# Public Service Delivery Challenges in South Africa: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

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## Abstract

This study investigated the challenges in public service delivery by the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) by examining the procedures, processes, communication techniques, and implementation of projects by the DARD.

The findings reveal the need to create self-reliant as opposed to dependent communities; create a conducive environment for stakeholders to participate in decision-making; enhance internal systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of service delivery; encourage commitment by staff members to support stakeholders, ensuring sustainability instead of a short-term approach to service delivery, which is people-centred and ultimately developmental and inclusive in its approach.

**Keywords:** service delivery, local government, rural development

## Introduction

Service delivery is a priority for any government to ensure that the constitutional rights of the citizens are upheld and leaders in the public service have the responsibility to guarantee good service delivery which enhances human life. According to Dorasamy (2010) ethical culture underpinning purpose-driven leadership is viewed as an effective approach that will promote the broader interests of society in respect of public service delivery. In his speech in the parliament in 2005, the former South African president Thabo Mbeki, stated that "poor service delivery will affect the stability of South Africa in the near future. Thus, any government should try to have a better understanding of any protests due to poor service delivery," (Akinboade *et al.,* 2013).

Determining the type(s) of services that must be rendered to society to improve its general welfare is not always an easy task, especially if one takes into consideration that different groups in society have different needs and expectations. It is obvious that a government which promises free health care, education and housing to the poor and destitute, will embark on action to render the required services (Du Toit *et al.*, 1998).

In South Africa, the pre-apartheid regime implemented laws and practices which perpetuated economic injustices and contributed to high unemployment, poor infrastructure and service provision. The post-democratic government was summoned to fix the inequalities by promoting equality and providing good living conditions for the entire population, especially to those who were disadvantaged by the previous government. In an effort to eradicate poverty, the government of South Africa initiated a series of development projects which brought infrastructure related services to the underprivileged and attempted to diminish the colossal backlog. The aim was to increase community participation, improve service delivery and the lives of poor people, through local governance (Hlongwane, 2011).

The South African Constitution (Act 108:1996) states that "public state administration should abide to a number of rules and principles," amongst which is that "people's" needs must be addressed; it must

be accountable, transparent and development-oriented. It means that the government departments and other institutions must ensure that they put people first. This will give reason to question the effectiveness of ensuring that citizens receive the services they were promised, and that they are empowered to take part in the decisions on public service delivery meaningfully (Public Service Commission, 2012). Therefore, public service managers must guarantee programmes that are in line with the expectations of the community, which will be a long-term commitment; it must involve the effective use of resources and transform threats into opportunities (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 1999).

The SA government has managed to provide basic services to the people, as is evidenced by the following: 82% of households received electricity, 95% of households received water, 75% of households received housing, and it is committed to do more (SONA, 2015). However, it is important that the SA government takes a centre position to guarantee effective and efficient delivery of public service to the people. Challenges identified by the government in service delivery include the need to address the complexities of cooperative governance across government spheres and geographical boundaries; the need to reduce the infrastructure backlog for the provision of services; the delivery of enhanced service delivery reach, and access to constituent communities (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 2011).

In his 2016 State of Province address, the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal stated that:

> "We have a clear plan of action expressed in our Provincial Growth and Development Plan setting clear targets of what it is that we have to achieve to ensure that we realise this Vision. We confirm our commitment to the Key National Priorities and 9 Point Plan, namely, Revitalisation of agriculture and agro-processing value chain (APAP) remains a critical component of our economy to unlock growth and expand employment opportunity. It is for this reason that we are currently implementing a KZN Agrarian Transformation Strategy, which will contribute to rural economic development, increased production, job creation, and market access for farmers mainly in rural areas through their integration into global value chain."

The Premier further stated that:

> "There is a programme for the development of commercial farmers (i.e. new entrant, small scale, and land reform farmers), we have 3483 beneficiaries. The agricultural sector including forestry and livestock farming saw an increase in employment, which rose to 134 000 from 11 000 at the end of September 2015" (KZN State of Province Address, 2016:3).

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARDs) vision is captured as follows:

> "A united, sustainable and vibrant agricultural sector with thriving rural communities in balance with nature, and the mission is To promote through partnership, sound agricultural practices that promote economic growth, food security, and advancement of rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal."

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) further developed the Batho Pele Principles, which in terms of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Government Gazette No. 18340), 1997, is clear that the DARD has committed to quality public service delivery which will also encapsulate the Service Delivery Commitment Charter.

In terms of the Constitution of South Africa, (Act 108:1996), "the transformation agenda has been characterised by representativeness and participation with respect to the form and substance of the public service." Upon attainment of democracy in 1994, the first order of business for the democratically elected South African government, was consolidation of the disparate administrative systems into a unified public service, premised on a different value set - inclusive as opposed to exclusive", which resulted in 176 departments being reorganised into one system with the same standards and values (Ngidi & Dorasamy, 2009). The guidelines from community values include among other things, value systems and religious doctrines; reasonableness and fairness; balanced decision-making; probity, thoroughness, and honesty; effectiveness and efficiency (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 1999).

Ijeoma and Sambuthu (2013), highlight that to effectively and efficiently meet the citizens ever changing needs, governments around the world are increasingly searching for the best mechanisms to improve the extent to which public office holders can be effectively held accountable and responsible for their actions. The policy implementation process encompasses various activities which aim at converting the aims and objectives of various policies into public goods and services (Mfene, 2013).

