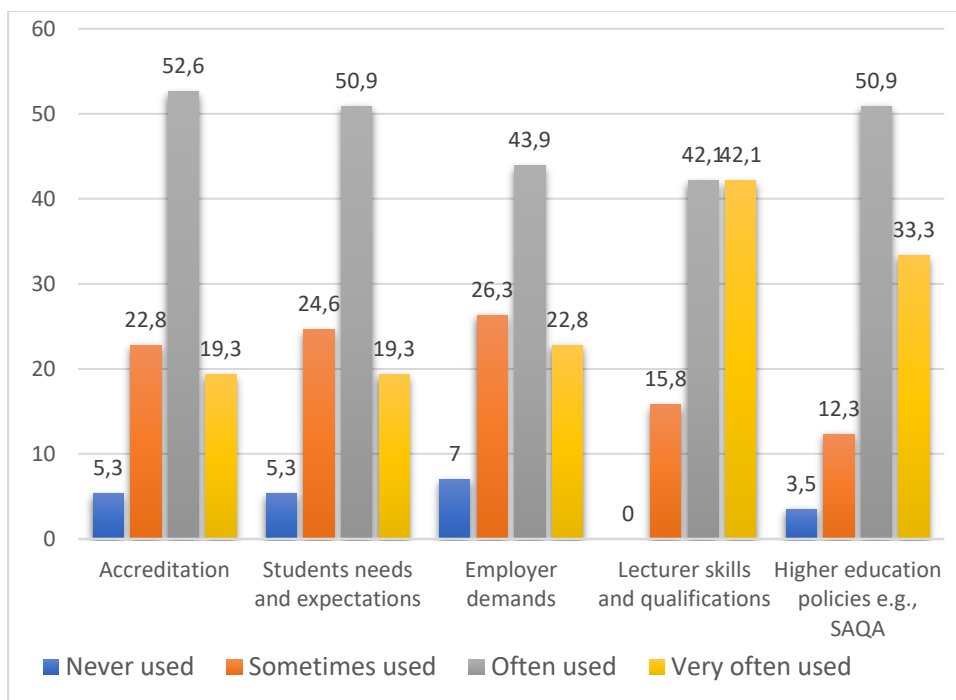


Table 5.2 shows that many of the participants agreed with the identified determinants of the Public Administration curriculum and were often used in the designing of a curriculum. 52.6 per cent of the participants which is the highest number noted accreditation as the key determinant of the Public Administration curriculum. This may be because the participants were already aware of the existence of the accreditation board and its functions in the institutes of higher learning.

The results from the interviews and focus groups also revealed some of the themes common to survey questionnaires responses and these views alongside those from surveys are explored below.

5.4.1 Students needs and expectations

Table 5.2 shows that 50.9 per cent of the participants argued that the students' needs, and expectations were often determiners of the Public Administration curriculum and only 5.3 per cent argued that the students' needs, and expectations were never determinants of the curriculum in Public Administration.

During the interviews the interviewees also concurred with the views of those from the surveys. 4 of the 6 participants agreed that the students' needs, and expectations shape the curriculum. The students are the ones who know what they want and giving them a voice drives the curriculum towards achieving their goals. Respondent 1 noted:

The voice of the students is paramount for it to be heard. We as students know what we want and if the curriculum is driven in that direction, it would accomplish the desired needs of the many. Also, we have a network of ideas as students coming from different backgrounds with different ideas, approaches, and abilities. If these are harnessed it would be a greater contributor to the Public Administration curriculum. As a student I think the university is achieving my expectations and the employer expectations because what I study at the university is what applies to the public sector.

Participant 3 in the same vein but with a bit of uncertainty revealed that

We as students we are underestimated but we do possess some information and knowledge that can enrich the curriculum. Though I can understand to some extent that we are students here to learn and of course less knowledgeable with little to offer to the designing of the curriculum., The expectations we have from a programme or module can be an indicator of the type of curriculum which serves the majority, provided it is relevant to the employment environment.

Therefore, the views of those from the surveys and the interviews were the same and this may be since most of the respondents were students in Public Administration and others former students (lecturers). So, it is no surprise that they recognise their contribution to the curriculum for they may have been talking from experience.

5.4.2 Employer demands

When asked about the determinants of the Public Administration curriculum, Table 5.2 again shows that 43.9 per cent of the participants identified employer demands as often the determinants of the curriculum, 22.8 per cent stating that the demands of the employer very often affect the curriculum and another significant 26.3 per cent advocating for sometimes and 7.0 per cent failing to acknowledge the employer demands as a determinant of the Public Administration curriculum.

Turning to interviews and focus group discussions on the same theme, the participants brought out that an employer or the industry influence the designing of a Public Administration curriculum. If students are equipped with knowledge that ends up not meeting the market's demands, then the whole reason for learning will be defeated. The participants had this to say:

The employers have knowledge about their institutions and the kind of candidates they need in order to fill in the vacant posts, therefore, it is crucial that employers be involved

in the development of a curriculum so that the university can teach what is expected by the employers. (Respondent 1)

The demand in the market determines what is to be learnt. Arrangements must be made by employers to come to address universities shedding light on what they expect from them. They are the recruiters and if the curriculum does not teach the skills and competencies they need this will simply disadvantage the students who end up unemployed. (FGR4)

A possible explanation for the participants to view the demands of the employer as the determinants of the curriculum is that they as Public Administration students know that they are being educated to enter the employment environment and if what they are taught does not meet the demands of the employer, then the whole aspect of learning would be defeated. It is this realisation that led to the above results.

5.4.3 Lecturer skills and qualifications

The skills of the lecturers and their qualification were also identified as the determinants of the Public Administration curriculum. From Table 5.2, it shows that 42.1 per cent which is the majority agreed with this statement with none of the participants against the statement of lectures being the determinants of the curriculum in Public Administration.

The interviewees on the same theme reflected on the competences of the lecturers as a factor to consider in the designing of a curriculum. The participants' argument was that the lecturers due to their experience and prior knowledge equipped them to be in a better position to know what the curriculum needs which benefits its students.

The lectures are learned people with significant knowledge. They are researchers, qualified and experienced to recognise a gap in the curriculum and how to rectify it. This then makes them the best candidates to design a public administration curriculum. (Respondent 3)

Participant 6 elaborating on this revealed that:

How a lecturer introduces a course content and how they lecture has made me enjoy the curriculum and made me get more interested in the field of public Administration. I feel the lecturers were afforded the chance to define the curriculum and this enabled them to design it in a fun and captivating way, to make it appealing to us students. I can safely recommend students to enrol in Public Administration so that they get more skills of managing and to understand government operations.

This perception about the lecturers as the determinants of the curriculum by the participants may be due to the fact that, the participants having experienced the lecturers' expertise and knowledge of the field may have instilled within them that conclusion that if they are this knowledgeable why can they not just formulate the curriculum. In addition, it is common knowledge that who can be better at improving something more than someone who is exposed to it daily.

5.4.4 Higher education policies (SAQA)

The results from surveys indicated that higher education policies like SAQA have got a hand in the Public Administration curriculum development. Table 5.2 indicates that 50.9 per cent of the respondents acknowledged the influence of higher education policies in the formulation of the curriculum with only 3.5 per cent claiming that higher education policies played no part in determining the curriculum.

The participants from the interviews and focus groups also indicated that policies have a hand in Public Administration formulation. There are higher educational policies like SAQA and many more which indicate the lines which institutions of learning should not cross in their curriculum formulations and how they should go about it. These findings are reported below as follows.

Policies are responsible for guiding the universities on what you are supposed to do and how they need to go about developing the curriculum. Higher education policies also stipulate the standard that each qualification must meet, and it also determines the level of knowledge and experience that the academics need to possess to teach the curriculum.
(Respondent 4)

There is a synergy between higher education policies and PA curriculum that we deliver. The higher education policies assist the university curriculum to be structured in a way that it meets the needs and the expectations of both the students and the employers.
(Respondent 6)

Higher education policies I think they help the university to develop a public administration curriculum that is more relevant to what the government is expecting and that is accredited. (FGR2)

The findings strongly indicate that the participants perceive higher education policies influence the curriculum of Public Administration. It is not a surprising finding though considering that no institution operates out of the bounds of laws or policies.

5.4.5 Government

The government is the public sector and usually the policies and laws which govern the public sector reflect the interest of the government. The participants revealed that somehow the government has got a hand in curriculum development since whatever most institutions deliberate on should not conflict with the interests of the country's *Constitution* and governmental laws or policies. Participants 2 and 4 reflected on this below as follows:

The government is the law givers, and it controls almost every aspect of the public sector. So, organisations are not free to act of their own will if whatever they will be doing goes against the principles laid down by the government. (Respondent 2)

Government impact is bigger because as a student I am also expected to work for the public sector and yet I am still learning which is a huge role since the government is the one which is responsible to determine how the curriculum should look like and what areas must be covered so that the student/graduates get that knowledge. (Respondent 4)

5.5 Factors that enable effective implementation of the curriculum

The third research question in this study intended to find out the factors that enabled the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The participants from the surveys, interviews and focus groups highlighted that there are various factors that enable effective implementation of a curriculum. The views of the participants from surveys are reported on in Table 5.3:

Table 5.3: Enabling factors for effective curriculum implementation

	Percentage rating			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
University facilities such as libraries and computer labs	10.5	14.0	38.6	36.8
Student funding such as NSFAS	7.0	14.0	35.1	43.9
Work integrated learning	8.8	17.5	35.1	38.6
Partnership with the employers/industries	10.5	21.1	40.4	28.1
Partnership with other universities	8.8	28.1	33.3	29.8
Social support (e.g., family support)	8.8	17.5	47.4	26.3
Student counselling	8.8	17.5	43.9	29.8
Qualified lecturers	10.5	12.3	29.8	47.4

Teaching assistance (e.g., PGA's_	10.5	15.8	29.8	43.9
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N=57

The participants revealed that at the UKZN amongst the highest-ranking factors which enable the effective implementation of a curriculum is student funding such as NSFAS. 43.9 per cent of the participants strongly agreed with this statement, 35.1 per cent agreed, 14.0 per cent disagreed and 7.0 per cent strongly disagreed. So more than half of the participants agreed that student funding enabled effective curriculum implementation. This finding is a result that many of the participants were receiving NSFAS funding thus experiencing the financial freedom and not being stressed out about their academic life or most of the respondents were financially challenged and because of this they were stressed out and this affected their academic life and they perceived that if they had student funding the case would have been different.

