

## Challenges on Application of Batho Pele Principles: A case study of Department of Home Affairs, Durban Regional Office

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**Abstract:** This paper presents and discusses the findings of a case study research that was conducted at the Durban Home Affairs regional office. The Batho Pele principles were launched in 1997 to promote quality and efficient service to all citizens. Under colonialism and apartheid, quality service was reserved for whites only and for the great majority of the population, Home Affairs (Ndabazabantu) was an instrument of repression and control. Given this legacy, the transformation of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) had to be underpinned by the following Batho Pele principles: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. According to Skweyiya (South Africa, 1997:5), Batho Pele aims to progressively raise standards of service, especially for those whose access to public services have been limited in the past and whose needs are greatest. The findings of the research show that while initiatives are in place to ensure the application of the Batho Pele principles, challenges still exist. Recommendations focus on enhanced procedures and processes relating to Batho Pele to improve service delivery at the Department of Home Affairs.

### Introduction

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, several policies relating to service delivery have been formulated and implemented. One such crucial policy is the Batho Pele White Paper gazetted in 1997. Batho Pele, "People first", is an initiative that intends to transform the public service at all levels. Since a democratic South Africa inherited a public service that was not people-friendly and lacked the skills and attitudes to meet the developmental challenges facing the country. In the struggle to transform the public service, there was a need to ensure that citizens are served properly, that all employees work to their full capacity and to treat state resources with respect (South Africa, 1997). The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is a core government department that produces enabling documents that give access to government services like government grants, housing and education. The department is needed by everybody who enters, lives and exits in South Africa through natural, social, economic and political processes. A crucial department like Home Affairs is not immune to challenges relating to the application of Batho Pele principles.

### *Fraud and Corruption*

Corruption engenders perverse political dependencies, lost political opportunities to improve the general well being of the citizenry and fosters a climate of mistrust, particularly of public officials. The losses that accrue from a culture of permissiveness with respect to corruption include a loss of revenue, loss of trust, loss of values, loss of credibility and legitimacy and a loss of the democratic ethos and impulse within institutions and organisations. Corruption erodes the "common good" and

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the “*People’s Contract*”. The political cost of corruption is that it undermines democracy, weakens the developmental state and undermines responsibility, accountability and legitimacy. Therefore, the state needs to take a lead in combating, preventing, managing and eliminating corruption. In eroding the “*People’s Contract*”, corruption alienates citizens from the very officials they have elected and also alienates people from each other. Corruption destroys trust and erodes both the sense of global citizenship and the sense of shared responsibility as well as national citizenship and the sense of social cohesion (Fraser-Mokeleti, 2008:46).

Corruption distorts and undermines the value systems of all societies, their peoples, possessive individualism and overrides any sense of the common good. An anti-corruption strategy must be articulated by leaders in the political, economic and civil society spheres and must engage all sectors of society on the basis of a core set of leadership practices and values. Anti-corruption strategy must articulate an alternative ethos and value system (Fraser-Mokeleti, 2008:46).

Given that the Department of Home Affairs is a government department that is needed by everybody who enters, lives and exits South Africa through various processes, fraud and corruption are quite pervasive in this department. The Public Service Commission (PSC) Report as quoted by Mbanjwa (2011:1-4) concurs with the above statement, which reveals that fraud and corruption are rife in most government departments. Mbanjwa (2011: 1-4) further reported that the DHA and Correctional Services departments are the most corrupt departments as per reports based on calls by anonymous whistleblowers to the National Anti-Corruption Hotline between 2004 and 2010. According to Mbanjwa (2011:1-4), the most common cases of alleged corruption relate to fraud and bribery, mismanagement of government funds, abuse of government resources and procurement irregularities. Mbanjwa (2011:1,4) states that the Public Service Commission reported that the majority of cases lodged against the DHA involved the bribing of officials to obtain fraudulent identity documents, passports, marriage certificates and the sale of identity documents to illegal immigrants. Of the 3 554 cases reported to the hotline since 2004, the largest number involved the DHA, with 781 reported but only 142 resolved (Mbanjwa, 2011:1-4).

The Public Service Commission expressed concern that the lack of action on reported cases of corruption by senior managers and directors-generals is a “*trend*” which compromises the integrity of the hotline and weakens the public’s confidence in government’s commitment toward fighting fraud and corruption (Mbanjwa, 2011: 1, 4). Given that fraud and corruption are rife in most government departments, it can be argued that those senior managers who are failing to take action on reported cases do benefit from those acts of corruption. The Public service commission (2007), as quoted by Dorasamy (2009:58), stated that concerns regarding service delivery can be attributed to the performance of public officials. Dorasamy (2009:58) argued that sustained efforts to improve standards while expanding services has failed in many of the government departments because of person-to-post mismatch, lack of skills and a lack of performance standards. She further argued that

these contributory factors can be linked to egoistic leaders who assumed positions without giving consideration to performance based on accountability and responsibility (Dorasamy 2009:59).

The then Minister of Public Service, Fraser- Moleketi (2008:46) argued that corruption reinforces the banality of evil and its conceit lies in its ability to implicate, its complicity and its ability to violate the laws of the country. She further stated that it flouts international conventions and treaties and undermines democratic values and ethos (Fraser- Moleketi, 2008:46). Chinua Achebe and many other writers, as quoted by Fraser-Moleketi (2008:46), pointed to the significance of fighting corruption because it erodes the social fabric of society like undermining communities, perpetuating poverty, inequality and underdevelopment. As a country, people must be resolute and steadfast in the fight against corruption in all spheres of society.