It is against the above background that this study seeks to determine the quality of services rendered and the conditions under which services are provided by the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). This study attempts to expand on public accountability which could test the socio-political environment in order to come up with relevant and objective recommendations to improve service delivery by DARD.

**Literature Review**

**Service delivery in South Africa**

After two decades of governing, the ANC led South African government still finds itself short in delivering better health services, housing, education and in reducing poverty. The shortcomings of the successive ANC led governments turned hope into despair, as the population had a lot of faith in the leadership of ANC (Nengwekhulu, 2009).

According to Pieterse *et al.*, (2013), the main task now is to guarantee that this strong state and its procedural democracy achieve a more vital transformation towards a state that is receptive and accountable to all its citizens, including those who have yet to benefit from its public services.

Separate economic conditions still prevail in South Africa, with resources and wealth concentrated in the first economy and poverty and concentrated in the second. Certain legacies of apartheid make this inequality deeply structural, particularly, the centralised monopoly structure of South Africa's core economy, including legacy, labour market laws and the highly skewed distribution of assets such as land and capital, spatial legacy of Bantustans and apartheid cities, and legacies of deep inequality in the development of human capital. "The second economy identifies these structural issues as the main causes of poverty, alienation, and mixed economic and fiscal

performance, which has not reduced the huge structural unemployment problem" (Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS), 2009).

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) "warns that the top-down, centralist, approach taken by the South African government to deliver services and build local capacity raises serious apprehensions. A bottom-up approach was suggested to vest legal authority and local governance responsibilities in local communities. It is therefore the responsibility of local governments to effectively implement democracy at the grassroots and engender development from bottom-up," (APRM, 2007).

The shortcoming of the first phase of the National Democratic Revolution has been that major redistributive socio-economic efforts have been conceptualised as top-down state delivery programmes. These dynamics have created three related problems:-

- As the government's massive redistributive effort gets overwhelmed by the scale of problems, or falls behind rising and often legitimate expectations, or fails to deliver equally at the same time to everyone, then the anger turns on government. The top-down redistributive delivery model based on insufficient fiscal resources sets up government as a sitting duck target for anger and frustration, while monopoly capital disinvests and largely escapes blame.
- The tendency to transform our popular mass base into individual or household beneficiaries, recipients, clients of government delivery also tends to undermine the potential cohesion of poor communities.
- The effective de-mobilization of popular forces by the top-down, state delivery model of redistribution has also deprived us of an important means of transforming the state itself (SACP, 2015).

As it prepared to govern, the ANC was designing the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) aimed particularly at redressing service delivery and housing imbalances in favour of the disadvantaged majority. The "RDP was consciously supply-driven, and given the vast disparities

imposed by the apartheid regime; this choice was widely viewed as justified. The supply-driven approach meant that functions that could be delivered effectively by local governments and communities, particularly housing, were reserved for national and provincial implementation," (World Bank, 2011:13).

The central objective of the RDP (1994) is: "to improve the quality of life of marginalised and poor people in the communities in South Africa. Empowering the poor in the communities will allow them to have control over their lives and will increase their capacity to mobilise enough development resources, including from the democratic government where necessary. The RDP reflects a commitment to grassroots, bottom-up development which is owned and driven by communities and their representative organisations".

Maintaining and increasing South Africa's ability to meet its national food demands, and seeking to eradicate inequalities and poverty among households made apparent by inadequate and unstable food production, weak purchasing power, weak institutional support network and poor nutritional status, are perceived as the two main challenges of food security in South Africa. Food security is considered as a Constitutional right in the country guaranteeing its people the right to have access to adequate food and water; in addition, "the state must by legislation and other measures within its available resources, avail to progressive realisation of the right to sufficient food. Despite national food security, malnutrition, food insecurity and unemployment are still affecting many South African households" (Strategic Planning, 2015).

About 14.3 million people are exposed to food insecurity (StatsSA, 2011) and to resolve this, the South African government is currently implementing a project namely, the "Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) of 2002". The project will tackle food insecurity in the country by gaining access to agricultural productive resources; creating income and job opportunities to enhance their power to purchase food; having access to state provided relief measures that may be short to medium-term and on a sustained basis, depending on the nature of given interventions, particularly where the group is unable to access sufficient food because of disability or extreme destitute conditions; and ensuring that there is a continuous

monitoring and evaluation of food security and nutrition status in the country (www.agis.agric.za).

It is against the above background that this study was undertaken in DARD to assess the level of dissatisfaction of the community with regard to public services; determine community participation in the DARD's programmes and propose recommendations that will assist in improving the provision of services to the community. The main objectives of the study are to understand first-hand the current level of service delivery by KZN's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, determine the attitude of DARD officials towards service delivery, highlight compliance with Batho Pele, which is a requirement in ensuring quality service delivery, and determine the challenges and constraints to effective public service delivery to the community.

## Research Methodology

The researcher used a mixed methods strategy in order to address the research objectives, since "triangulation provides richer data by exposing information that might have remained undiscovered if a single approach was used" (Shaidi, 2013:23). The qualitative methodology was appropriate because it sought to explore a phenomenon (Shaidi, 2013:23) and gain a rich and complex understanding of a specific social context or phenomenon (Bernard, 1995).

