LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE: A SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDY

by

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (safe to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

Leaders in public sector departments in South Africa operate in an environment that is different from that in which private sector departments operate. They also have an array of challenges, but still they are expected to perform and deliver a public service that makes a positive contribution to the lives of the people that that they lead as well as the lives of the citizens they provide the service to. With the service delivery protests and the outcry from the South African public for public leaders to become more accountable and effective, the researcher became interested in the effect that leadership may or may not have on the performance of an organisation.

The Department of Environmental Affairs, Branch: Environmental Programmes (EP Branch) is used as a case study to explore the concepts of leadership and performance. The purpose of this study is to explore the possible effect leadership has on organisational performance at the EP Branch, coupled with an investigation into the challenges faced by the organisation, whilst simultaneously aiming to find ideas to suggest how performance could be improved. Furthermore, the study attempts to identify a desired leadership style for improved performance at the EP Branch.

A case study design and a methodology that include a descriptive survey, a desktop review, and interviews to collect primary and secondary data are employed to do the fieldwork. The methods used include a self-administered questionnaire, desk study of internal documents, and informal one-on-one meetings, used under each of the methodologies employed. The desk review and interviews are used to collect secondary data that is held by the organisation, whilst the questionnaire is used to collect primary data by testing the knowledge and perceptions held by the research participants. A total of 19 out of the sample population of 22 senior managers participated in the survey. The responses to closed-ended questions on the survey questionnaire are analysed by using Statistica 13, computer software used by Stellenbosch University’s online survey services, whilst the responses to open-ended questions are analysed by using themes and summaries to explain and describe the response.

The findings of the study show that leadership style does have an effect on organisational performance. However, the findings show that challenges faced by the organisation can influence the performance capacity of the organisation. Furthermore, the context in which the organisation functions and in which the leader leads can also impact on the organisation’s overall performance. Lastly, the findings show that participative leadership as well as a

combination of different leadership styles are mostly demonstrated at the EP Branch. These styles are found to be conducive to organisational performance.

Owing to time constraints, the study was limited to only senior managers, thereby excluding the knowledge and perceptions held by junior and middle managers. Also, the employee's personal performance was not taken into account as the focus was on the organisation's overall performance. These limitations could possibly become future research projects.

Opsomming

Leiers in openbare sektor-departemente in Suid-Afrika werk in ’n omgewing wat verskil van privaatsektordepartemente. Hulle staar ook ’n versameling uitdagings in die gesig, maar steeds word daar van hulle verwag om te presteer en ’n openbare diens te lewer wat ’n positiewe bydrae tot die mense wat hulle lei se lewens maak, asook tot die lewens van die burgers aan wie hulle die diens lewer. Na aanleiding van die diensleweringsproteste en uitroep deur die Suid-Afrikaanse publiek vir openbare leiers om meer verantwoordbaar en effektief te wees, het die navorser geïnteresseerd geraak in die effek wat leierskap mag of nie mag hê op die prestasie van ’n organisasie nie.

Die Departement van Omgewingsake, Tak: Omgewingsprogramme (OP Tak) is gebruik as gevallestudie om die verskynsels van leierskap en prestasie te ondersoek. Die doel van die studie is om die moontlike effek wat leierskap op organisasieprestasie in die OP Tak het, saam met ’n gepaardgaande ondersoek na die uitdagings wat die organisasie in die gesig staar, te ondersoek terwyl daar tegelykertyd na idees gesoek word om voor te stel hoe prestasie verbeter kan word. Die studie poog verder om die verlangde leierskapstyl vir verbeterde prestasie in die OP Tak te identifiseer.