Fraser-Moleketi (2008:46) states the following important premises relating to corruption as outlined in the Africa Forum on Anti Corruption held in March 2007:

- Corruption, as a practice, is rooted in the operation of market forces, the pursuit of individual prosperity and gain as opposed to the common good. This possessive individualism has undermined the goals and objectives of national and community level development;
- Corruption is fundamentally undemocratic; it undermines the legitimacy and credibility of democratically elected governments and of responsible and accountable civil servants;
- Corruption is about the interface of political and economic elites at a global, national and regional scale;
- The intentional preoccupation in the global corruption discourse with bribe takers and bribe givers and particularly with bribe takers is disingenuous, ideologically loaded, and simplistic and certainly serves other agendas that are not linked to developmental goals. This discourse needs to be challenged precisely because it overlooks the complexity of the social forces, systems, processes and structures which underpin acts of corruption;
- Corruption is a direct impediment to Africa's development. Corruptions hurt the many and benefit the few. The many that end up being hurt are the vulnerable and the few that benefits are those that have money. As a result of this the "people first" premise is undermined. It inhibits the ability of government to respond to citizens' needs and to utilise scarce resources in the most efficient and effective manner. It also hampers the continent's efforts to instil sound political, socio-economic and corporate governance;

Unethical behaviour in the South African public service is characterised by the following (Mafunisa, 2008:5).

- Lack of responsiveness to the needs of clients.
- Tardiness in the discharge of duties.
- Manifestations of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, and
- Corruption.

According to Mafunisa (2008:9), unethical behaviour often starts at the top of public service leadership, where public service values are not personified and promoted. He attributes this largely to the lack of accountability for promoting quality public service. It can be argued that by placing greater accountability for adhering to rules and procedures instead of similar focus on quality public services, effectiveness and efficiency in the South African public service has been affected.

#### *Batho Pele principles*

The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service (South Africa, 1997:9) highlights the transformation priorities of government, which includes transforming service delivery to meet the basic needs, while redressing past imbalances. Transformation has to ensure change in institutions or people. Furthermore, it is difficult to talk about transformative institutions without talking about transformative leaders as these are intertwined. Burns, 1978 as quoted by Bhengu, (2009:5), describes transformation as, "a process of influencing major changes in the attitudes of employees, so that the goals of the organisation and the vision of the leader are realised"

The White Paper (Batho Pele) states that putting the principles into practice describes what the three tier government as well as the wider public sector will be required to do when introducing their service delivery improvement programmes. Van der Waldt (2004:88) states that Batho Pele principles are simple but ambitious. They are also sufficiently flexible to allow the department to implement them according to local conditions and circumstances. Eight principles for transforming public service delivery- Batho Pele principles- have been identified and formalised in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997. Batho Pele is in every sense part and parcel of the public sector human resource management (Erasmus et al. 2005:68).

According to Zuma (2009), by working together, we can ensure that South Africans obtain the services they are entitled to. He urged political parties and civil society to partner with the ruling party, with the common goal of improving service delivery to the public.

Glynn, Perkins and Stewarts (1996:246) stated that effectiveness refers to the extent to which an activity or programme achieves its intended objectives. The exclusive focus is outputs, outcomes and impacts. According to Epstein (1992:166), effectiveness is the degree to which goods and services meet the needs and desires of the community, client or consumers served. Members of society are not the only customers. National and provincial departments have various internal customers such as staff within their own organisations, as well as other departments and institutions to whom they provide a service (Du Toit, van der Waldt and Doyle, 2002:307). According to Nqakula, the former Minister of DHA, central to the vision of the government departments like DHA are its customers, their needs, preferences and, most importantly, the obligation is to serve customers in a convenient and efficient way. The twin objective for the improvement of the service systems is to ensure that

departments serve its customers efficiently, and to create an identification regime that is sanitised, credible and secured (South Africa, 2009:4).

Batho Pele principles have the major role in ensuring effective public service delivery, hence it illustrate how the actions of public officials could be regulated. These principles require that customers:

- Be consulted
- Have services that comply with set standards
- Access to services
- Be treated with courtesy
- Information
- Transparency
- Redress
- Receive value for money.

### **Methodology**

For the purpose of this study, a case study using the mixed method was used. The study was qualitative and quantitative in nature, using questionnaires, interviews, journals and government publications. White (2000:39) defined a case study as an extensive study of a single situation such as an individual, family or organisation. He further states that a case study employs a variety of different techniques that includes questionnaires and interviews. According to Sekaran (2007:125), case studies are useful in applying solutions to current problems based on past problem-solving experiences. He further states that they are also useful in understanding certain phenomena and generating further theories for empirical testing (Sekaran, 2007:125).

The regional office of the DHA in Durban was used as a case study. Implementation of Batho Pele principles in government departments is bound to differ within each regional office. This means that the findings of a study of this nature may not necessarily apply to all regional offices in a generalised manner. Therefore, a case study approach is most appropriate as it strives to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and 'thick description' of participants' experiences of thoughts (Geertz, 1973)

The advantage of a case study approach is that it helps the researcher not to solely depend on already published work (White, 2000:39). It also reinforces the use of multiple sources of data which, in turn, facilitates the validation of data (Denscombe, 2003:38).

Quantitative research aims to determine how one thing affects another in a population, by quantifying the relationship between variables (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008:75) The study used questionnaires

distributed to staff at the DHA Durban regional office to identify and analyse the various factors impacting on effective and efficient public service delivery.

According to Cooper and Schindler, (2008:162), qualitative research is designed to tell the researcher how (process) and why (meaning) things happen as they do. It aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of a situation. Penzhorn (2002:244) stated that the qualitative approach involves investigating individuals and phenomena in their natural settings to gain a better understanding of the area under research. White (2000:28) believed that qualitative research is a descriptive, non-numerical way to collect and interpret information. The study interviewed customers and some employees at the regional office to determine their perception of customer service.