The quantitative data was collected from Group A and C through a self-administered questionnaire which comprised scaled questions.

## Sample and sampling

This study used purposive sampling (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010) for the qualitative data collection and for the quantitative data, stratified random sampling was used. The qualitative data was obtained from executive management (Deputy Director Generals and Chief Directors) and Management (Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, Supervisors) and other officials, namely Extension Officers and Production Clerks.

## Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted among 25 participants so as to eliminate unnecessary questions and refine the questionnaire, to have realistic and relevant questions. The pilot study involved "a process of testing the instrument used for measuring among a

small number of subjects who have similar characteristics to those that are used in the main study itself. This also demonstrated whether the question or instructions are clearly understood and the relevance of the various questions" (Ngobese 2011).

The pilot study showed whether or not the respondents understood the questions in the questionnaire, and this led to reformulation of certain questions, after the pilot study.

## Data Collection

An interview schedule comprising a set of questions was used to collect the qualitative data (Kumar, 2011:46) through focus group interviews. One focus group comprised the Deputy Director Generals, Chief Directors, Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, and Production Staff members. The following questions were posed to this group:

- Is the strategic plan of the Department in place?
- Do you understand your role and responsibilities are as per the requirements in the strategic plan of the Department?
- What do you understand by customer satisfaction and customer orientation?
- Are there any measures available in the Department to assist staff in customer satisfaction and customer orientation?
- Who are your clients and what are your expectations in satisfying your clients?
- Does the Department have a communication strategy?
- Are you conversant with the term "BATHO PELE"?
- Have you attended BATHO PELE training programme/s?
- Do you have any other information pertaining to service delivery that you would like to bring to the attention of the researcher?

Another focus group consisted of Farmers, Farmers Associations and Farmers Unions. The structured questions used with this focus group included the following:

- Are you aware of services offered by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development? If not, what are your service expectations?
- Does the Department formally introduce any specialist officials operating within your area? If not, explain any current consultation?
- Are you conversant with the Department's service standards?
- Does the Department involve you in decision making regarding services?
- How is your relationship with officials and the Department?
- Is there any relevant memorandum of understanding or agreement duly signed with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development? If yes, does the Department comply? If not, what measures did you take to enforce the agreement?
- Do you have any other information pertaining to service delivery that you would like to bring to the attention of the researcher?

## Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analysed…………

The quantitative data was analysed using the SPSS software to conduct Chi-square tests to test for relations amongst categorical variables and the T-test for comparisons of the mean scores between different groups.

## Research Findings

## Quantitative Data

A total of 66 questionnaire were distributed to participants, and all were returned to the researcher filled which provided a 100% response rate. The Cronbach's alpha score of all the (nine) items that constituted the questionnaire for the quantitative study was 0.927, which confirms reliability, since a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as "*acceptable*" (Cronbach 1951).

Table 1 presents the results of "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin" Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity Test. The KMO requirement is a value greater than .50 and Bartlett's Test should be less than 0.05 (Spearman, 1904). The results in

Table 1 reveal that all the conditions are satisfied for factor analysis, since the KMO value is .865 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity significance value is .000 which is less than 0.05.

**TABLE 1:  KMO and Bartlett's Test**

| "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy". | | .865 |
|---|---|---|
| "Bartlett's Test of Sphericity" | Approx. Chi-Square | 468. 624 |
| | Df | 36 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

The results of the factor analysis procedure is reflected in Table 2.

**TABLE 2: Rotated Component Matrix**

| | Component | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 |
| 1.Is the strategic plan of the Department in place? | .249 | .897 |
| 2.Do you understand your role and responsibilities as per the requirements in the strategic plan of the Department? | .133 | .947 |
| 3.Do you understand customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | .442 | .804 |
| 4. Are there any measures available in the Department to assist staff in customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | .808 | .330 |
| 5. Do you know your clients and your expectations in providing services? | .773 | -.025 |
| 6. Does the Department have a communication strategy? | .653 | .561 |
| 7. Are you conversant with the term "BATHO PELE" | .697 | .494 |
| 8. Have you attended "BATHO PELE" training programme/s | .695 | .507 |
| 9. Do you have enough supporting tools which enables you to provide services to your clients? | .752 | .343 |

Table 2 reflects the results of the factor analysis procedure using Principle Component Analysis as the extraction method and the Kaiser Normalization rotation method. It is evident from Table 2 that the items loaded on two factors/ variables.