When it comes to partnership with the employers/industries 40.4 per cent strongly agreed that partnership with employers enabled an effective implementation and promoted a responsive Public Administration curriculum, 28.1 per cent agreed, 21.1 per cent disagreed and 10.5 per cent strongly disagreed. The findings indicate that most of the participants acknowledged the importance of partnership with employers to implement a responsive and effective PA curriculum. This is not a surprising finding considering that the employers are the ones who know what is needed in their respective organisations hence their affiliation means the curriculum is shaped to their expectations and needs which becomes the curriculum's aim.

As can be seen from table 5.3 partnership with other universities is believed to enable the effective implementation of a responsive curriculum. To this statement the greater percentage of 33.3 agreed but there was also a significant 28.1 per cent who disagreed with this statement. This difference in perception is because the participants were divided between those who had the chance to visit other universities for seminars and those who did not. So those participants privileged to be part of another university realised the importance of information sharing between or amongst universities to create a responsive Public Administration curriculum.

47.4 per cent of the participants agreed that social support, for example family support enabled the implementation of an effective and responsive PA curriculum. 26.3 per cent agreed with the statement, 17.5 per cent disagreed and only 8.8 per cent of the participants were in strong disagreement with this statement. This difference in perception may be due to the fact that some of the participants had supportive families which made them settle more easily into

university life and this contributed to a responsive curriculum and the few participants who were in disagreement may come from dysfunctional families or poor backgrounds.

The results from the same theme from interviews, focus group and also surveys on the question of the factors that enable effective implementation of a responsive PA at the university of KwaZulu-Natal produced the following results:

5.5.1 University facilities such as libraries, computer labs

With regard to university facilities such as libraries and computer labs, Table 5.3 shows that 36.8 per cent strongly agreed that these facilities enabled the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum at the university, another 38.6 per cent agreed, with 14.0 per cent disagreeing and 10.5 per cent strongly disagreeing.

When the same question was posed to the interviewees and those in focus groups the sentiments were the same. The participants revealed that the status of the learning institution's library will determine if the curriculum implementation will be effective or not. They were of the view that libraries are the source of information be it online or offline. The participants had this to say:

At UKZN I applaud its libraries and computer labs. The library is well furnished with the relevant literature supporting academic development and computer labs are where you can carry out all your research. It is such a scenario which can enable effective curriculum implementation at any institution of higher learning. (FGR5)

The buildings and classrooms are conducive for academic learning, the library is also available, rich in literature and which is accessible at any time within the stipulated opening hours making researching and learning possible. (Respondent 3)

It can be observed from the results that the existence of well-furnished libraries and computer labs results in a responsive curriculum being implemented. The results may then be due to the fact that the participants, as most of them are students, may have utilised these facilities and ended up experiencing positive results in their PA studies.

5.5.2 Work-integrated learning

Table 5.3 shows that work-integrated learning contributes to effective and responsive curriculum implementation. A total percentage of 38.6 were in strong agreement with this statement, 35.1 per cent agreed, 17.5 per cent disagreed and 8.8 per cent strongly disagreed.

The participants from the interviews on the same theme indicated that work -integrated learning developed a curriculum and its effective implementation. This experience enables students to

link theory with practice and make to recommendations where the two seem not to align. Participant 4 noted that:

Work-integrated learning enables students to execute what they would have learnt. This allows them to make the necessary recommendations to a curriculum, if need be, based on the applicability of the learnt material. (Respondent 4)

Another participant noted but without certainty that:

I still need to get experience but from what I heard work-integrated learning may produce students who would bring new ideas and experiences to the academic table. (Respondent 1)

These results especially from surveys may suggest that those who acknowledged work-integrated learning as a factor which enables an effective and responsive curriculum implementation may be those who would have undertaken work integrated learning and may have witnessed its contribution to curriculum implementation. And the smaller percentage against the majority may be those students still under study and are still to experience for work-integrated learning.

5.5.3. Student counselling

The participants from the surveys also maintained that student counselling had a hand in the effective implementation of a curriculum and 43.9 per cent of the participants agreed with this statement. 8.8 per cent of the participants strongly disagreed with this.

Turning to interviews and focus groups, the participants on the same theme noted student counselling as being good for the curriculum development as well as for its implementation. The participants with concern revealed that students did not make use of counselling as much as expected but those few times they engaged and committed themselves to counselling positive results were also yielded. The participants had this to say:

Mentorships programmes and student counselling assist students to develop their knowledge and their careers by assisting other students. This motivates them to be more skilled in terms of communicating and engaging with diverse individuals. (Respondent 4)

Student counselling assisted students to address their personal or academic challenges. If addressed, they assist with ideas on how to deal with those challenges (FGR3)

Though it seems to be conflicting views between the results from the surveys and interviews pertaining to the frequency with which the students utilised the counselling service but there is one fact the participants agreed on is that the contribution student counselling had led to an improved student academic life which in-turn results in an effective and responsive curriculum being implemented.

5.5.4. Qualified lecturers

Table 5.3 further reveals that having qualified lecturers leads to the implementation of an effective and responsive PA curriculum. It is not surprising that most participants, that is, 47.4 per cent were in strong agreement with this statement.

Results from the interviews also revealed that qualified lectures are key to an effective implementation of a curriculum. They equip the students with knowledge based on the experiences, research, and qualifications they possess. They are part of the drivers of the university's life and programmes that it presents. The participants had this to say:

We teach or deliver what is exactly required by the higher education and what is expected by employers. We capacitate the students with the skills of adapting to the organisation once they have graduated. Academics are well informed about the public sector, so they will be able to implement the policies. (Respondent 6)

The lecturers are the fountains of knowledge which we have come to drink from. I do not doubt the fact that sometimes they just lay the foundation and encourage us to be creative and to undertake research of our own, through class presentations. Even though we too as students may contribute something towards the curriculum what enables its effective implementation are the competences of a qualified lecturer. (Respondent 5)

The lecturers if qualified and knowledgeable of their field it automatically means the curriculum taught is relevant. The results portrayed can be easily interpreted given that one of the respondents was a lecturer and was talking from his experience in the PA field.

5.5.5. Teaching assistance (e.g., PGA's)

Teaching assistants following Table 5.3 is also recognised as a factor that enabled the effective implementation of a curriculum. A majority percentage of the participants, that is 43.9 per cent strongly agreed with this statement.

The results from focus groups also revealed that teaching assistant had more to offer to the curriculum than one may have anticipated. They were found to be more flexible to talk to and facilitated learning and they were mostly still experiencing learning themselves so could relate better to learners. One of the participants in line with this noted:

Post graduate assistants (PGA's) are helpful as students are more comfortable to learn from them and do understand them better as compared to lecturers. We feel free to ask the PGA's whatever we want to learn freely without fear. (FGR4)

These results suggest that the students are benefiting from the aid of teaching assistants. The reason why the majority of the participants acknowledge this may be that the respondents are

students and lecturers are aware of the capabilities that PGAs possess, having guided them in the acquisition of those attributes and qualities.

5.5.6. Students' involvement

The participants revealed that the students as much as they were learners their involvement in the development of the curriculum enabled its effective implementation. This taps the lecturers or any responsible parties for curriculum development into the world of the students to also learn of what is new and what can be of great academic development for them. Respondent 1 elaborated on this below:

Students enter the school environment with different backgrounds and experiences and as much they are here to learn their contribution can shed light on a phenomenon which had not been identified. In addition, their interaction with other students and the external environment may equip them with skills and knowledge beneficial to the academic pool. This can lead to the effective implementation of a curriculum.

5.6 Factors that hinder the effective implementation of a curriculum

Various responses were revealed by participants when it came to identifying factors which hindered the effective implementation of a curriculum. These were also views derived from the surveys, focus group discussion and interviews. Some of the factors seem to contradict previous findings displayed on Table 5.3 as the results show that a majority of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the factors that are hindrances to effective curriculum implementation. Table 5.4 reflects on the survey responses pertaining to factors which hinder the effective implementation of a responsive curriculum.

Table 5.4: Hindering factors to effective curriculum implementation

Factors	Percentage rating			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Incompetent lecturers	15.8	22.8	21.1	40.4
Lack of financial support	14.0	10.5	36.8	38.6
Lack of resources	3.5	14.0	26.3	56.1
Student lack of involvement in decision-making	7.0	15.8	38.6	38.6

Poor communication with stakeholders (e.g., employers)	8.8	8.8	45.6	36.8
Poor engagement with other universities	7.0	26.3	33.3	33.3
Failure to link the university goals with those of the students	7.0	24.6	26.3	42.1

N=57

Most of the participants revealed that lack of resources at an institution of higher learning hindered effective curriculum implementation. These consisted of 56.1 per cent of the participants who were strongly in agreement with the statement. These results seem inconclusive considering that earlier the participants had noted that the university was well equipped and furnished. However the participants may have arrived at this conclusion considering other resources like lack of up-to-date text books or the lack of a conducive learning environment they would have experienced.