#### *Data collection method*

The data collection methods in this study used questionnaires combined with interviews. These served as primary data collection methods. Leedy (1993:117) stated that primary data is the information closest to the source of the ultimate truth underlying the phenomenon. He further stated that primary data reflects truth more faithfully than any other approach to truth. The data collection methods in this study used questionnaires combined with interviews. These served as primary data collection methods. The main point here was that the data collected was unique to the researcher and confidentiality of the respondent was guaranteed. A covering letter assured respondents of their anonymity. A consent form was attached to the questionnaire.

Questionnaires are data collection instruments that enable the researcher to pose questions to participants in his or her research for answers to the research questions. The questionnaire gathered primary data. A field worker assisted in the distribution and collection of questionnaires to the regional office staff. Qualitative research for this study included interviews. As with any summary information, a pattern may be apparent. This can only be satisfactorily explored by some kind of interview technique (Gillham, 2005:166). Saunders *et al.* (2003:280) suggested that it is generally good practice not to rely solely on questionnaire data but to use the questionnaire in conjunction with at least one other data collection instrument.

Therefore, the interview was used as a technique for discourse or interaction between two or more people, in which verbal communication was used to achieve a certain purpose such as gathering or giving information or influencing behaviour (Ziel and Antoinette, 2003). In this study customers were interviewed. Open-ended interviews took the form of a conversation with the intention that the researcher explores with the participants his or her views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about certain events or phenomena. Interviews were conducted with customers and some members of management at this office in order to establish their concerns regarding service delivery and to ascertain whether they are treated as the real customers in line with the Batho Pele principles or not.

Documentary analysis and informal observations were also used for triangulation purposes. Document analysis comprised looking at displayed charts, Annual Reports and newspaper articles. Informal observations were meant to assist in obtaining a sense of the pressure the employees and customers face in their daily interaction.

*Profiling the case study: Department of Home Affairs-Durban Regional Office*

There have been numerous reports of poor service delivery by the department, thus violating and defeating the sole purpose of the Batho Pele principles of treating citizens more like customers, hence, the “*people first*” approach. The study is drawn from a case study of the Durban Regional Office of the Department of Home Affairs. This is the office, where even foreigners get enabling documents to live and work in South Africa. It is imperative that quality service delivery is not compromised in the said office, since it services densely populated areas such as Durban Central, Durban North and Durban South, thereby making it the largest regional office in KwaZulu-Natal. This office is serving approximately 1500 customers per day. This office used to have 65 employees but now it is operating with about 50 employees because 10 employees are out on abscondment, suspension, expulsion and retirement. Furthermore, since the researcher is based in Durban, accessibility to the regional office was not compromised.

The DHA Durban Regional is at the heart of the city, close to the railway station and the Durban International Convention Centre and the central business district. The geographical location is an important consideration in terms of the extensive area that the regional office is servicing, since it is the only regional office in Durban. This has implications for human resource, material and physical capacity to provide effective and efficient services.

## **Findings and discussions**

*Charting a new direction for the regional office*

Leadership literature maintain that effective organisational change begins with the adoption of and adherence to a new vision and mission (Calitz, 2002; Clarke, 2007 as quoted by Bhengu, 2009). Change process in Durban Home Affairs regional office started with the management inviting both external and internal customers to participate in decision making and to air their views on service provision in the office. The regional manager had a new vision for institutional change and this was based on five pillars, i.e. effective, efficient and economical, user friendly and quick service. All these pillars had to be responsive to all stakeholders in the regional office.

*The impact of effectiveness in an organisation*

According to Robbins and Coulter (2005:8), *effectiveness* means completing activities so that organisational goals are attained, i.e., doing the right things. The right things, in this case, refer to those work activities that will help the organisation reach its goals. It is concerned with the means of

getting things done; the attainment of organisational goals and can be judged in terms of output and impact. Organisational effectiveness is a measure of how appropriate organisational goals are and how well an organisation is achieving those goals (Robbins and Coulter, 2005:466).

The Durban regional office to be effective in its dealing with customers or stakeholders is now operating on certain weekends and they close later than other offices. This undertaking emanated from the outcry from both external customers and internal customers. The internal customers could not bear pressure of long queues from sunrise to sunset. This was aggravated by the fact that customers would rush to get services from this office before going to their work places, and late in the afternoon they would rush to the offices to get service before the regional office is closed. Another important factor that improved effectiveness in the regional office was separation of functions and sections. This meant that each section will have its own supervisor and its team. Further, the introduction of floor managers made service provision effective in the sense that customers are quickly directed to relevant section.

#### *The impact of efficiency in an organisation*

Efficiency refers to getting the most output from the least amount of inputs. An organisation is considered efficient when it is able to produce the most goods and services using the least amounts of inputs. It is also termed doing things right (Robbins and Coulter, 2005:7). It relates to the degree to which outputs are achieved in terms of productivity and input. The Durban regional office to be efficient despite being understaffed managed to provide efficient service through restructuring of functions and sections.

#### *Impact of being economic in an organisation*

Economical means using the minimum amount of time, effort, or language that is necessary (Collins, 2009). This pillar has been beneficial to both employees and customers. Availability of floor managers has impacted on service delivery because this has reduced loitering of customers in the office not knowing where to go.