**Demographics**

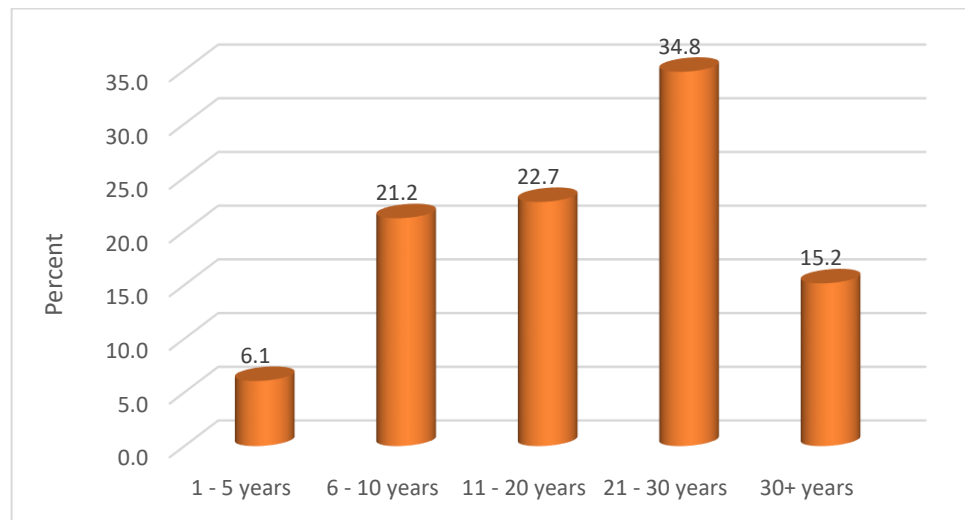Figure 1 depicts the length of service of the participants.

**FIGURE 1: The Length of Service**



Figure 1 indicates that 94% of the respondents have been in employment for more than 5 years, which implies that responses were from experienced workers, for example 34.8% of respondents are 21-30 years in service.

**TABLE 3: Scoring Patterns to Statements**

| | "Strongly Disagree" | | "Disagree" | | "Neutral" | | Agree | | "Strongly Agree" | | "Chi Square" |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | "Row N %" | Count | "Row N %" | Count | "Row N %" | Count | "Row N %" | Count | Row N % | "p-value" |
| Is the strategic plan of the Department in place? | 8 | 12.1% | 7 | 10.6% | 19 | 28.8% | 22 | 33.3% | 10 | 15.2% | 0.007 |
| Do you understand your role and responsibilities as per the requirements in the strategic plan of the Department? | 12 | 18.2% | 9 | 13.6% | 15 | 22.7% | 22 | 33.3% | 8 | 12.1% | 0.048 |
| Do you understand customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | 8 | 12.1% | 11 | 16.7% | 16 | 24.2% | 23 | 34.8% | 8 | 12.1% | 0.015 |
| Are there any measures available in the Department to assist staff in customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | 9 | 13.6% | 15 | 22.7% | 19 | 28.8% | 19 | 28.8% | 4 | 6.1% | 0.011 |
| Do you know your clients and your expectations in providing services? | 5 | 7.6% | 3 | 4.5% | 6 | 9.1% | 45 | 68.2% | 7 | 10.6% | 0.000 |

| Does the Department have a communication strategy? | 10 | 15.2% | 7 | 10.6% | 18 | 27.3% | 23 | 34.8% | 8 | 12.1% | 0.005 |
| Are you conversant with the term "BATHO PELE" | 7 | 10.6% | 6 | 9.1% | 6 | 9.1% | 31 | 47.0% | 16 | 24.2% | 0.000 |
| Have you attended "BATHO PELE" training programme/s | 9 | 13.6% | 12 | 18.2% | 6 | 9.1% | 28 | 42.4% | 11 | 16.7% | 0.000 |
| Do you have enough supporting tools which enables you to provide services to your clients? | 11 | 16.7% | 22 | 33.3% | 10 | 15.2% | 16 | 24.2% | 7 | 10.6% | 0.033 |
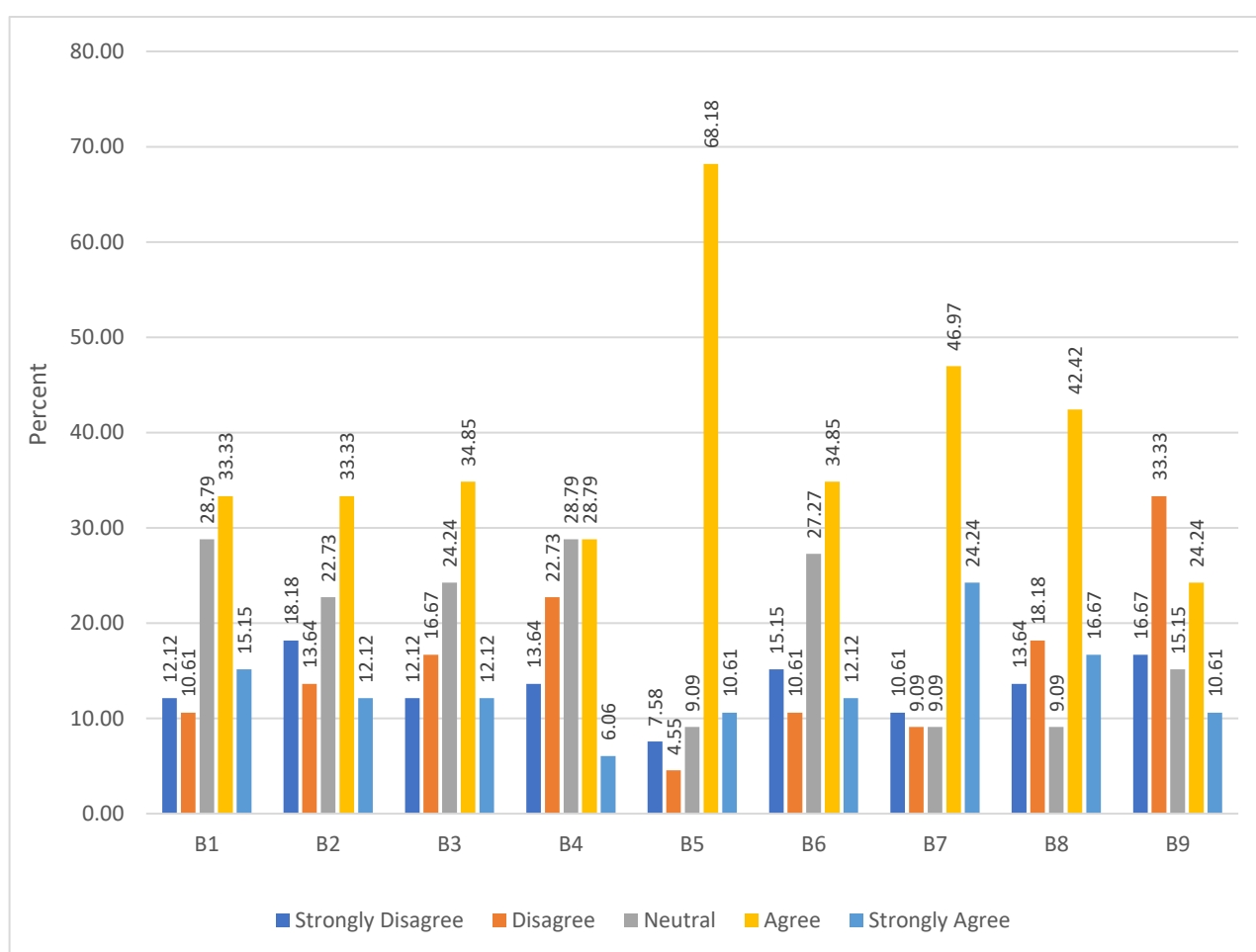