’n Gevalliestudie-ontwerp en ’n metodologie wat ’n beskrywende opname, ’n lessenaarondersoek, en onderhoude insluit, is gebruik om die veldwerk te doen. Die instrumente wat gebruik is, sluit ’n self-geadministreerde vraelys, lessenaarstudie van interne dokumente, en informele een-tot-een onderhoude in wat as deel van elke metodologie aangewend is. Die lessenaarondersoek en onderhoude word gebruik om sekondêre data wat deur die organisasie gehou word te versamel, terwyl die vraelys gebruik word om primêre data te versamel deur die kennis en sienings van die deelnemers te toets. A totaal van 19 uit 22 senior bestuurders het aan die opname deelgeneem. Die reaksies op geslote-tipe vrae is deur Statistica 13 geanaliseer, rekenaarprogrammatuur wat deur die Universiteit Stellenbosch se aanlyn-opnamedienste gebruik word, terwyl die reaksies op oop-tipe vrae geanaliseer was deur temas en opsommings om die reaksie te verduidelik en te beskryf.

Die studie toon dat leierskapstyl wel ’n effek het op organisasieprestasie. Die bevinding toon egter aan dat die uitdagings wat deur die organisasie in die gesig gestaar word die prestasiekapasiteit van die organisasie kan beïnvloed. Verder kan die konteks waarbinne die organisasie funksioneer en waarbinne die leier lei ook ’n impak op die organisasie se

oorkoepelende prestasie hê. Laastens toon die bevindinge dat die OP Tak meestal deelnemende leierskap asook ’n kombinasie van leierskapstyle demonstreer. Hierdie style word as bevorderlik vir organisasieprestasie bevind.

Weens tydbeperkings is die studie tot slegs senior bestuurders beperk en gevolglik is die kennis en sienings van junior en middelvlak-bestuurders uitgesluit. Verder is die werknemer se persoonlike prestasie nie in ag geneem nie, want die fokus was op die organisasie se oorkoepelende prestasie. Hierdie beperkings kan moontlik toekomstige navorsingsprojekte word.

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Lastly, to my "study buddies", and the staff and personnel at the School of Public Leadership, the Language Centre as well as Survey office at Stellenbosch University for their inspiration, assistance and friendship during the past two years.

Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to my Mom who passed away in July 2014, two days before I had to write my final examination in Leadership and Change Management. Also, in the words of Padi (2015) "this (thesis) is dedicated to all men and women who are tired of mediocrity and want to make a difference in their families, organisations, society, and the country. Like Mahatma Ghandi said: "Be the change you want to see". "Leadership starts with you and is within you" (Padi, 2015).

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List of abbreviations/acronyms

CD	: Chief Director
DDG	: Deputy Director General
DEA	: Department of Environmental Affairs
DPW	: Department of Public Works
DPME	: Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
EP	: Environmental Programmes
EPIP	: Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes
EPWP	: Expanded Public Works Programme
FTE	: Full-Time Equivalent
IMSC	: Information Management and Sector Coordination
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
NDP	: National Development Plan
NRM	: Natural Resource Management
ODDG	: Office of the DDG
RPL	: Regional Programme Leader
PPM	: Provincial Project Manager
UOA	: Unit of Analysis
WO	: Work Opportunity

Definitions/Glossary

Autocratic leadership style: The "autocratic leader retains almost all the power" and their leadership style is the complete opposite of the "participative leadership" style.

Charismatic leadership style: The "charismatic leader" has the charm and charisma "to convince" people "to follow" them and exerts the power to influence people to reach goals.

Consensus leadership style: The "consensus leader" encourages the group to discuss issues and base the final decision on "general agreement" which the group members will support.

Democratic leadership style: The "democratic leader confers final authority on the group" and simply collects the group opinion and "takes a vote before making a decision".

Full-Time Equivalent job refers to one person-year of employment. One person-year is equivalent to 230 person-days of work. Person-years of employment = total number of person-days of employment created for targeted labour during the year divided by 230. For task-related workers, tasks completed should be used as a proxy for 8 hours of work per day.

Leadership theory/approach: A discipline that focuses on finding out what make successful leaders excel in what they do.