#### *Impact of a user friendly system and quick service in an institution*

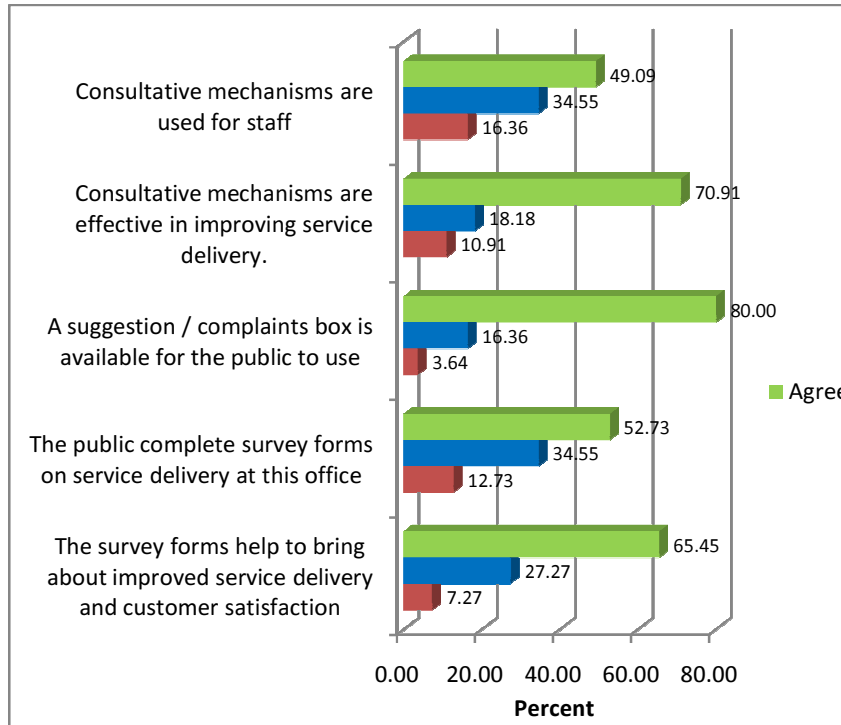
Collins (2009) describes a user friendly system as one that is well designed and easy to use. The Durban regional office is now user friendly and produces quick service to certain functions. This is evident by well displayed information charts, electronic queuing system, and ability to issue temporal identification document, ability to issue death certificate and birth certificate within a day off occurrence of entering and exiting natural processes in South Africa.

#### *Challenges on application of Batho Pele principles in the Durban regional office*

According to the White Paper on Transforming Public Service (WPTPS), (South Africa, 1997:15), the Batho Pele policy framework consists of eight service delivery principles which are:



- *Consultation:* Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, where possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered. Matoti (2011:1) argues that, on the contrary, like many other public policies, the desired outcome of Batho Pele principles has not been achieved. The first principle recommends that the public be consulted concerning all public service developments. Consultation interlinked with all eight principles. For example, the promotion of the principles of access requires that consultation takes place with citizens to better understand their needs and to ensure services can be accessible to them. Consultation is critical in the deepening of good governance and democracy but also as players in decision- making on service delivery. The implementation of consultative principle should, therefore, transcend mere technical compliance and become an integral part of service delivery in the Public Service. If departments want to put their customers first, they should listen and take account of their views (consultation).
- *Principle of consultation*
- Only 49.09% indicated that consultative mechanisms were used for staff, while 34.55% remained neutral. Majority of the respondents (65.45%) agreed that survey forms contributed to improved service delivery. It was also important to note that 52.73 % of respondents indicated that the public do complete survey forms, which provided important feedback on standards of service at the DHA.
- Although 70.91% of the respondents believed that consultative mechanisms were effective in improving service delivery, only 52.73% indicated that it was used. 80% of the respondents indicated that a suggestion box was available. Responses to question on general comments relating to the medium of communication are indicated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Consultative Mechanism**

Barriers to consultation as cited by management include staff shortage, lack of appropriate monitoring, incapacity and budgetary constraints. Budgetary constraints ranked high as a barrier to consultation, language barrier and literacy featured second. Surprisingly, poor participation also came out as a barrier. Consultation has been described by the respondents as a time consuming principle. But they agreed that if correctly adhered to, it minimises conflicts among the employees and customers. Amongst the factors that make respondents to be perceived as being not sensitive to needs of public are delays in the processing of enabling documents of which some they do not have control over them as they are processed at Head Office. It can be argued that consultation causes unnecessary delays in implementing or taking action. This is seen in the eyes of the management. Management is quick to come up with solutions in any given challenge to promote efficient and effective service delivery, but this is always hindered by consultation which is time consuming and which might end up being rejected. The “us and them” attitude always makes any decision taken by management to be challenged. A typical example of such cases:

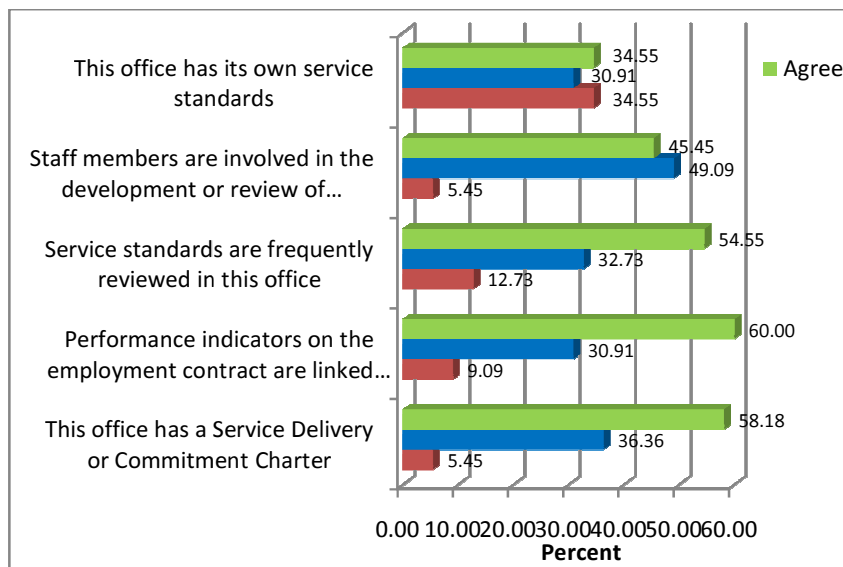
- The system that one government institution uses to issue reports failed, the management instead of writing an instructional circular, decided to go through consultation process only to discover that the decision they had taken was rejected outright, because the staff did not want to report manually and that consultation process delayed the issuing of reports by five solid weeks, the intended recipients of reports suffered, because they could not access services that they were going to

receive within three days. This would not have occurred if consultation principle was not observed.