Table 3 and Figure 2 indicate that in some sections of the questions/statements there are variations of scoring patterns which influenced the outcome. All the questions/statements reflects significant differences as the p-values Chi Square method were less than the level of significance of 0.05. Notwithstanding that they were slightly different numerically, were not different statistically or significantly. It is also observed that for some questions/-statements there is a show of significantly higher levels of agreement whilst for other the levels of agreement are lower.

Figure 4.4 indicates that B2 and B9 have a significant difference. The factor analysis shows that the following three questions/ statements form a sub-theme, i.e.

B5: Do you know your clients and your expectations in providing services?

B7: Are you conversant with the term "BATHO PELE"?

B8: Have you attended "BATHO PELE" training programme/s?

Seemingly, there are high levels of agreement in relation to this sub-theme which is "Batho Pele". It is evident that these statements relate to the Batho Pele and the understanding of the term and training thereof. It is evident that the other statements focus on the Strategic plan and customer satisfaction. "To determine whether the scoring patterns per statement were significantly different per option, a chi square test was conducted. The null hypothesis claims that similar numbers of respondents scored across each option for each statement, one statement at a time. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a significant difference between the levels of agreement and disgreement".

The highlighted significant values (p-values) are less than 0.05 (the level of significance), which implies that the distributions were not similar. That is, the differences between the way respondents scored (Agree, Neutral, Disagree,) were significant. Table 4.7 indicates the Pearson Chi-Square Tests.

### TABLE 4.7: Pearson Chi-Square Tests Results

| | | Age Group (In Years) | Home Language | Gender | Highest Grade Passed | Highest Tertiary Qualification | Service Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is the strategic plan of the Department in place? | Chi-square | 16.465 | 10.038 | 4.948 | 43.642 | 21.446 | 16.460 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.171 | 0.613 | 0.293 | .002* | 0.162 | 0.421 |
| Do you understand your role and responsibilities as per the requirements in the strategic plan of the Department? | Chi-square | 14.815 | 14.518 | 5.792 | 39.025 | 20.707 | 18.905 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.252 | 0.269 | 0.215 | .007* | 0.19 | 0.274 |
| Do you understand customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | Chi-square | 12.350 | 13.998 | 7.124 | 42.262 | 18.317 | 24.577 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.418 | 0.301 | 0.129 | .003* | 0.306 | 0.078 |
| Are there any measures available in the Department to assist staff in customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | Chi-square | 18.450 | 15.519 | 5.354 | 57.293 | 28.096 | 24.066 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.103 | 0.214 | 0.253 | .000* | .031* | 0.088 |

| Do you know your clients and your expectations in providing services? | Chi-square | 20.346 | 14.118 | 10.025 | 62.479 | 16.839 | 14.585 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.061 | 0.293 | .040* | .000* | 0.396 | 0.555 |
| Does the Department have a communication strategy? | Chi-square | 14.329 | 20.439 | 6.010 | 37.030 | 20.934 | 15.267 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.28 | 0.059 | 0.198 | .012* | 0.181 | 0.505 |
| Are you conversant with the term "BATHO PELE" | Chi-square | 22.832 | 15.426 | 4.476 | 54.776 | 16.552 | 14.988 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 12 | 16 |
| | Sig. | .029* | 0.219 | 0.345 | .000* | 0.167 | 0.526 |
| Have you attended "BATHO PELE" training programme/s | Chi-square | 16.606 | 14.359 | 9.496 | 47.276 | 22.576 | 17.035 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.165 | 0.278 | .050* | .001* | 0.126 | 0.383 |
| Do you have enough supporting tools which enables you to provide services to your clients? | Chi-square | 14.679 | 14.658 | 9.106 | 35.469 | 15.689 | 20.407 |
| | df | 12 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 16 |
| | Sig. | 0.259 | 0.261 | 0.058 | .018* | 0.475 | 0.202 |

Table 4.7 indicates that the traditional approach to reporting, a result requires a statement of statistical significance. A *p-value* is generated from a test statistic. A significant result is indicated with" "*p<0.05*" (Pearson 1900). These values are highlighted with a *. Also another chi-square test was peformed "to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables which is rows versus columns.