Leadership style: The way in which the functions of leadership are carried out and the way in which the manager behaves towards members of a group.

Organisational performance: An analysis of an institution's performance as compared to goals and objectives.

Participative leadership style: The "participative leader" shares decision-making with group members and the leader and group members "work together to reach goals".

Primary data refers to new information that is gathered through the research process.

Secondary data refers to existing information that is gathered from books, articles and other documents.

Situational leadership style: The "situational leader" makes their behaviour "contingent on situational forces" (e.g. member characteristics, internal and external environments, changes, organisational culture).

Transformational leadership style: The "transformational leader" influences people "to look beyond their self-interest" and "to embrace change", and commits people to greatness.

Transactional leadership style: The transactional leader "transacts" (or negotiates) with the follower by exchanging reward for task completion.

Work Opportunity refers to paid work created for an individual on an EPWP project for any period of time. The same person can be employed on different projects and each period of employment will be counted as a job opportunity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is quite often that one finds the status of a friend or follower on social media to be rather cynical, but at the same time pretty thought-provoking. One such status indicated that

> we have the money, the power, the medical understanding, the scientific know-how, the love and the community to produce a kind of human paradise. But we are led by the least among us – the least intelligent, the least noble, the least visionary. We are led by the least among us and we do not fight back against the dehumanising values that are handed down as control icons (Terence McKenna, as seen on Facebook on 31 December 2015).

These kinds of statuses on the profiles of ordinary people are indicative of how critical people are about others that stand in leadership positions. It is an outcry for change and a desperate plea to remedy the wrong and the bad in a society where the potential to make good is within our reach.

During the course of the second half of 2015, allegations of bribery during the 2010 Soccer World Cup that made South Africa’s leadership seemed corrupt made headlines in newspapers around the world. In the latter part of 2015, students all over the country engaged in protest action against the fee increases at universities (the #FeesMustFall campaign), and, in the beginning of 2016, a huge “Zuma must fall” billboard was erected on the side of a residential building in Cape Town, South Africa. President Zuma shuffling three Finance Ministers in a time span of four days, the status of the economy on the brink of being downgraded to “junk” status, and service delivery protest actions *inter alia* were among a myriad of issues that had placed an enormous amount of pressure to change on public sector departments in South Africa. The latter often have to bear the brunt of vigorous negative criticism from the general public, whilst at the same time having to provide answers or solutions to these issues. Good leadership skills became of paramount importance in addressing these and other issues and in endeavours to change how public sector departments are ultimately perceived. Furthermore, as political leaders experience pressure from the general public, they, in turn, put pressure on public sector departments to perform their functions. This pressure increases with fewer and fewer available resources (The School of Public Leadership, 2016).

Although the concept of leadership has been studied for generations, there is still a degree of confusion in the minds of many people who lead others (or those that are being led by others) about what leadership really means and what it encompasses. Burns (as cited in Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 4) purports that "the study of leadership has become fragmented and … even trivialised" whilst others argue that "the endless accumulation of empirical data has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership" (Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 47).

According to Franks (2014: 55), the South African Public Service requires public service expertise of high standards and a legal framework to ensure accountability and ethical behaviour among public leaders. Although public sector departments have moved towards the appointment of competent senior managers (Mansfield as cited in Bhatta, 2001: 195), there are still many challenges that public leaders face that may have an effect on how they perform in the workplace. According to Schwella (2008: 31) public leaders face challenges of "globalisation, complex problems, economic inequality, gender inequality, diversity, good governance, capacity, and administrative reform". However, it is still believed that leaders have the power to make decisions that influence how organisations perform. McKee, Johnston and Massimilian (2006: 1–6), on the one hand, contend that resonant leaders, for example, create environments, and encourage and motivate their followers to improve their overall performance. On the other hand, Chong (2007: 212) argues that in order to enhance organisational performance, the leader should know how to build high-performing teams within the organisation.