- *Service Standards:* Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect;

*Level and quality of service*

- On average, more than a third of the respondents were uncertain or neutral for this section. Apart from the first statement which showed a high level of disagreement, most of the other statements had low levels of disagreement.
- Employees responded quite differently to the principle regarding service standards compared to consultation. A higher percentage for each of the statements in this section (service standards) remained neutral compared to the section on consultation. Nicklaus (undated), as quoted by Michelli (2008:256), is correct when he says that achievement is largely the product of steadily raising one’s level of aspiration and expectation.
- With regard to the DHA having its own service standards, the same percentage (34.55%) agreed and disagreed. It can be argued that there is a lack of consensus on the existence of service standards, which is a cause for concern.
- With regard to the involvement of staff members in the development and review of service standards, about 49.09% of the respondents were uncertain regarding involvement and 5.45% disagreed. This reveals that information is shared by few and possibly not all staff members are involved in this activity. This shows lack of consultation and information sharing in this office.

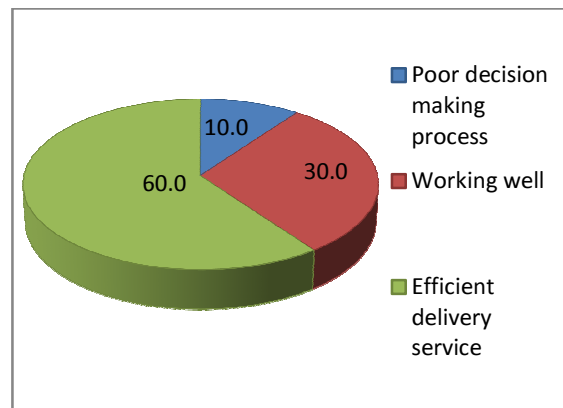


**Figure 2: Level and Quality of Service**

- Regarding performance indicators being linked to service standards, about 60% of the respondents agreed, and about 30.91 % were uncertain. This can have a negative bearing on service delivery in this office. Consistent staff development is an imperative so that all staff members are aware of the service standards and the linkage to performance indicators.
- With regard to service delivery / commitment charter, about 36.36% respondents were uncertain whether the office had a service delivery or a commitment charter. This possibly may not have been communicated. It can be suggested that gaps in staff awareness of such a charter did exist and this needs to be considered for attention.

#### *Implementation of service delivery standards*

While only 30% indicated that service delivery standards are working well (Figure 3). Twice the number of respondents 60% believed that service delivery is efficient. While the majority agreed that service delivery is efficient, the majority did not agree that service standards are working well. It can be argued that if service standards are working well, then service delivery ought to be efficient. However, the responses do not reflect this.



**Figure 3: Implementation of Service Delivery Standards**

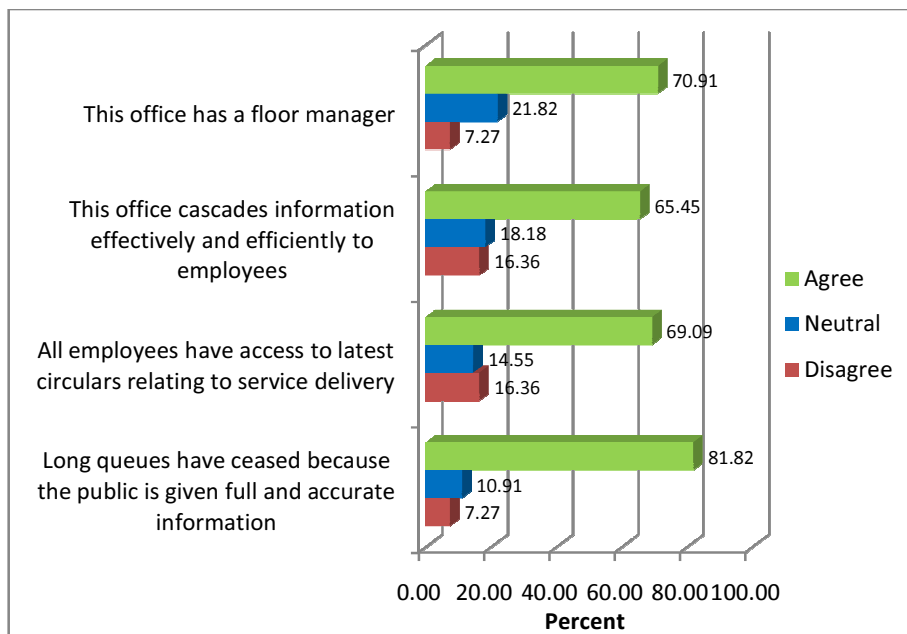
In terms of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997), the first step should be to consult customers so as to identify their needs, followed by the formulation of service standards based on the identified needs so that customers know what to expect from the departments (South Africa, 1997:15). An accepted standard of service is a necessity, so is equal access to services (Matoti, 2011:1). Matoti (2011:1) stated that the Department of Public Service (DPSA) vowed to be transparent in all its dealings. Matoti further argues that, previously, ethics were primarily guaranteed by section 32(a), 42(c & h) of 'the highest law in the land', the Constitution. Such provisions become mere words on paper when the promise is not delivered; and a policy gap elapses. Ahmad, Savage and Srivasta (2004), as quoted by Matoti (2011:1), stated that the success of service delivery

depends on whether institutions of service provisions are accountable to citizens. The public ought to exercise its lawful right, as endorsed by the constitution’s section 41(c), 152(a b, e), and 195(e, f, g). Service standards also speak of service commitment charter, which is provided by the Head office as the guide of which it demands that each office designs its own. Service commitment charter is not a one man’s document but it is a collective designed document that communicates who is in charge, how to deal with complaints and the response time.