33.3 per cent of the participants also strongly agreed and agreed respectively to poor engagement with other universities the hindrance to an effective and responsive curriculum implementation with 26.3 per cent disagreeing and 7.0 per cent strongly disagreeing with the statement. The above results again show the majority agreeing with the statements portraying the mixed perceptions of the participants. More so a significant percentage disagreeing with this statement may be those with many years of university experience had the chance to engage with other universities and the majority are yet to experience this engagement.

5.6.1 Incompetent lecturers

Table 5.4 shows that the incompetence of lecturers hindered the effective implementation of a responsive PA curriculum. 40.4 per cent strongly agreed with this statement, 21.1 per cent agreed 22.8 per cent disagreed and 15.8 per cent strongly disagreed.

Turning to interviews and focus groups the participants speculated on how incompetent lecturers hinder the implementation of a curriculum. The participants stressed that lecturers as the knowledge givers, if they lack the skills and competences to pass on the knowledge this will affect the curriculum. The participants had this to say:

If lecturers are not capable of delivering their services, it would hinder the implementation of the curriculum (Respondent 4)

I think lack of understanding and being a slow learner as I can be a problem that can lead me not to fully understand the course content. Failure of a lecturer to deliver and make students understand can also be a problem that can lead to factors that hinders the effective implementation of the curriculum. (FGR2)

This finding may be due to the fact that as much as the University has qualified lecturers knowledgeable in the field of Public Administration, they may be lacking in the motivation or in the incentive to convey this knowledge in their lecturing, a fact which has come to the realisation of the students or participants.

5.6.2 Lack of financial support

Table 5.4 also show that 38.6 per cent which is the majority of the participants strongly agreed with the statement that lack of financial support hindered the effective implementation of a responsive curriculum. 36.8 per cent were also in agreement with this statement and only 14.0 per cent strongly disagreed.

On the same theme results from the focus group indicated that lack of financial aid was a challenge and if a student focused more on making himself/herself financially stable the schoolwork will be affected. The participants noted that:

The funding can be a challenge when it comes to effective implementation of the curriculum because if the students are struggling financially, they cannot concentrate on their studies which can result in failure. I think the provision of support services such as counselling can help the students to be motivated to study (FGR1)

Some students are on NSFAS which has been found to be a stress in itself as it pays late for the requirements of the students and some of the students seem to abuse this funding instead of utilising their scholarship money for academic purposes, they end up indulging in negative stuffs like drugs and alcohol abuse (Peer pressure). (FGR2)

This financial challenge indicates that many of the participants may have been from poor backgrounds without NSFAS aid, hence could relate to how challenging it is to concentrate on studying when on the other hand you are trying to make ends meet financially. This undoubtedly impacted on the effective implementation the PA curriculum.

5.6.3 Lack of student involvement in decision making

To the statement student lack of involvement in decision-making hinders curriculum implementation, 38.6 per cent the majority strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the statement, 15.8 per cent disagreed and 7.0 percent strongly disagreed

Turning to interviews the participants revealed that students felt that they were not given enough say in the implementation of the curriculum. The students being the recipients of the curriculum, their viewpoint is not given as much attention as it should be. The participant's argument was that there was need to capitalise on the diversity of the students and to enrich the curriculum with ideas based on their various competencies and abilities. Participants 2 and 5 had this to say respectively:

I feel we are being left out in the most important aspects of our academic life. I am not asking to change or have a total bearing on the curriculum, but what I am saying is that a little consideration of the students' views concerning the formulation and implementation of a curriculum wouldn't hurt.

Students against the common belief are the greatest researchers more than the lecturers themselves. The lecturers are there to guide us and then we develop from the introduction they would have presented to us. Imagine then taking into consideration the research of many students compared to one lecturer. Without involving the students, the curriculum will suffer.

The results indicate that the students have more to offer to the curriculum than just their passive presence. It is of concern then that they are not given enough recognition as the drivers of the curriculum which would have made the effective implementation of the PA curriculum easy.

5.6.4 Poor communication with stakeholders (employers)

Table 5.4 shows that 45.6 per cent of the respondents were in agreement with the claim that poor communication with stakeholders hindered curriculum implementation with only 8.8 per cent strongly disagreeing with the statement.

The results from interviews and focus group portrayed the same sentiment revealing that not being in consultation with the stakeholders can impact negatively on the implementation of a curriculum. The participants stated that poor communication and relations with the employers hindered the effective implementation of a curriculum. The participants highlighted that the employers were the ones who knew what they wanted from the graduates, thus if no proper and effective communication was established their interests would not be conveyed to universities, which are tasked with teaching the students. Participants 4 and 6 highlighted that:

The university is not doing much to ensure constant meetings with employers so that they (the university) and we as students also learn from them. At least seminars and workshops should be made a norm almost every month to keep abreast of the employer's expectations of us students so that when we graduate, we do not fall short of their requirements.

The Public Administration curriculum is responsive. However, the challenge is that there is no link between channels of the public sector or future employers and the universities. In future there must be proper communication channels. Things will be better if the future employers and academics engage so that the employers will be able to teach students.

In the same vein another participant from the focus group discussions had this to say:

We are here to learn so that we can enter the employment environment. It is a noble gesture to engage these employers so that they tell us what they look for in a graduate. (FGR5)

5.6.5 Failure to link the university goals with those of students

A majority consisting of 42.1 per cent were strongly in agreement that failure to link the university goals with those of students hindered effective curriculum implementation (Table 5.4). Another 26.3 per cent agreed, however a significant 24.6 per cent disagreed with this statement, showing that to some smaller extent the universities goals met with those of the students.

When the same question was asked during the focus group discussions and interviews, there was a consensus amongst the participants as the interviewees expressed the view that the university fails to link its goals to those of the students. It is like they fail to communicate their intentions to the students to make the Public Administration programmes appealing and to convey its benefits. The university was regarded as having a shortfall when it came to this.

The university does not give us an opportunity to go to the field and embark on work-integrated learning so that I can apply what I have studied in the workplace, which can be problematic if I get a job. The institution of higher learning must have conferences so that they can update the curriculum to close the gap between the curriculum and the expectations of the employer. (Respondent 4)

The expectation of most PA students was to study in the fields of Engineering. When they did not qualify in these fields, they decided to do Public Administration. The challenge is that they do not have patience with the programme and often complain of it not meeting their needs, but after all it was not their priority. (Respondent 6)

Such a finding can be a result that there is no effective communication between the students and their university or lecturers. As alluded to earlier students have also something to offer academically and in terms of personal goals, hence without communication this leaves the goals of the university and those of the students not aligning.

5.6.6 Technology failure

The interview participants echoed the view that technology is a blessing of the twenty-first century. In institutes of learning however it can also hinder the implementation of a Public Administration curriculum. The participant's argument was that the students had become more accustomed to online research that reading or researching from a book was becoming difficult. The problem then starts if the very source of technology is not performing to full capacity.

Here at UKZN now and then we experience network problems, this draws back our learning experience as we are compelled to wait for proper connectivity so that we continue with our learning or researching. (Respondent 3)

On the same note Respondent 4 revealed a matter of great concern which hindered curriculum implementation namely lack computer literacy. Considering that it is the technological age and students are in the highest level of learning, this result is worrisome.

Technological advancements are difficult for some students which might contribute to their failure. Some have no computer background, and it takes long to learn and to cope, and others are just not that keen to learn. (Respondent 4)

These results seem to suggest that there are some students still not well versed with computers which is very disturbing considering that this is now the fourth industrial era. It automatically means these students will not also be able to cope in the work environment if such a shortcoming is not rectified during their university years.

5.6.7 Employability challenges

The participants noted with concern that the public sector is becoming more characterised with high levels of unemployment. This is making the sector less favourable to students. The reason behind students getting educated is that someday they should be able to take care of themselves presumably through employment. This being the case the participants indicated that they prefer other fields with greater future employment prospects. The views of the participants are indicated below:

Job opportunities in this field are scarce hence a hindrance to people doing this course, people are not being hired hence it is problematic for me to continue with the course. (FGR1)

The public sector has become everyday news for not being able to cater for the large numbers of the unemployed. We as students have started doubting if we should undertake courses in the Public Administration programmes. As for myself Public Administration was not my first preference. Other students would say the same thing the reason is that students have lost faith in getting employment opportunities in the public sector. (FGR4)

These results should then be a wakeup call to the South African government considering it is the largest employer of the public sector but not able to cater for the increasing number of the qualified individuals in this sector.

5.6.8 Lack of interaction

The participants reflected that lack of interaction between the students and their lecturers or faculty advisors, or departmental heads hinders the effective implementation of a curriculum. The curriculum to be responsive there is need for that good relationship between the lecturer and the learner, so that interaction is made possible, and learning accomplished in a conducive environment. The participants noted that:

There should be a spirit of friendship between the lecturers and the students, though each should recognise boundaries and keep to one's lane. This supports a classroom environment that is not uptight, where a student feels free to ask any question and the lecturer answers to the best of his/her ability. A lecturer is also able to offer advice readily taken into consideration, hence learning takes place. FGR5

Knowledge is easily shared where there is lecturer-student interaction. This also goes for faculty advisors. The lack of interaction between us students and the faculty advisors make us lose out on advice which could have provided enlightenment on our academic path. (Respondent 3)

5.7 Ways to improve the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness at the UKZN

The fourth and last question in this study sought to find ways in which the responsiveness of the UKZN curriculum could be improved. The participants offered varying solutions as reflected in Table 5.5 and the responses from interviews and focus group discussion.