The question of whether there is proof that it is indeed the skills, competencies or behaviours of leaders that result in good performance or whether the good performance may be attributed to other factors, such as teamwork, remains. Similarly, the question of what constitutes good performance and how an organisation improves its overall performance also remains. According to Bass (1995: 463–478), "leadership is effective if followers achieve their goals or meet their needs as a consequence of successful leadership".

Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore and generate knowledge on leadership and its possible effect on how a selected public sector department has performed.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Considering the performance of the Environmental Programmes Branch of the National Department of Environmental Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the "EP Branch") over the past two financial years, as well as the strategic objectives set, the question of how much the leadership skills of the senior managers responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these strategic objectives affect the performance of the organisation springs to mind. Other questions that arise relate to whether it is indeed leadership opposed to other factors that may or may not influence organisational performance. The EP Branch has undergone various changes since 2012, for which purpose a change management process was initiated in order to assist staff with their transition into a "new" department. An external service provider was appointed to drive and facilitate this change management process. The EP Branch has since then made huge strides in implementing its mandate. This study is interested in finding out what the leadership of the EP Branch had to deal with and whether leadership had anything to do with the overall performance of the Branch. In a study by Scott (2014), it was found and recommended that senior members of management at the EP Branch should familiarise themselves with the characteristics of leadership styles and suggested that staff needed to be motivated more to reach their goals, become closer to each other, and in the process become contributing members of high-performing teams in the organisation. Since then, more changes have taken place to try and improve alignment and synergy within the functions of the EP Branch. Furthermore, amongst other challenges, the EP Branch has been grappling with proper data management, a challenge that was perceived to have had a debilitating effect on the capacity of the organisation to do adequate and timeous reporting, which ultimately affected its performance ratings (Willemse, 2015).

In the next section, the above-mentioned is translated into a research goal statement and question with interlinking research objectives.

1.3 RESEARCH GOAL STATEMENT

As mentioned, the goal of this research is to explore the concept of leadership and its possible effect on organisational performance at the EP Branch. It is an exploratory study that aims to generate knowledge and understanding and no assumptions are made about any of the research variables. However, a research question has been formulated, with objectives to find answers to the research question.

Research Question

Flowing from the motivation for this study, the question to be answered reads as follows:

- Does leadership style have an effect on the overall performance of the EP Branch?

Research Sub-question

- What are the challenges and how can the organisation improve its performance?

Research Objectives

In order to answer the research question, the objectives of the study include the following:

- To understand and describe the characteristics of different leadership approaches and styles;
- To explore the challenges or debilitating factors of performance at the EP Branch,
- To establish the possible effect leadership may have on organisational performance at the EP Branch,
- To suggest how organisational performance could be improved, if necessary; and
- To identify a desired leadership style for improved performance at the EP Branch.

It is envisaged that the findings of the study will, firstly, contribute to a better understanding of the concept of leadership and leadership styles. Secondly, is presumed that the findings will confirm whether leadership does have an effect on the performance of the organisation. Thirdly, the findings are expected to provide an understanding of the importance of good organisational performance. Lastly, the findings are supposed to confirm whether there is a particular leadership style that is conducive to good performance at the EP Branch.

In order to investigate the research question and objectives, a particular framework (design) and methodology in terms of which the research will be undertaken are presented in the next section.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

With the aim of answering the research question, the research design that is used to gather appropriate answers is a case study research design, which is qualitative in nature. This design is the most appropriate one to assist in gathering evidence and data to answer the research question.

Research methodology and data collection

The research methodology for the case study is based on the type of questions and how the data is to be collected. Under the case study design, a descriptive survey, a desk review and interviews were used as methods to collect primary and secondary data. This is explained further in the next paragraph.

Primary data:

In order to collect primary data, a survey methodology will be used, with a questionnaire as the method of collection. The questionnaire will be developed with the aim of exploring knowledge and perceptions held by the participants about leadership, leadership styles, and whether they believe that leadership has an effect on the performance of the organisation. This semi-structured, self-administered questionnaire will be presented to the participants via a computer link that will direct them to a website where they have to complete the questionnaire.