- *Access:* All citizens should have access to the services to which they are entitled to; The location of the regional office provide adequate access to service, but due to corruption people who get quick access and receive favours over the rest of the customers are those who bribe officials to bypass inefficiency in this office. Corruption then becomes a barrier in applying this principle

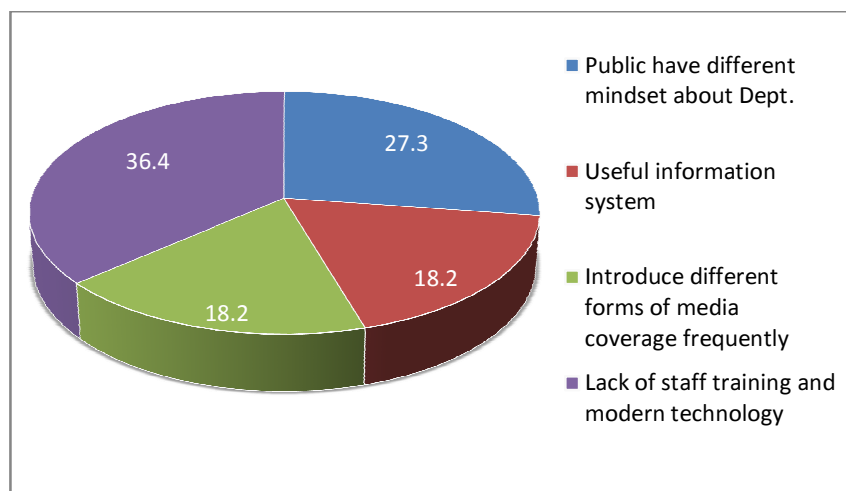
- *Courtesy:* Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration This principle is adequately practised in this office, where customers who are physically challenged, pregnant, and mothers of new born babies are given first priority. The challenge in applying this principle is when people begin to share wheel chairs and babies. This now makes employees to be perceived as inconsiderate when they happen to notice the habit of sharing items that makes them get preferential treatment.

*Provision of Information*



**Figure 4: Provision of Information**

- *Information:* Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
- There is a general pattern of agreement with the statements in this section regarding the cascading of information to staff and customers. On average, about two-thirds of the respondents agreed with the statements. The last statement relates to information dissemination to the public, resulting in shorter queues. Statements 1 and 4 relates to information sharing with staff and customers. Statements 2 and 3 relates to information sharing with staff only.
- The presence of floor managers in this office has improved service delivery, since they are directly accessible to customers as they walk to the regional office Customers are given an opportunity to declare the purpose of their visits, and then they are directed to the relevant section.
- Regarding long queues, the queuing system has made processing easier for both customers and staff. When one enters the office, the floor manager asks the purpose of the visit, and one is then given a queuing ticket, with the number that will appear on the information screens which directs the customer to the next available teller.
- Information sharing and access to latest circulars has a positive bearing on service delivery in the DHA office. The long queues cited as amongst the problems, hindering service delivery, at DHA in the literature review has been addressed. This is confirmed by customers interviewed and the observations by the researcher. Accessibility to information is imperative for staff to execute their duties, while recognising that they need to be informed to address queries from customers. More so, well informed employees can contribute to processing applications and queries more effectively and efficiently, thereby reducing the waiting time in queues.
- Figure 5 relates to general comments regarding the information in the Department of Home Affairs. *Figure 5 information provided by the DHA*



**Figure 5: Information Provided by the DHA**

- Of the four comments, one was positive, which indicated that (18.2%) of respondents believed that information provided to the public is adequate (Figure 5). The other statements were perceptions and recommendations. The public has different mindsets about the DHA. The public perception will always differ. The reason for different perception emanates from bad past experiences, current positive experiences and wide negative media publications. Usefulness of the information system reflects that customers know about the services offered by the DHA in the case study. This has also been confirmed by customers interviewed, who stated that even the posters displayed at this office, often minimises the stay at the office. The introduction of cell phone enquiries, informs the customer of the stages in the processing of enabling documents, marital status hence inconvenience and fraudulent marriages have occurred in this office and whether one is still alive or not, since fraudulent death certificate have been issued in this office (Padayachee, 2009:4). The Introduction of different forms of media coverage promotes the principle of access and information. Information must be published in all languages, amongst the wall charts and posters there are English and isiZulu publications. About 36.4 % of respondents stated that there is lack of staff training and modern technology. For this office to be effective and deliver services efficiently, Human Resource and Development has to take a lead in empowering human resources.

About 20 % of respondents indicated that there is a big change in the offices. The offices are now clean, information on the walls in the form of charts and information brochures are displayed. Over-crowding in this office has been adequately addressed through the introduction of electronic queuing system. Time one spends in this office is now reduced because of visibility of floor managers and cell phone enquiries. One respondent said in her last visit, she spent almost 3 hours queuing to enquire about her identity book, but now she is being able to enquire about the stages of enabling document processing at the comfort of her home.