Table 5.5: Ways to improve the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness at the UKZN

Ways	Percentage rating			
	Less effective	Somewhat effective	Effective	Mostly Effective
Encouraging student voice	5.3	15.8	36.8	42.1
Engaging with employers	3.5	10.5	45.6	40.4
Improve infrastructure	7.0	10.5	28.1	54.4
Quality management development	7.0	7.0	29.8	56.1

The involvement of academic leaders and lectures	1.8	10.5	22.8	64.9
The involvement of teaching and a professional development unit	3.5	8.8	22.8	64.9

N=57

Table 5.5 reveals the survey participants' responses to the enquiry of the ways that can be adopted to improve the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The responses are reflected below

64.9 per cent of the participants which is the majority noted that the involvement of the teaching and professional development unit and the involvement of academic leaders and lecturers respectively, is mostly effective in improving the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness, with 22.8 per cent stating that they are both effective. Another 56.1 per cent revealed that quality Management Development is mostly effective in improving responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum. The above results portrayed factors which impact more on the educators maybe because that is where the participants identified the greatest gap.

Regarding encouraging student voice and improving infrastructure, 42.1 per cent and 54.4 per cent respectively acknowledged that these two ways most effectively improve the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum, with 45.6 per cent arguing that engaging with employers effectively improves the Public Administration curriculum. In addition, from the results it can be noted that most participants identified that those approaches to the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness improvement were effective.

5.7.1 Encouraging student voice

The interviewees also expressed the same sentiment as those responding to the survey questionnaires, when they expressed the view that encouraging the student voice is one way of improving the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum. The participation of the students in the curriculum which affects them gives them the opportunity to make contributions which might improve the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. This is what the participants had to say:

The students have a lot of ideas which may benefit the curriculum structure locked within them. They interact with people of different cultures and social standing in their free time and places of leisure. From there they can pick on new trends in the market worth

exploring in the classroom and indirectly impacting positively on the curriculum. This may sound weird but the most unlikely places like a pub can produce life-changing ideas directly linked to the educational sector. (FGR3)

5.7.2 Engaging with employers

The interviewees also revealed that the employers are the industries which the students will be getting equipped to enter. There is nothing wiser than engaging the very person who has almost all the practical answers to your theoretical knowledge. The participants views are noted below:

The employers give first-hand information, which is difficult to get in the lecture room, so it will be beneficial to engage them. (Respondent 2)

Conferences or seminars afford the lecturers and sometimes students the opportunity to learn from those experienced in the field. The employers can enlighten both parties on what is old and what is new in the industry for them to make proper adjustments or recommendations. (Respondent 4)

An employer knows the skill sets he/she requires in a person, so engaging them as a university ensures that they influence the curriculum formulation to the benefit of the students. (FGR5)

5.7.3 The involvement of academic leaders and lectures

The results again showed that engaging the lecturers or academic leaders improves the responsiveness of the Public Administration curriculum. They are the centre of the universities and the curriculum circles around them. The participants revealed that what usually the lecturers say goes, so it is paramount to involve them in the curriculum as they will bring improvement to it. Respondent 6 had this to say:

Responsibilities lie with the academic lectures so that the field of PA or PA curriculum can be transformed to become more attractive to students, which is currently not the case in PA. Students always think that it's all about clerical or secretarial work.

On the same note participant 4 revealed that,

Lecturers can identify the difference or changing expectations of the employers and the students. So, they can easily cover the gap at the same time making the proper adjustments to the curriculum.

5.8 Discussion of Findings

The themes as well as the sub-themes that arose from the study, pertaining to curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration graduate employability at the University of KwaZulu-Natal were explored above. This segment will discuss the findings in relation to the literature.

5.8.1 The nature of the Public Administration curriculum at the UKZN

The first research question of the study aimed to look at the nature of the PA curriculum at the UKZN by focusing on the skills required from a Public Administrator and a few were identified by the participants of the UKZN.

The study revealed that communication coupled with problem solving and analysis skills were important in the field of Public Administration. It was recognised that a Public Administrator without communication skills could not excel in his/her job in the public sector. It was also revealed that the ability to solve problems analytically made for a competent Public Administrator. Research done by the Higher Education Quality Council, among the many identified the prowess to problem-solve and to manage the work duties as key to a Public Administrator (*Higher Education Quality Council, 1995*). The council argued that the focus of a Public Administrator should be zeroed in on gathering information for problem-solving assistance and critical thinking hence a requirement of a Public Administrator.

The findings in addition revealed the requirement of a Public Administrator to be a researcher and good at report writing. Public Administrators are to capitalise on seminars to be good researchers and to be up to speed with the new work trends. In line with this, literature emphasizes that for the Public Administration to be effective, the importance of research should be emphasized, especially in innovation and technology. This is a common picture towards

those who are to work in the public sector, for research and being able to compile a report was identified as paramount in driving the organisation forward.

The results further revealed that a Public Administrator needs to be able to manage change. The work setting is ever-changing and so are the economic goals of many countries. This then requires leaders to change with it, and Public Administrators are part of those leaders. Literature in the same vein noted that developing one's career, coping with higher workloads, and transforming together with the changing environment defines a Public Administrator (*Higher Education Quality Council, 1995*). Tomlinson (2007) further pointed out that a country's economy to develop needs people with the skills to adapt with the socio-economic changes. Moll in his model then argues that since societal needs are changing every day there is need to create a curriculum that responds directly to these changes.

The results moreover revealed that strategic management was the new trend characterising the twenty-first century industries which every leader needed to adapt to. A leader needed to be strategically competent to head the public sector. George & Jones (2006) to complement this, stated that strategic leaders exerted control in the organisation, and control served as a measurement for performance and easily identified where a challenge might be to rectify it. In Public Administration strategic leadership is a control mechanism. As a result, the university should put in place a curriculum in Public Administration which enhance and supports strategic leadership.

The results also revealed that courses in Public Administration were designed to cover the political aspects of the country as well as its policymaking, because Public Administration and politics cannot be separated. This also mean that a public Administrator should be politically competent and knowledgeable of the existing policies and legislation. Beetham in Ranson & Stewart (1994:27) noted that the difference between the public sector and the private sector is the legal and political characteristic of its services. Fayol in George & Jones (2006:8) expanded on this and revealed that policy making, organising, and controlling were requirements of the managers in the public sector organisations. Thus, it is paramount that the students are taught more about the policies that govern the public sector so that they will be in a position to understand them better and be able to implement them later in the work environment.

Another key finding regarding the skills required from a Public Administrator is teamwork. The results revealed that a Public Administrator needed to be a team player. It was identified that through teamwork ideas can be captured from a diversified workforce and used for the benefit of the organisation. Teamwork also brings individual contributions together into one big idea with a better bearing on the work approach. In the same vein literature noted that teamwork provided a workplace atmosphere characterised by better communication, efficient working with a diversified workforce, being able to understand different perceptions and being a good listener to others (*Higher Education Quality Council, 1995*). This enables easy identification of the values of the employees on the part of a leader. Thus, a Public Administrator should be a team player or lose out on all the above benefits locked within teamwork.

Planning and organising is a skill set which the Public Administration field again requires. The results showed that a Public Administrator was expected to be a good planner and organiser. Planning was revealed to lead to better service delivery as it prompted things to be done in an organised manner. Sanchez & Heene (2004) being of the same view noted that to be able to plan for tasks was a skill that, for a leader, ensured efficiency. Allocation and organisation of work made employers know what was expected of them daily. Hence, it is vital that PA programmes in the higher education institutions be arranged in a manner that moulds the students into better future organisers and planners.

It is no hearsay that technology has taken over the industries and capacity to deal with technology is a requirement in almost every organisation. The results revealed the same sentiment stating that a Public Administrator needs to be technologically well-versed. Digitalisation is now the new reality in most organisations. The higher education quality council noted that the basic knowledge that a student should acquire from a higher education institution included technology understanding and the ability to deal with numbers (*Higher Education Quality Council, 1995*). Andrews & Higson (2008) similarly in a study to do with Public Administration revealed that some competencies were vital to student employability, and these included among others time management, communication skills, reliability, and

technological skills. Thus, as Lungu (1997) states it is important for a Public Administrator to possess skills that make him/her effective in providing services to the citizens.

5.8.2 Factors considered in the curricula of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The second question in the study aimed to identify numerous factors which determine the Public Administration curriculum. This study found that accreditation has an important role to play in the creation or formulation of a curriculum. The participants expressed a strong belief in this statement. Looking at the literature, in line with this, Brans & Coenen (2016:338) note that there is no curriculum taught in institutions of higher learning, which does not pass through the accreditation process. Accreditation is used to enhance the standard of university programmes, especially those to do with Public Administration. Therefore, accreditation is the soul which determines the curricula of Public Administration. This is also evident in European education; the *European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA)* is behind the accreditation of public administration programmes.

The students' needs and expectations were also revealed to be a strong factor in determining a Public Administration curriculum. The argument was that students possess a pool of ideas due to their socialisation and they also come to an institution of learning already knowing what they want to achieve from the educational system. Putz & Mundt (2018), declared that it is important to see from the perception of the students as they are the ones after the employability skills demanded by the employers. Moll (2014) adds that learners' responses among the many should be taken into consideration in order to attain a responsive curriculum. Cultural diversity can lead to diversified ideas from the students, which impacts positively on the curriculum development.

When it comes to employer demands, the study revealed that it is essential to design a curriculum which meets their needs and for this to be fruitful the employers are to be involved in the curriculum designing process. The employers are the ones who know what they want hence their input should make the curriculum efficiently address these needs. Putz & Mundt (2018) suggests the same sentiment stating that, an effective curriculum achieves the demands

and needs of the employers, to help students secure employment opportunities. As a result, universities must always take the viewpoint of the employers seriously, especially in the formulation of the curriculum in Public Administration.