The null hypothesis states that there is no association between two variables, and the alternate hypothesis indicates that there is an association. The p-value between "*Highest Grade Passed*" and "*Is the strategic plan of the Department in place*?" is 0.002, which means that there is a significant relationship between the variables highlighted in yellow. That is, the grade of the respondents did play a significant role in terms of how respondents viewed the strategic plan being in place. Thus, all values without an * or "p-values more than 0.05 do not have a significant relationship".

The table 4.8 reflects the correlations between questions/ statements.

**TABLE 4.8:  CORRELATIONS**

| | | Is the strategic plan of the Department in place? | Do you understand your role and responsibilities as per the requirements in the strategic plan of the Department? | Do you understand customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | Are there any measures available in the Department to assist staff in customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | Do you know your clients and your expectations in providing services? | Does the Department have a communication strategy? | Are you conversant with the term "BATHO PELE" | Have you attended "BATHO PELE" training programme/s | Do you have enough supporting tools which enables you to provide services to your clients? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is the strategic plan of the Department in place? | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | | | |
| | N | 66 | | | | | | | | |
| Do you understand your role and responsibilities as per the requirements in the strategic plan of the Department? | Correlation Coefficient | .834** | 1.000 | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | | | | | | | | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | | | | | | | |
| Do you understand customer | Correlation Coefficient | .726** | .814** | 1.000 | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| satisfaction and customer orientation? | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | | | | | | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | | | | | |
| Are there any measures available in the Department to assist staff in customer satisfaction and customer orientation? | Correlation Coefficient | .494** | .404** | .632** | 1.000 | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | | | | | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | | | | |
| Do you know your clients and your expectations in providing services? | Correlation Coefficient | 0.140 | 0.078 | .308* | .458** | 1.000 | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.261 | 0.534 | 0.012 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | | | |
| Does the Department have a communication strategy? | Correlation Coefficient | .627** | .546** | .687** | .669** | .426** | 1.000 | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | | | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | | |
| Are you conversant with the term "BATHO PELE" | Correlation Coefficient | .528** | .449** | .569** | .678** | .354** | .609** | 1.000 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.004 | 0.000 | | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | |
| Have you attended "BATHO PELE" training programme/s | Correlation Coefficient | .580** | .552** | .615** | .653** | .357** | .689** | .734** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.003 | 0.000 | 0.000 | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 |

| Do you have enough supporting tools which enables you to provide services to your clients? | Correlation Coefficient | .429** | .433** | .597** | .613** | .374** | .663** | .698** | .684** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.002 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 |

Table 4.8 reports the bivariate correlations that were performed on the ordinal or data. The results indicate the patterns that suggest the positive values which indicates a directly proportional relationship between the variables and a negative value indicate an inverse relationship. All significant relationships are indicated by a * or **. The correlation value between statements, i.e., "**Are there any measures available in the Department to assist staff in customer satisfaction and customer orientation?**" and "**Does the Department have a communication strategy?**" is **0.669**. Respondents indicate that the greater the presence of a department strategy, the more customer satisfaction and customer orientation can be achieved and vice versa. The other correlation value between statements are "**Have you attended BATHO PELE training programme/s?**" and "**Do you have enough supporting tools which enables you to provide services to your clients?**" is **0.684\*\***. It is therefore indicates that the greater the BATHO PELE training programme, the more enough tools to provide services and vice versa.

**Discussion of the findings**

**The Strategic Plan of the Department**

Louw and Venter (2007:15) posit that "strategy as a plan provides an overall direction and a course of action which is then effected via organizational layers, structure and control systems. This approach seeks to reach a match or link amongst the internal organizational capabilities and external possibilities, forming the basis of the resource-based and dynamic capabilities perspectives". It was abundantly clear that most officials from the age groups of 36-45 and 56+ agreed that there is strategic planning. It was noted that 70% of respondents with Post Graduate qualification agreed, which is a clear indication that respondents who possessed Post Graduate and other qualifications might be in management positions and also form part of strategic planning team.

What is also noticeable on the basis of the service experienced is that only 50% of respondents having 30+ experience in the Department agreed and, 50% of respondents with 1-5 years of work experience were neutral.

Future strategies are centred on the adaptation of prior strategies, "collective experience of individuals and the way of doing things embedded in the cultural web of the Department". It is a product of the minds and ideologies of individuals, groups and management in the Department. "Resolving different views and experiences requires negotiation and bargaining. In other words, the extent to which the strategic link is attained between the organization and its competitive environment is meditated by how the individuals and management interpret the internal resources and capabilities with the environment. As a perspective, strategy looks inside the organization and upwards toward the strategic purpose, intent and direction of the Department" (Louw & Venter, 2007:16).