- One respondent from Africa highlighted that there are big changes, the manner the office of study is being managed, and he spoke of reduction of overcrowding and tighter controls in accessing enabling documents. This suggests that DHA in this office is now Batho Pele complaint. However, major intervention still needs to be considered to cater for the deaf and blind people, hence amongst the staff there is no one who interprets sign language and Braille forms are not available. As a result for these people to receive and access service through information principle they have to be accompanied by friends and family members.
- *Openness and transparency:* Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge;

This is a very dicey principle; it protects the accounting officer from temptation and insults which may lead to expulsion due to theft or mismanagement of resources. It protects only if correctly adhered to it. If it is not adhered to it becomes a territory of fraud and corruption, therefore leading to poor service delivery. According to Maseko (2008:16), public servants have degenerated into think tanks for the vulnerable. Sometimes, they think that delivering a service is like a favour that they are doing for their communities. He suggested that extensive consultation should be done in ensuring that the management of public funds are effectively and efficiently utilised for the benefits of those who need government services. The White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery, (South Africa, 1997), stated that openness and transparency are the hallmarks of a democratic government and are fundamental to the public service transformation process. According to Crous (2004:582), transparency in the public service helps keep the public service clean, effective, and free from nepotism and corruption. Maseko (2008:16) believed that the gap between managers and foot soldiers creates a void which impacts negatively on service delivery.

- *Redress*: If the promised standard of service is not delivered , citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made , citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response; and apology.
- *Redress measures*

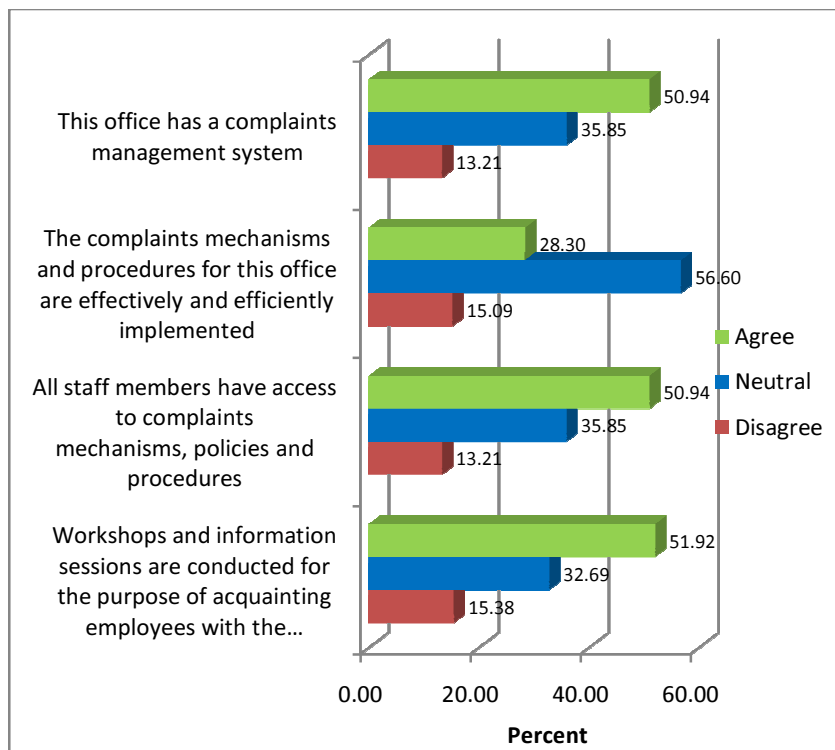
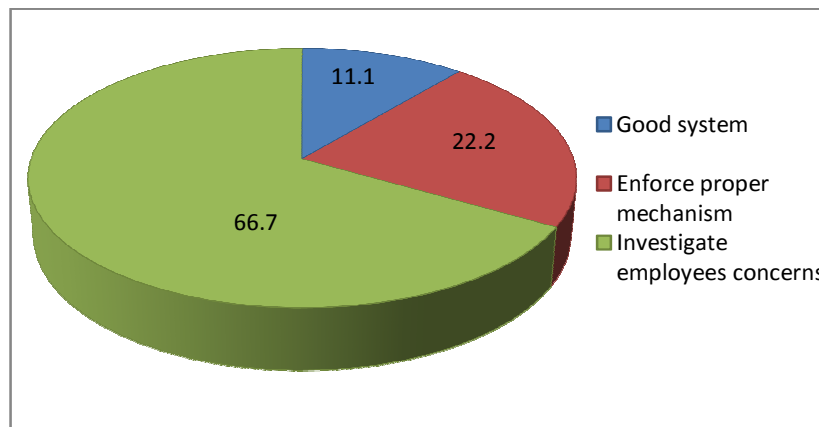


Figure 6: Redress Measures



- The average level of disagreement for this section was 14%. Agreement levels is slightly more than half, for all statements, except for the second statement regarding complaint mechanisms. The levels of uncertainty (neutrality) were about a third, excluding statement 2. It seemed that staff members' uncertainty about whether the complaints mechanisms and procedures were effectively and efficiently implemented showed lack of information to staff regarding redress.
- Regarding DHA's complaint management system, about a third of respondents were uncertain whether this office had a complaint management system. This indicates that information sharing in this office is inadequate. It also reveals that only a few employees knew of this system which is likely to be employees in management. About 57 % of respondents were uncertain about effectiveness and efficiency of complaints and mechanisms, policies and procedures. This also highlight that "foot soldiers are not given information. Maseko (2008:16) suggested that leadership and management should always strive to increase interactions with stakeholders. He further stated that staff members in government departments do not even know the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the department, but they are expected to deliver.
- *Suggestions to improve service delivery*



**Figure 7: Suggestions to Improve Service Delivery**

- Two thirds (66.7%) of the respondents indicated that employees' concerns should be investigated. If employees' concerns are not addressed, then it can negatively impact on their performance and can possibly hinder effective and efficient service delivery.
- The White Paper speaks of how customers should be treated and development of the redress mechanisms in cases where the actual delivery of services falls short of the promised

standard. Respondents stated that to follow up on redress cases take forever because calls are not answered in Head Office timeously and yet they are dealing with continuous queues of people eagerly waiting to be assisted. One respondent reported that technological challenges as indicated below impact negatively on effective and efficient service delivery.