The UKZN participants again revealed that higher education policies guide and stipulate the standards for curriculum formulation. These policies also set the qualifications needed for one to teach, at the same time meeting both the students and employer's needs. *The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) governs the South African institutions of higher learning. SAQA and it informs curriculum planning and development (South African Qualifications Authority, 2000).* It is important that curriculum developers understand what SAQA requires from them in order to have a responsive curriculum. SAQA's approach aims to influence all programmes in the universities to meet the reality of the outside world and to enable candidate to be employable after graduation (Harvey & Van Wyk, 2001).

Marx in Cayer & Weschler, (1988:12), note that institutions or departments are compelled to deliver services acceptable to the public. It means the public sector employees should be trained and educated accordingly. Public Administrations act within the framework of regulations. The results in line with this indicated that the government, which is the public sector, designs the policies which also govern the curriculums of institutions so that they serve the needs of the public efficiently. So educational institutions are influenced by the government, to draft a curriculum which moulds the students to be efficient Public Administrators rendering the best services to the public.

5.8.3 Factors that enable the effective implementation of a responsive public administration curriculum at the UKZN.

With regard to the third question, the study aimed at identifying various factors that enable the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum, some of which has no supporting literature, like university facilities, student funding, work-integrated learning, partnering with other universities, social support, student counselling, and tutor involvement. Nonetheless they add valid information to the pool of Public Administration knowledge.

The results revealed that work-integrated learning enables the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum. The participants indicated that theory can be measured easily if it has practical significance, and it makes the proper recommendations if any are called for. New ideas can also be acquired from this experience to add to the Public Administration curriculum. On the same note Pandey (2015) stated that work- integrated learning enabled the students to face future challenges earlier and to learn quickly how to avoid such challenges. This cannot only be the student's solution but can be shared with other junior students. Challenges are lessons learnt hence solutions can be brought into the classroom so that students can face the similar challenges but with a prescribed solution (DoE, 2013).

The results emphasised that the contribution of the employers was to enable a curriculum that is effective. The participants revealed a confident answer that the employers had more to offer to the curriculum implementation. Literature in agreement with this statement revealed that partnership between the government/employer and educational institutions was essential to ensure that the graduates produced are employable material (Putz & Mundt, 2018). In addition, Mbhele (2014) notes that the employer expects universities to deliver students skilled enough to be employed, thus the relationship between employer and the institution of higher learning enables effective monitoring and evaluation of the Public Administration curriculum.

The results furthermore revealed that student counselling guided the career path of the students and encouraged them to be good communicators in class or elsewhere to their benefit. The Stratified model by Moll, (2014), states that universities have got a responsibility of inducting students effectively into the techniques of the field. Diversity should be embraced, and the university should make provisions for a safe environment for communication and the results can later be reflected in the classroom. The success of the implementation of a curriculum is made possible by the effective communication and bonding of the student-lecturer. This interaction can also be made possible by student counselling, hence although the results also identified that many students are not fans of counselling the few who try it have witnessed its benefits and effectiveness.

Lecturers who are qualified because of their experience in teaching were revealed by the participants to be drivers of the curriculum. The results portrayed the lecturers to be well-informed with most knowing of the curriculum, hence a good fit that enables effective implementation of it. In the same vein Knight & Yorke (2004: 9) in their studies identified that the way graduates are taught determines employability and in the words of Trowler & Trowler (2010), a design which is led by a lecturer was found to produce a higher rate of enhancing student engagement and performance. So qualified lecturers as noted above are knowledgeable to enable effective curriculum implementation.

The participants also alluded to student involvement shaping the curriculum. The results revealed that the diversified nature of students and their interactions is experience enough to warrant sharing in the classroom setting. These results support McFadden et al., (2011) and Kouwenhoven's (2009) findings that for the Public Administration to be responsive it needs to emphasise students' competence development and performance, at the same time including them in recommendation-making towards the programs they undertake. Moll (2014) further noted that a responsive curriculum opts for learning routines favouring involvement of the diversified students.

Cooker-Sather (2006), also revealed that actively involving the students in educational development yields advantages. This challenges the teaching practices and learning principles as new ideas will be incorporated. Hence a student needs constant up-dates of what is surrounding his/her academic life, and they should be given the chance to offer ideas as this has been found to be positive for effective implementation of a curriculum (Khosa, 1996; Moll, 2014).

5.8.3.1 Factors that hinder the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The third research question also aimed to look at the factors that hinder the effective implementation of a responsive PA curriculum. The study revealed that there are various factors that also hinder the effective implementation of a responsive public curriculum. Furthermore, some of these factors were not represented in the literature but are sound factors as brought out by the participants. These include, lack of financial support, poor

communication with stakeholders, poor engagement with other universities, lack of knowledge, technology failure and employability challenges.

The results revealed that the lecturers lack of expertise to convey their knowledge hinders Public Administration curriculum implementation. Lecturers are considered the knowledge givers at the institution of higher learning, so it means if they are rendered incompetent then the whole idea of learning is affected. As earlier alluded to by Trowler (2010), there is higher students' performance and engagement in a curriculum designed by a lecturer, meaning that if the lecturer is incompetent the opposite is bound to happen. Hence, there is need to develop or replace the incompetent lecturers to avoid the ineffective implementation of the curriculum.

The results, moreover, revealed that resources shortage at an institution of higher learning undoubtedly hinders the effective implementation of a curriculum. This affects the whole course of learning as no institution can operate effectively and deliver best results without the proper resources. Though the results did not identify the resources lacking, they portrayed that being resourceful influences the curriculum at the university. Meyer & Rose (2005:1) echo the same sentiment arguing that for a public administration to be responsive all the materials that aid students must be available, or they will be academically challenged. The availability of resources enhances the student's competence and potential. Thus, it comes as a recommendation that the university should furnish itself with the right resources to support the effective implementation of a curriculum.

In addition, the results indicated that students are not involved in decision-making in curriculum formulation as much as they should be. Despite them being the recipients of the education and the diversified ideas, they might bring, they are not given much credit. This was found to have a negative impact on the implementation of a curriculum. Literature in agreement stated the need to approach the Public Administration education in a more open system than the existing closed knowledge system. This way all stakeholders are afforded a say in the development and planning of the curriculum (NCHE, 1996:4). Students have been viewed in universalistic terms, with the focus on one goal, their different aspirations and perceptions for employment prospects are not taken into consideration (Tomlinson 2007). This then ignores

and does not take into consideration the views of the students and any fruitful contribution they may have towards the effective implementation of a curriculum. Hence there is need to take into consideration the subjective and different contributions of the students towards curriculum implementation for it to be effective.

The UKZN participants also noted that the university is failing to communicate its goals clearly to the students so that they align these with their own. The results revealed that the students are not even developed through seminars to have a feel of what Public Administration really is. It is not surprising that the results revealed that despite this affecting curriculum implementation, Public Administration was found to be less favoured among the programmes. Bowers-Brown & Harvey (2004), noticed that in South Africa, the education system lacks encouragement for students to enrol in certain programmes, such as in the Public Administration field. The curriculum should be made more student-centred, focused on employability prospects and in this way, students can be retained in Public Administration (Tomlinson 2007). Thus, graduate exit surveys are recommended as they capture the students' views which can prove useful to the higher institutions of learning.

With regards to lack of interaction, the results discovered that student-lecturer or student-faculty advisor relationship were not capitalised upon, and this resulted in the ineffectiveness of curriculum implementation. The results revealed that such lack of relationships made students lose out on faculty/school advisors' guidance and the classroom learning experience was made unbearable. Manathunga (2011:1) noted that the responsiveness in the Public Administration rested upon the encouragement students received from the lecturers, which would not be a possibility if there is no lecturer-student interaction. Glatthorn et. al, (2000:93) on the same note state that for public administration curriculum to be responsive the students and the lecturers should be encouraged to interact, to have a better understanding of each other, leading to a fruitful learning experience.

The role of the faculty advisor has been found to be influential in the student's life, but it is not easy to have a positive relationship between the student and faculty advisor (Campbell & Nutt, 2008:4). This lack of interaction means students lacked the mentorship and career guidance provided by the faculty advisor, hence learning development is affected. This echoes the results of this study and evidence is available to suggest the importance of the student-faculty interaction towards a student's success. Academic advisors being experienced from the many

years of interaction with other students offer the best solutions and advice which leads to enhanced employability chances (Pizzolato, 2008:21; *Recruitment and Retention*, 2004:8; Hale et al., 2009). Consequently, there is need to foster such interactions so that curriculum implementation will not be rendered ineffective.

5.8.4 Ways in which the implementation of a responsive Public Administration can be improved.

The fourth research question sought to determine the ways that can be adopted to improve a responsive Public Administration. These include encouraging student voice, engaging with employers, improved infrastructure, quality management development and the involvement of academic leaders and lecturers.

The results revealed that the involvement of academic leaders as well as lecturers lead to the improvement of curriculum responsiveness. The lecturers are considered pivotal in institutions of higher level and whoever determines the curriculum does not matter as it all comes down to the lecturers as the ones who will deliver the knowledge to the students. The results unearthed that it is the responsibility of the lecturers to ensure that the field of Public Administration improved and is more appealing to the students. Literature on the same course has identified that the educational needs have changed, and the educators or lecturers and faculty advisors have recognised this (Peelo & Wareham, 2002; and Trainor, 2002). This is so because these parties are in the centre of the curriculum and can adjust as the educational needs transform. Hence the need always to involve the academic leaders and lecturers if an institution of learning wants to improve its curriculum and for it to be effective.

Most universities equip their students with basic skills so that it benefits them when they enter the employment environment. These skills may not necessarily be directly linked to the programme at hand, but they are nonetheless essential (DHET 2012). *The National Commission on Higher Education* (NCHE) highlighted the need for the Public Administration curriculum to be responsive to the political, cultural, economic, and social changes rapidly occurring. This is accomplished by setting up a group of professionals able to cope with these changes. The study's results in the same vein have highlighted the need for involving a teaching and professional development unit if there was to be improvement in the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. This was found to be effective if coupled with encouraging student participation, that is having their voice heard. Azzi et al., (2007) maintain that the Public Administration curriculum must be flexible to embrace diversity and to capitalise on it by

encouraging students' participation this in-turn foresees the improvement in the curriculum responsiveness.