It is therefore clear that the strategic plan as a strategic tool for strategic direction has impacted or been made known to officials in the Department. However, it can be assumed that some officials are in the management positions which will be ideal for them to share the information with their counterparts. Capacitating and nurturing lower level officials will assist to build future leaders.

## Roles and Responsibilities as per Strategic Planning

It is very crucial that all officials should understand their roles and responsibilities in implementing strategy. The officials should feature in all strategies and this should be made known to them not only to be confronted with predetermined 'Mission and Vision' without substantive ideology or reasons behind the plan. Grant, (1991) cited by Louw and Venter (2007:16), points out that "the acceptance of resources and capabilities as the foundation of strategy rests on one important premise; resources and capabilities can determine the strategic direction of the organization". To understand the distinctive resources and capabilities can help the organization to determine what it is capable of doing, rather than focusing on what its current business is. It was noted that 50% of the respondents who were in the 30+ work experience and 70% of respondents with Post Graduate qualifications did understand their roles and responsibilities.

It is noticeable that there is a wide gap between the different categories or levels of officials with regard to understanding of pertaining their roles and responsibilities.

Implementation of successful strategies depends on strategic management as the crucial player in the execution involving all stakeholders in the Department.

## Understanding Customer Satisfaction and Orientation

This is very important in the service delivery, since understanding customer satisfaction and orientation contributes in the strategic direction of the Department. It was noted that 100% of respondents who have Grade 9, 80% of respondents with Grade 0-7 and 67% of respondents with Grade 10 strongly disagreed to understand customer satisfaction and orientation and only 100% of those with Grade 12 agreed to understand the customer satisfaction and orientation.

Irrespective of the level of education, through operating in different levels, it must be obviously clear that the role of service delivery will remain a key to link all categories. Also, 50% of respondents with tertiary qualification and 66.7% of respondents who have other qualifications agreed with the understanding of customer satisfaction and orientation. Surprisingly, 75.0% of respondents

with 1-5 years of experience agreed to understand customer satisfaction and orientation. This indicates that the Department has to look at the different levels in the organization to ensure that everyone is on board and understands what is expected of them.

### Measures available to assist staff in customer satisfaction and orientation

The Department should ensure that conducive environment exists in which staff members perform their duties, which includes the allocation of resources or tools to perform. Based on the findings, 100% of respondents with Grade 0-7, 100% of respondents with Grade 9 and 50% of respondents with Grade 10 strongly disagreed that there are measures available to assist in customer satisfaction and orientation. But 50% of respondents with Grade 8 strongly agreed that there are measures available to assist in customer satisfaction and orientation. This reflects the level of understanding and what is expected of them, which must be rectified by the Department. Officials with degrees disagreed that there are measures available to assist in customer satisfaction and orientation which means there are no processes and procedures in place to assist them with customer satisfaction and orientation. If there are no measures in place, it means there is no synergy that interrelates with all levels within the system. The culture of operating in silos can be a contributory factor in this instance; therefore, the Department should address it.

Kaul (1996:143-144) emphasised that "customers are so important that they have to be consulted continuously and proposes that the public service training programmes should include customer care training, including courtesy and complaints handling".

### Knowing the clients and their expectations when providing services

It is important to know your clients and their expectation when rendering services. This will be a determining factor with regard to the output. The analysis revealed that 80% of respondents at the age of 18-35 years, 75.0% of respondents aged 35-45 years, 67.9% of respondents aged 46-55 years and 50.0% of respondents aged 56+ effectively agreed to know their clients and their expectations in providing services. It was indicated that 79.4% of the male respondents agreed to know their clients and expectations when providing the services and 56.3% female respondents also agreed to know their clients and expectations when providing services. On the basis of highest grade passed, it was

confirmed that 80.0% of the respondents with Grade 0-7 and 57% of respondents with Grade 9 strongly agreed to know their clients and expectations when providing the services.

Clearly, staff members know their clients and will assist in ensuring the attainment of the goals or objectives of the Department. With regard to respondents with highest tertiary qualification, 87, 5% with certificates, 53.3% with diplomas, 84, 6% with degrees and 80.0% with post graduate degree agreed, whereas 50.0% with other qualification strongly agreed to know their clients and expectations when providing the services. These results look convincing in that staff in all levels understand their responsibilities. There is support that can be nurtured for future developments.

## Communication Strategy

Communication is one of the tools that can be used to either market strategies or as an internal control measure within the Department. On the basis of home language, 100% of respondents who speak other languages disagreed with the statement which stated that there is communication strategy in the Department, 58.3% of respondents who speak English were neutral and 35.4% who speak isiZulu agreed. Only 70.0% of respondents with post graduate qualifications agreed on the availability of the communication strategy. It may be concluded that there is a challenge with the communication strategy in the Department. "There is need for correct and impartial reporting, as this reinforces the climate of openness and public accountability. Information should be provided in a way that is most suited to the requirements of the specific users of a service and at intervals most opportune and beneficial to these users" (Kaul, 1996:149).

### Understanding the term "BATHO PELE"

The term 'Batho Pele' is the signature term in government services which comes with a lot of responsibilities and commitments. The term cannot be used in isolation but in conjunction with all relevant prescripts applicable to government service. It is crucial that all staff members understand the term "BATHO PELE" which is obviously a part of the orientation programme.