*“As I speak to you now, we are off-line and customers have been waiting for the past 20 minutes. Some are in the queues for temporally identity documents, of which can be processed at this office if technology is giving us problems, how can we then be expected to deliver at our utmost best?”*

The respondent suggested that the Head office must provide and devise strategies to deal with frequent off-line situations, bearing in mind that customers travel from far and wide to the DHA. Redress is a difficult principle to apply hence it involves all levels in the hierarchy in any given department or institution, as stated in the DHA where centralisation of functions makes it difficult to make prompt decisions with responses or in addressing challenges.

Respondents in management reported that they have undergone specialised training and some have been in the department for quite some time. In relation to Batho Pele principles, they do understand the concepts, but somehow it becomes difficult for them to adhere to it, due to centralisation of functions. With regard to the principle of redress, they stated that while they are able to apologise on behalf of the department, they are not able to quick fix the problem or errors in enabling documents, they are not even able to tell customers the turnaround time as these are referred to the Head Office in Pretoria.

- *Value for money:* Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

Public servants never or hardly think why they are paid a salary or why they are given appointment letters when given the position that they occupy in government. Some think they are appointed to improve their lifestyles (Maseko, 2008:17).

According to Maseko (2008:17), public servants need to ensure that they strengthen the organisational culture specifically, and to uphold set standards by ensuring that budgets are spent as per strategic plan. He highlighted that the Public Finance Management Act is explicit in terms of expenditure patterns (do not spend a cent if you do not have a plan).

The foremost challenge that makes government department seems to be dysfunctional emanates from the fact that “*people first*” approach is the fact that employees tend to forget their core duties and focus on scrutinising each and every decision that the top management takes.

## Recommendations

- The office of study is the only regional office in an urban area. Out of 65 employees, only 40 are on duty, due the rest being unavailable as results of expulsion, abscondment and suspension. This impact on service delivery. To enhance an effective and efficient service delivery in this office, additional staff needs to be employed until staff problems have been resolved.
- The incorporation of the implementation of Batho Pele principles in the performance contract of all the employees of the Department. The job description of the employees should reflect the standards so that implementation is guaranteed as the job description informs the performance contract. Every employee of the Department should be assessed and evaluated on the implementation of the principles in their daily duties.
- There should be a greater awareness of the presence of service standards within the DHA, so that all employees are educated on its value and relevance for public service delivery. This can be achieved through displays, workshops and development programmes.
- A Service Charter should be developed to give details about the type, quality and quantity of services to be provided by the Department. The Charter will also give details regarding location of service access points and contact details of responsible staff. Information about the Complaint Management Systems utilised in the Department and responsible staff should also reflect on the Charter.
- Communication with staff regarding the important levels of service delivery is necessary to ensure that all staff and not just a few are aware of procedures and processes guiding effective and efficient service delivery.
- Feedback mechanisms should be regulated to inform staff on challenges facing service delivery, so that staff can be part of the process to improve services at the DHA and what specific initiatives are institutionalised to address this.
- Mechanisms to monitor levels of service, apart from survey forms need to be considered. A multi-dimensional approach to determine effective and efficient service delivery will provide vital information like whether people's needs are responded to within reasonable time. For example, an analysis of the number of customers that are attended to within a specific time, using the electronic queuing system, can provide important information to set targets to increase the rate of processing queries.
- There is a need for training and development of staff, which is important not only for career development, but also for motivation of staff in respect of service delivery initiatives.
- There is a need to consider staff complaints as this provides valuable input that be accessed to improve service delivery. Since staff are also customers and are often directly involved with the public, their complaints often constitutes primary data which should not be ignored for any service delivery improvement initiatives.

- Management teams play a pivotal role in providing strategic leadership and leading by example. There should be greater monitoring in terms of management “walking the talk”. This will motivate staff to follow the principles underpinning the “people first” approach.
- Awards or incentives should be provided to diligent and committed employees, this can be done through the introduction of “ *Employee of the Month* ”, where DHA Durban regional office customers will be given a chance to choose the best employee who is Batho Pele compliant.

## Conclusion

Giese and Smith (2007:79) stated that the DHA has long been considered as one of the weakest arms of government. At the same time, its mandate makes it an essential component of a full service package for bonafide citizenry and international visitors. Based on tireless endeavours by various DHA Ministers, governed by Public Service Acts and various pieces of legislation since 1994, the DHA has made a tremendous progress regarding service delivery. The findings of this study reflect that while employees in the office of study do understand the concept of the Batho Pele principles while the benefits of its comprehensive application still needs to be realised if service delivery is to be enhanced. DHA Durban regional office has made an improvement on service delivery, but there are still factors that require consideration to eradicate the gaps in effective and efficient service provision.

Capacity building workshops around adherence to Batho Pele principles must be instilled to all stakeholders, more importantly the foot soldiers (implementers), the do's and don'ts must also be instilled. This will minimise challenges on application of Batho Pele principles and enhance an effective and efficient public service driven by leadership which prioritises the needs of the public.

Effective, efficient and economical service provision can also be improved if Batho Pele principles can be aligned to employment contract and employees be evaluated against it. Management should also be given powers to suspend and expel if the need arises, this will eradicate the attitude of lazy employees who regards government departments as “toothless dogs”.

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