The purpose of higher education is to produce students employable through their learnt skills or competences. Good qualifications increase employability chances hence the need for institutions of learning to improve on their quality management and development (Elias & Purcell 2004). Necessary skills enticing to the employer's eyes are attained if the quality of graduates and the skills or competences they possess are deemed competitive enough. The study also revealed the same sentiment, thus this being the case quality management development is essential for the improvement of the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness.

Matrix 5.1: Summary of research questions, themes, and interaction with the literature

Research question	Emerging themes	Interaction with literature	Sources
What is the nature of the Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication and problem-solving ▪ Research and report writing ▪ Change management ▪ Strategic capability and leadership ▪ Policy articulation skills ▪ Teamwork ▪ Planning and organising ▪ Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ communication coupled with problem-solving and analysis skills were important in the field of Public Administration. ▪ among the many identified the prowess to problem-solve and managing the work duties as key to a Public Administrator. ▪ country's economy to develop needs people with the skills to adapt to the socio-economic changes. ▪ In Public Administration strategic leadership is a control mechanism. ▪ what differentiates the public sector from the private sector is the legal and political characteristic of its services. ▪ teamwork provides a workplace atmosphere characterised by better communication, efficient working with a diversified workforce, being able to understand different perceptions and being a good listener to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher Education Quality Council (1995) ▪ Tomlinson (2007) ▪ Agwanda (2019) ▪ Mitchell (2019) ▪ Sabc-El-Rayess & Mansur (2016) ▪ Mandla (2016) ▪ Mandukwini (2016)
What are the factors that are considered in the curriculum of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accreditation ▪ Student needs and expectations ▪ Employer demands ▪ Higher education policies ▪ Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is no curriculum taught in institutions of higher learning, which does not pass through the accreditation process. ▪ it is important to see from the perception of the students as they are the ones after the employability skills demanded by the employers. ▪ Learners' responses among the many should be taken into consideration to attain a responsive curriculum. Cultural diversity can lead to diversified ideas from the students, which can impact positively on the curriculum development. ▪ an effective curriculum is in direct response to the demands and needs of the employers, to help students secure employment opportunities. So, universities must always take the viewpoint of the employers, especially in the formulation of curriculums in Public Administration. ▪ SAQA's approach aims to influence all programmes in the higher education to meet the reality of the outside world so that when the students leave the school, they would be employable ▪ institutions or departments-are compelled to deliver services acceptable to the public. It means the public sector employees should be trained and educated accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brans & Coenen (2016) ▪ Putz & Mundt (2018); Moll (2014) ▪ Harvey & Van Wyk (2001)
What are the factors that enable the effective implementation of a responsive public administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work integrated learning ▪ Partnership with the employers/industries ▪ Student counselling ▪ Qualified lecturers ▪ Students' involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work-integrated learning enabled the students to face future challenges earlier and they learn how to avoid such challenges quickly. This cannot only be the students' solution but can be shared with the next batch of junior students. ▪ Challenges are lessons learnt hence solutions can be brought into the classroom so that students can face the same challenges but with a prescribed solution. ▪ Partnership between the government/employer and educational institutions was essential to ensure that the graduates produced are employable material. ▪ the employer expects universities to deliver students skilled enough to be employed, thus the relationship between employer and the institution of higher learning enables effective monitoring and evaluating of the Public Administration curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pandey (2015) ▪ DoE (2013) ▪ Putz and Mundt (2018) ▪ Mbhele (2014) ▪ Moll (2014) ▪ Trowler & Trowler (2010) ▪ McFadden et al. (2011)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a responsive curriculum opts for learning routines favouring involvement of the diversified students. 	
<p>What are the factors that hinder the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incompetent lecturers ▪ Lack of resources ▪ Students' involvement in decision-making ▪ Failure to link the university goals with those of students ▪ Lack of interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is higher student performance and engagement in a curriculum designed by a lecturer, meaning that if the lecturer is incompetent the opposite is bound to happen. ▪ for a Public Administration to be responsive all the materials that aid students must be available, or they will be academically challenged. The availability of resources enhances the students' competence and potential. ▪ Students have been viewed in universalistic terms, with focus on one goal, their different aspirations and perceptions for employment prospects have not been taken into consideration ▪ there is need to take into consideration the subjective and different contributions of the students towards curriculum implementation for it to be effective. ▪ the education system lacks encouragement for students to enrol in certain programmes, as in the case of the Public Administration field. The curriculum should be made more student-centred, focused on employability prospects and in this way, students can be retained in Public Administration ▪ the responsiveness of the Public Administration rested upon the encouragement students received from the lecturers, which would not be a possibility if there is no lecturer-student interaction. ▪ Academic advisors being experienced from the many years of interaction with other students offer the best solutions and advice which leads to enhanced employability chances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trowler (2010) ▪ Meyer and Rose (2005) ▪ Tomlinson (2007) ▪ Manathunga (2011) ▪ Campbell and Nutt (2008) ▪ Pizzolato (2008); Hale et al. (2009)
<p>How can the implementation of a responsive Public Administration be improved? (Academic development and support, curriculum monitoring and evaluation).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging student voice ▪ Engaging with employers ▪ Improved infrastructure ▪ Quality management development ▪ Involvement of academic leaders and lecturers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The responsibility of the lecturers is to ensure that the field of Public Administration is improved and is rendered more appealing to the students. ▪ There is always the need to involve the academic leaders and lecturers if an institution of learning wants to improve its curriculum to be effective. ▪ There is a need for the Public Administration curriculum to be responsive to the political, cultural, economic, and social changes rapidly occurring. ▪ the need to involving a teaching and professional development unit if there was to be improvement in the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness. ▪ the Public Administration curriculum must be flexible to embrace diversity and to capitalise on it by encouraging student participation This in-turn foresee the improvement of the curriculums responsiveness. ▪ The purpose of higher education is to produce students employable through their learnt skills or competences. ▪ necessary skills enticing to the employer's eyes are attained if the quality of graduates and the skills or competences they possess are deemed competitive enough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peelo and Wareham (2002); Trainor (2002). ▪ Balepe (2017) ▪ DHET (2012) ▪ Azzi et.al (2007)

5.9. Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings in relation to literature and the theory. The results revealed different perceptions when it came to curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration graduate employability. The findings were based on views from the UKZN students and lecturers, and they shed light on the subject matter. The study revealed the nature of the Public Administration by looking at key skills required by a Public Administrator. Several were identified which included problem-solving skills, communication skills and the ability to manage change just to mention a few. The determinants of the implementation of the Public Administration curriculum as well as its enablers and hindrances were explored. The findings ended by giving a few recommendations for how the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness could be improved.

The results revealed that the UKZN has to some extent got a responsive programme and it strives to equip the students with the skills the market require from the students, however there are also several barriers to this effort. The results revealed that to the implementation stage of the curriculum itself challenges are present, like lack of financial support, resources, skilled lecturers, student involvement and the high level of unemployment of Public Administration graduates. This makes the employability of those exploring the curriculum in public administration doubtful. Though it should not be dismissed from the results that the UKZN has been good in offering a Public Administration curriculum. The next chapter will offer recommendations and conclusions to the study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The research's summary is presented in this chapter. The chapter also aimed to present the extent to which the objectives of the research were met after the findings have been presented and discussed. A summary of the research objectives and questions was given in this chapter, followed by the summary of the study findings and then general conclusions of the study are presented. Based on the results recommendations were be offered and then a conclusion will end the chapter. The study's main objective was to explore curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration graduate employability, drawing on the University of KwaZulu-Natal for the case study.

6.2. Summary of the research objectives and research questions

The aim of the study was to investigate whether the Public Administration education is responsive to what students need and, to what the public sector (employer) needs and whether or not employability opportunities are available to the graduates after they have completed their qualifications specifically in Public Administration. This was done with the aid of Moll's (2014) *Stratified Model of Curriculum Responsiveness* and the case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Table 6.1 reflects a summary of research objectives and research questions.

Table 6.1: Summary of research objectives and research questions

	Research Objectives	Research Questions
1.	To investigate the nature of the PA curriculum at the UKZN	What is the nature of the PA curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?
2.	To determine factors that are considered in the curriculum of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.	What are the factors that are considered in the curriculum of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?
3.	To examine factors that enable or hinder the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.	What are the factors that enable or hinder the effective implementation of a responsive PA curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?
4.	To determine ways in which the implementation of a responsive Public	How can the implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum be improved? (Academic

Administration curriculum can be improved.	development and support, curriculum monitoring and evaluation)
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6.3. Summary of study findings

This study based on the above research objectives, utilised a mixed methods approach to gather the information it needed. The targeted population was the UKZN students and lecturers who were selected conveniently and purposively. Convenience sampling was for surveys and focus group discussions as the availability of participants at the time of study was important. For purposive sampling this was to ensure that the right participants in the Public Administration field were chosen and precisely from the UKZN. For the interviews the total number interviewed was 6, consisting of 5 students and 1 lecturer and for the focus group discussions this involved of 5 students.

An interview guide was used to direct the interview questions. The participants responses were audio-recorded for accuracy's sake and these recordings were transcribed, but it must be noted this was done with the full consent of the participants. The covid 19 regulations were adhered to in the face-to-face interviews carried out. Recurring patterns of the UKZN participants in the Public Administration Department were then identified through thematic analysis. Themes were identified during analysis which reflected on the curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration graduate employability.