The results confirmed that 80% of respondents with Grade 0-7, 50% with Grade 8, and 100% with Grade 9 strongly agreed that they understand the term. Furthermore, of the respondents, 62.5% with

certificates and 70% of respondents with post graduate qualifications also agreed.

On the basis of experience, 60.0% of respondents with 11-20 years of service experience, 50% respondents with 30+ experience agreed to understand the term. It is clear that the Department has sensitized the staff members about the term and its importance. The orientation programme has made a significant impact to service entrants in the Department.

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995), was "to establish a policy framework to guide the introduction and implementation of new policies aimed at transforming the South African public service". The policy set out eight (8) transformation priorities which are "***Consultation, Service Standards, Access, Courtesy, Information, Openness and Transparency, Redress*** and ***Value for Money***," amongst which Transforming Service Delivery is regarded as key. The policy also declares that Public Service should be:

- People-centric
- People MUST come first
- BATHO PELE "A better life for all

The Department developed an additional three (3) transformation priorities which are "***Encouraging Innovation and Rewarding Excellence, Service Delivery Impact and Leadership and Strategic Direction***".

Furthermore, the Department developed the following ethical principles:

- Honesty and Integrity
- Professional behaviour
- Competence
- Objectivity
- Confidentiality
- Fair business practices
- Responsibility to society
- Respect and fair treatment
- Accountability and decision-making.

The Department has taken positive action to ensure the commitment of staff members to service delivery. This positive approach may assist to develop the culture of accountability and responsibility to stakeholders.

### Attending "BATHO PELE" Training Programme/s

The service delivery must also be aligned to the "Batho Pele principles". The operations in the Department, public service in particular, are guided by Batho Pele. It was indicated that 52.9% of male respondents as opposed to 31.3% of the female respondents agreed to have attended training programme. The attention should be drawn that 80.0% of respondents with Grade 0-7 and 100% with Grade 9 strongly disagreed to have attended the programme. With regards to highest tertiary education, 62.5% of respondents with certificates, 61.5% with diplomas, and 70% with degrees agreed to have attended the training programme.

The importance of officials attending the Batho Pele programme will avoid the challenges of not understanding their roles and responsibilities when providing services to the communities.

### Supporting tools to enable officials to provide services

In order for the officials to perform their task they require supporting tools. It was ascertained that the vast majority 80% of the respondents with Grade 0-7 strongly agreed to have supporting tools at their disposal to perform their work. Surprisingly, 50% of respondents with Certificates and 50% with Degrees disagreed implying that they did not have the necessary supporting tools. According to service experience, it became clear that 50.0% of respondents with 1-5 years of experience and 53.3% of respondents with 11-20 years of experience disagreed to have supporting tools. The Department clearly has officials who are not performing their duties due to not having the requisite supporting tools.

### To understand first-hand, the current level of service delivery by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

It became evident that there are challenges in respect of service delivery stemming from inter-alia, red tape in the provision of services. Although understanding strategic planning as a tool which provides a strategic direction is crucial, it was clear that a lack of understanding resulted in more challenges being faced by the officials and management and also in respect of roles and responsibilities in the Department. Although, Departmental operational systems are in place, they lack the proper implementation. Considering the necessity of communicating the services to

stakeholders, it has become an issue because the communication strategy is not articulated properly.

**To determine the attitude of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development officials towards service delivery**

DARD officials who were interviewed admitted that they do not have enough tools to perform their functions effectively. It was ascertained during farmers' interviews that the visibility of Extension Officers and agricultural scientists had become a problem, which will compromise the integrity of the Department enshrined in Service Delivery Improvement Plan and the Commitment Charter. Knowing clients and their expectations should play a significant role to ensure that the service rendered has an impact on the community. Lack of support from the Departmental officials was evident, since there are no measures available to assist Officials in attaining the objectives of the department. It was also clear that the officials from the department, at the coal face of the service delivery, have necessary support to carry out their functions effectively. However, there is willingness to change in attitude in providing effective and efficient services to the clients.

### To highlight compliance with Batho Pele which is a requirement in ensuring quality service delivery

The respondents indicated that they do not understand the term "*Batho Pele*", and have not been provided with requisite training on the programme. It should be a matter of importance that the Batho Pele programme must be the driving philosophy of all public service delivery.

### To determine the challenges and constraints to effective public service delivery to the community

The relevance of team work, interaction, and determination will contribute to the effectiveness of the Department. The respondents were quite clear about the lack of supporting tools, unavailability of measures available and the unconducive environment to perform their duties. Whilst the respondents "are at the coal face of the service" delivery, the commitments by political leaders to stakeholders has contributed to the challenges faced by the Departmental Officials.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations are based on the findings presented in chapter 4:

- Training and orientation of staff on customer service in the Batho Pele programme is needed.
- Deployment of Extension Officers per ward is necessary, especially in rural areas. Due to the size of each ward, it should be ensured that each Extension Officer is responsible for one ward.
- Stakeholders should be involved in decision making to avoid break-down of trust.
- Staff should be provided with the relevant tools, enabling them to perform the duties effectively and efficiently.
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation of projects should be improved.
- Public participation regarding the services rendered by the Department should be improved.
- Credible forums which will serve as a communication platform should be established.
- Improvement of internal and external communication channels is needed.

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