The key results of the study are that the University of KwaZulu-Natal, when it comes to having a responsive curriculum to the employability of the students undertaking Public Administration, it still has a long way to go to improve. It is worth noting though that there are various initiatives by the university to meet the requirements of a Public Administrator. The results also revealed that at the University of KwaZulu-Natal there are various factors which led to the effective implementation of a responsive curriculum, meaning the university equips students with the market requirements; however, these seem to be outweighed by the challenges the university faces in creating a responsive curriculum. The South African country itself was found not being able to meet the employment requirements of those in the public sector. Hence the recommendations which will follow.

6.4. General conclusions of the study

The study sought to explore the curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration graduate employability. General conclusions were arrived at as presented below:

6.4.1 The nature of the Public Administration curriculum

This objective was investigated in the context of the skills required of a Public Administrator and various factors were identified:

- The UKZN participants revealed that communication skills, problem-solving and analysis; and research and report writing skills were required of a Public Administrator. These were all found important as a public Administrator works with people so needed communication skills and ways to research upcoming challenges and at the same time, they need to be quick problem solvers.
- Following the changing work environment, the results revealed the need to have a Public Administrator with change-management skills, strategic capability, and leadership; knowledge management skills; and technology and learning skills. This was found to enable a leader to be competent in both the public and private sectors as being technologically well-versed enabled a Public Administrator to fit into the digital age and to be a strategic leader.
- The public sector is highly politicised and as the results portrayed need a Public Administrator with policy articulation skills and people's management and empowerment skills. Politics comes with many policies and people's rights hence the need for a Public Administrator who can manage this.
- The study found that teamwork was essential in most organisations. Therefore, a Public Administrator is expected to be a team player to manage the organisation. As a team leader this was found to be effective if coupled with good presentation and self-management skills.
- The results again revealed that planning and organising skills were a necessity in a Public Administrator. This is an obvious result following that no organisation can operate without planning and without being organised.

6.4.2 Factors considered in the curriculum of Public Administration.

Various factors were also identified as determinants of the Public Administration curriculum, these are presented below:

- Accreditation was found to be essential in the curriculum formulation as it determined the skill sets for one to be deemed an educator and what was considered relevant to the programmes. Higher education policies along the same line were found to have the same influence as they determined what had to be done and what should not be done in institutions of higher learning.
- The study found that student's needs, and employer demands have a hand in curriculum formulation. Students having diversified experiences and coming with expectations, and employers knowing what they want from the students, together the curriculum should be shaped to meet these needs.
- The results further found that lecturer skills and qualifications and the government influence the curriculum. The lecturers from experience know the right skills to equip the students with and the government shapes all the policies which govern the public sector. This then directs the curriculum which leads to employment prospects.

6.4.3 Factors that enable the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum.

The study identified several factors which lead to the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum.

- The study found that the UKZN's facilities such as libraries and computer labs were well furnished and conducive for research, therefore effecting the learning positively.
- NSFAS was also found to be funding the student's studies and work-integrated learning was available for the students which afforded them the chance to align theory with practice and to adjust where need be in time.
- Partnership with the employers/industries and other universities was identified as essential for an effective implementation of a curriculum as this enhanced the learning experience and enabled the UKZN and its students to learn directly from the employers what their needs were.

- The study found that social support and student counselling aided in making the curriculum effective. The students career path was shaped through counselling, and this taught students how to find solutions for themselves for their personal and academic life.
- The UKZN was recognised as having qualified lecturers who knew the course requirements and the employer's needs hence, they equipped the students accordingly. Teaching assistants were also recognised to be of help as they related better to the students considering they were students themselves.

6.4.4 Factors that hinder the effective implementation of a responsive Public Administration curriculum.

Several factors were found by the study to be hindrances to the effective implementation of a curriculum at the UKZN.

- The incompetence of the lecturers was found to be a hindrance to the effective curriculum implementation at the UKZN. This is contrary to what is believed of lecturers as being hubs of knowledge for students.
- The results showed that there was lack of financial support despite the above results which seemed to indicate otherwise. NSFAS was found not to be living up to its obligations hence becoming a stress to the students.
- The UKZN was found to be lacking in basic resources which enabled effective learning hence, the process of an effective curriculum implementation was affected.
- Lack of student involvement in decision-making was found to be crippling the curriculum as their input from their diversified backgrounds would have been a great contributor to the Public Administration curriculum.
- The results also found that poor communication with stakeholders and engagement with other universities made the curriculum fall short of information which was paramount. Employers know what they want hence their contribution should be to communicate the exact things which lead to employment prospects.
- The results further found out that the public sector needed to create more employment opportunities since the high unemployment rate communicated a negative message to the students that the Public Administration discipline trained students but with no assistance offered to help graduates to secure employment.

- At UKZN technological advancement was said to be available but the network was found to be a problem and some students because of their background had no knowledge of some technologies. Hence this hindered the effective implementation of the curriculum.
- Lack of interaction between the students and their faculty advisors as well as lecturers was found to be robbing the students of the advice and career guidance to employability, hence this situation needed to be rectified.

6.4.5 Ways in which the implementation of a responsive Public Administration can be improved.

The results below are reflective of the ways the implementation of a responsive Public Administration can be improved as per the UKZN participants.

- The results found that encouraging students' participation would improve the Public Administration curriculum considering that students can contribute a network of ideas that can be utilised.
- The results also found that engaging the employers was essential as they had reliable and first-hand information regarding the skills the industry required.
- Improved infrastructure and quality management development were also revealed to be ways that can improve the Public Administration curriculum responsiveness at the UKZN.
- Involving the academic leaders and lecturers was found to be beneficial to the Public Administration curriculum. Everything pertaining to knowledge circle around them should be able to influence the curriculum to be responsive through experience.

6.5. Study recommendations

The recommendations below are based on the study's findings:

- A team should be put in place at the UKZN to observe the changing trends of the market regularly to keep abreast of the markets demands and expectations.
- The students should also be given a say in the formulation and implementation of the Public Administration curriculum so that the system would know what they want and if it benefits the curriculum through implementation of these contributions.
- Team building exercises and computer skills or any technological skills relevant in the employment environment should be made a must to be taught and this should be delivered in a way that leaves every student knowledgeable.

- Constant workshops and seminars should be held for the UKZN lecturers and tutors so that they do not fall short of the requirements of the programmes they will be teaching, especially in the Public Administration Department.
- The UKZN should have a culture of engaging with stakeholders and with other universities to learn what is new and what is beneficial in Public Administration which they did not have and then they can adjust accordingly.
- The University of KwaZulu-Natal should educate the students on the importance of counselling and of engaging with student advisors, so that they develop and are guided in their career paths.
- Student funding should be transparent and be on time to avoid any stresses on the part of the students and a team should be established to make follow-ups to minimise the abuse of these funds.
- The infrastructure at UKZN should be improved so that it is more accommodative of the students, in terms of numbers and learning experience.

6.6. Conclusion

Following all the data gathered, presented, and discussed, it can be concluded that at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, when it comes to the Public Administration curriculum and prospects of employment the two are yet to really align. As identified in the study there are still areas which need to be worked on and recommendations applied for the curriculum to be more responsive. Despite all of this it would not be doing justice to not acknowledge that the UKZN is striving to meet the demands of the public sector and is offering a curriculum which empowers the students enough to be employable, however as per the findings of the study, the public sector itself seem to be failing the Public Administration students resulting in the high percentage of the unemployed in this sector. Further research is recommended to discover factors outside of the university's reach which might influence the responsiveness of the public sector, either positively or negatively.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey questionnaire

CONSENT LETTER

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL (For research with human

participants) Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research Date:

Greetings,

I am Sphamandla Simphiwe Gumede (214511747), a Masters student in Administration at the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. My contact details are as follows:

Email: gumede.simphiwe@mut.ac.za
Cellular 0784069164/0814080077

You are kindly requested to consider participating in a research study titled “Exploring

Curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration Graduate employability: A case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The objective of the research is to gain an in-depth understanding of public administration curriculum and how it responds to the needs of both the students and the employers. The study is expected to include the academics/lecturers and students at all study levels of the UKZN particularly those who are enrolled in public administration course at the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance. The researcher shall conduct interview with the lecturers within the School of Management, Information Technology and Governance. Focus group discussion shall also be held students through zoom meetings in order to understand their perceptions regarding a responsive public administration curriculum. Kindly note the following in respect of your participation:

- a. That your participation in this study is voluntary. You have a choice to participate or not. You may also withdraw your participation at any time you deem without giving any reason;
- b. Your participation is highly confidential. No one has the right to know of your participation
- c. no incentives, monetary or otherwise is available to participants and no risk is envisaged;
- d. all data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for 5 years after which all data shall be destroyed;

- e. all information given shall be treated with strict confidentiality and will be analysed strictly for academic purpose.

Kindly note that this study was approved having been screened by the Ethics Board of the School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa with approval no.

.....

Considering the foregoing, your honest response to the questions will be highly appreciated.

If you have any doubt, question, or concern, you may please, call on the research supervisor; Prof. Sybert Mutereko (muturekos@ukzn.ac.za; +27312607951) or contact:

Mr. Premiall Mohun,

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

GUMEDE, SS.

Researcher

1. *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Doctoral Degree	Masters Degree	Honours Degree	BAdmin 3rd Year	BAdmin 2nd Year	BAdmin 1st Year
Qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“The nature of Public Administration curriculum and its competencies”

2.The skills required from a public administrator *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Never used	Rarely used	Used	Mostly used
Communication skill	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem solving and analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research and report writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Change management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self management skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategic capability and leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy articulation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peoples management and empowerment skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teamwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning and organizing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology and learning skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Initiative skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“Determining the factors that are considered in the curriculation of Public Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal”.

3.The determinants of public administration curriculum *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Never used	Sometimes used	Often used	Very often used
Accreditation bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students needs and expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employer demands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lecturer skills and qualifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher Education policies e.g., SAQA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

“Examining factors that enable or hinder the effective implementation of a responsive public administration curriculum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal”.

4. Factors that enables effective implementation of curriculum *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
University facilities such as libraries, computer labs etc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student funding such as NSFAS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work intergrated learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partnership with the employers/industries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partnership with other universities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social support, for example, family support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student counselling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualified lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching assistance for example PGA's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Factors that hinder the effective implementation of a curriculum *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Incompetent lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of financial support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student uninvolved in decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor communication with stakeholders for example the employers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor engagement with other universities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Failure to link the university goals with those of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Determining ways in which the implementation of a responsive public administration can be improved

6. Ways to improve public administration curriculum responsiveness at UKZN *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Less effective	Somewhat effective	Effective	Mostly effective
Encouraging student voice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaging with employers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality management development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The involvement of academic leaders and lecturers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The involvement of Teaching and Professional Development Unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B: Focus group guide

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

TO BE USED FOR ONLINE INTERVIEW

Timing: 1hr 30mins.

Introduction: - Welcoming of participants and introduction

- Ethical discussion: voluntarism, confidentiality, privacy, clearance
- Rules guiding discussion: respect for other opinion, freedom to expression of contra-views, guide against abuse of persons, avoidance of domination of discussion by few individuals, objectivity, other ground rules to be set by the group.
- Need to transcribe information for the purpose of coding.
- Recording of audio, video, and photographs

Questions (Area of focus for the discussion):

Focus I – Nature of public administration curriculum.

- What do you think is the nature of public administration curriculum at UKZN?
- Would you say that the university is achieving students needs and expectations through the curriculum and why?

Focus 2 – Determinants of public administration curriculum.

- What would you say about the factors that determines public administration curriculum and why?
- How has these determinants impacted on the development of the curriculum?
- What do you think about the role of higher education policies on curriculum development?

Focus 3 – Perception of students.

- What do you think are the factors that enables/ hinders public administration curriculum implementation?
- Do you think that poor curriculum implementation has an impact on student's success? Why do you think so?
- What are the benefits that the university offers to you as students other than studying?
- How these benefits assist students in coping within the university?

Vote of Thanks.

Interview Guide

**Exploring Curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration Graduate
employability: A case at a University in South Africa**

- Introduction
- Observant of protocols and discussion of ethics guiding research.

The nature of public administration curriculum and its competencies

1. What do you think is the nature of public administration curriculum at UKZN?
2. Would you say that the University is achieving both students and employers needs and expectations through public administration curriculum?
3. What do you think are the competencies required from a public administrator?
4. What do you think the university perceives about the quality of public administration curriculum as compared to when the curriculum is provided by the TVET colleges?

Determinants of public administration curriculum

5. What is your view of the determinants of public administration curriculum?
6. What is your view of the impact of these determinants on the development of a curriculum?
7. What do you think of the higher education policies? Do you think they are the most effective tool to use when developing the curriculum?

Perception of academics on factors that enables/ hinders the implementation of public administration curriculum

8. What are the factors that you might consider as enabling or hindering the effective implementation of public administration curriculum?
9. Do you think that factors that hinders the implementation of a curriculum contribute to students' failure? Why do you think so?
10. What are other benefits that the university offers to students other than studying their respective courses?
11. What is the standard of teaching that is expected from you? What contribute to such standard?

Perception of academics on ways to improve curriculum responsiveness

12. As a senior lecturer, what is your feeling regarding public administration curriculum responsiveness?
13. Would you say that you are able to meet the needs and the expectations of the students through public administration curriculum?
14. As an institution of higher learning would you say that you have a good relationship with the public sector organisations (employers)? If yes, what are the benefits that the university is getting and if not, why do you think the university is not benefiting?
15. What are the challenges that you have encountered since you started working at UKZN as a lecturer?

Vote of Thanks

Appendix D: Recruitment poster



INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

TITLE OF STUDY

Exploring Curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration Graduate employability: A case at a University in South Africa.

Researcher: Sphamandla Gumede

The purpose of the study is to:

- Understand students and academic experiences about public administration curriculum.

As per the invitation you are reminded to participate in the study:

- Venue: Zoom Meetings and Microsoft Teams

Contact Information

To find out more about this study please contact:

- Prof Sybert Mutereko
- 031 260 7951
- muterekos@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix E: Gatekeepers permission



31 October 2020

Mr Sphamandla Gumede (SN 214511747)
School of Management, IT and Governance
College of Law and Management Studies
Westville Campus
UKZN
Email: 214511747@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mr Gumede

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Exploring curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration graduate employability: A case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal."

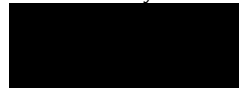
It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with students and/or staff members in the School of Management, IT and Governance on the Westville campus (Taking in account the regulations imposed during the lockdown ie restrictions on gatherings, travel, social distancing etc. ZOOM, Skype or telephone interviews recommended)

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire/attached to your notice:

- Ethical clearance approval letter;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the PAIA and POPI Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



DR KE CLELAND: REGISTRAR (ACTING)



INSPIRING GREATNESS



Appendix F: Ethical clearance
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YAKWAZULU-NATALI

15 February 2021

Mr Sphamandla Simphiwe Gumede (214511747)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus”

Dear Mr Gumede,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002322/2021

Project title: Exploring curriculum responsiveness for public administration graduate employability: a case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification — Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 23 November 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 15 February 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone; +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hsrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: **Edgewood** **Howard College** **Medical School** **Pietermaritzburg** **Westville**

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Appendix G: School Approval letter

11/3/2020

Mail - Sphamandla Gumede (214511747) - Outlook

FW: Proposal Approved By School Research Leader

Sybert Mutereko <Muterekos@ukzn.ac.za>

Tue 11/3/2020 8:22 PM

To: Sphamandla Gumede (214511747) <214511747@stu.ukzn.ac.za>

Prof. Sybert Mutereko

Associate Professor & Academic Leader – Public Governance Discipline

School of Management, IT and Public Governance

University of KwaZulu-Natal |2nd Floor M Block, Room 212

Westville Campus |Durban | Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 7951| E-mail: sybert@ukzn.ac.za



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From: ITS@ukzn.ac.za <ITS@ukzn.ac.za>

Sent: Friday, 16 October 2020 10:18

To: Sybert Mutereko <Muterekos@ukzn.ac.za>

Subject: Proposal Approved By School Research Leader

Student Number and Name : 214511747 Gumede, Sphamandla Simphiwe

The School Research Leader has approved this proposal.

Log onto Personnel iEnabler to view the proposal details and comments.

Submission Details :

Supervisor Name : MUTEREKO, SYBERT

School : 2484 : SCHOOL OF MAN, INFO TECH & GOV

Qualification : Master of Administration

Commencement Year : 2019

Title : Exploring Curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration Graduate employability: A case of the University of KwaZulu-atal

School Research Leader Comments :

Click https://erpweb.ukzn.ac.za/pls/ukznint/w99pkg.mi_login to access the iEnabler.

Appendix H: The



proposal outcome letter

**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

“To: Mr. S Gumede

From: School of Management, IT & Governance

Date: 06 February 2020

Subject: Outcome of Masters Research Proposal

Student Name & Student Number: Sphamandla S. Gumede (214511747)	Title of study: Exploring Curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration Graduate employability: A case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal
Qualification, Major & Campus: Masters of Administration MADMIN Westville	Supervisor: Dr S Mutereko Co-Supervisor: N/A
Proposal submission Date:	16 November 2019
Decision:	Proceed with comments

Attached to this letter please find the following documents:

Review I

Review 2

Please note the comments/suggestions made are intended to develop and strengthen your study, thus you need to consider them seriously. Your Supervisor will provide further guidance on how to factor the suggestions into your study.

Please ensure that this Outcome Letter together with Research Proposal is uploaded onto the HDMS system. Your Supervisor needs to upload this Outcome Letter on HDMS and you, as the student, needs to approve this on HDMS.

Thereafter you may proceed to apply for Ethical Clearance (EC) via the Research Information Gateway (RIG) system (<https://rig.ukzn.ac.za>).

Wishing you all the best with your study.

Your Sincerely



Dr Qwabe

On behalf of AL: Research & Higher Degrees School of Management, IT & Governance

University of KwaZulu-Natal — Westville Campus

ASOKA ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING
35 Arcadia, 1 Peacehaven Pl, Grosvenor, Bluff, 4052. South Africa

CELL NO.: 0836507817



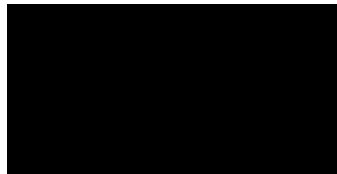
DECLARATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE DISSERTATION ENTITLED

***Exploring curriculum responsiveness for Public Administration
graduate employability: A case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal***

Candidate: Gumede SS

HAS BEEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITED.



DISCLAIMER

Whilst the English language editor has used electronic track changes to facilitate corrections and has inserted comments and queries in a right-hand column, the responsibility for effecting changes in the final, submitted document, remains the responsibility of the client and the editor cannot be held responsible for the quality of English Language expression used in corrections or additions effected subsequent to the transmission of this certificate on 11/02/2021.

Prof. Dennis Schauffer, M.A.(Leeds), PhD, KwaZulu (Natal), TEFL(London), TITC Business English, Emeritus Professor UKZN. Univ. Cambridge Accreditation: IGCSE Drama. Hon. Research Fellow, DUT. Durban University of Technology.