Secondary data:

Secondary data will be collected through the desk review and interviews. The desk review will be used to study the Strategic Plans and Annual Reports of the past two financial years (2014/15 and 2015/16), as well as internal documents of the organisation. The interview method will be used to have informal one-on-one meetings with key staff members at the organisation to learn about the staff and challenges faced by the organisation.

Undertaking this research study required that some ethical issues had to be considered. These ethical considerations are described next.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research design and methodology chosen for the collection of primary data require that management approval be obtained for the research to be undertaken at the EP Branch. They also require that consent forms be signed by the research participants. These steps are important to ensure the validity and the reliability of the study as well as the confidentiality of data obtained from and the anonymity of the participants. Participants also have to be ensured that the data collected would be used for research purposes only. Only once all of this is in place, and ethical clearance is obtained from the university, can the actual fieldwork commence.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

There are certain conditions that should be in place for the study to be successful. Below is a list of limiting conditions that would have to be borne in mind in this regard:

- Geographical dispersion of participants: Some participants are situated in Pretoria and some in Cape Town. The EP Branch has regional offices in all nine provinces and participants commute between the nine provinces on a regular basis. This poses a challenge for reaching them timeously during the data collection phase.
- Data gathering and analysis: It is necessary to obtain some form of training on the use of the computer software to assist with creating an online questionnaire. Training is also required for coding and analysing the data that is gathered during the collection phase.
- Time limitations: It is always important to consider the time limitations which would have an impact on the completion of the study. Besides the anticipated delays in receiving responses from participants, it would also be important to be sensitive to the time that the research supervisor would need to study the different chapter submissions with the aim of providing comment and input for amendments and improvements of the thesis document.

1.7 STUDY OVERVIEW

In this chapter, an outline of the study is provided. It includes the background, motivation and rationale of the study, the research goal and research question, as well as the research design and research methodology to be used.

The rest of the document will include a literature review, Chapter 2, in which the results of other similar studies will be provided as well as consider what other authors have said about the research variables.

Chapter 3 will reflect on the Policy and Regulatory Framework as well as the context of the work environment in which the research will be conducted, i.e. the EP Branch at the Department of Environmental Affairs. An abbreviated explanation will also be provided on the “Working-for” programmes managed by the EP Branch and its targeted and actual performance as per the department’s strategic goals and objectives.

In Chapter 4, the design and methodology of the research study will be discussed in detail. The collection of data and the fieldwork undertaken will be discussed, which will include the sampling, unit of analysis, and the compilation of the tools to be used.

The results, final analysis and interpretation thereof will be discussed in Chapter 5 and the conclusion and recommendations in Chapter 6. Hopefully the results will enable the researcher to draw certain conclusions after which recommendations for improvement should be made, which as mentioned, will be presented in Chapter 6.

1.8 CONCLUSION

The leader in a public sector environment has many challenges, especially in an environment that undergoes some kind of change on a continuous basis. This will almost always have some kind of effect on how the people that they lead perform their duties and responsibilities. In this chapter, the scene was set in terms of what this study will consider. In the ensuing chapters, what was outlined in the study overview will be elaborated on in detail. Ultimately, the study will look at what the performance situation is at the EP Branch, why it is the case, what can be learnt from it, and how can the learning be used and built back into the organisational system to improve its quality and performance (Schwella, 2014).

In order to understand the context of what this research aims to explore, it is important to understand the different concepts, definitions, uses, and applications of the different variables of the study. These variables include leadership and performance. Similarly, it will be important to find out what other authors have written about these variables and what can be learnt from them. This will be pursued through a literature review in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher provided the background and rationale to the research, the research problem that will be investigated, and a brief explanation of the design and methodology of the research that will be undertaken. In this chapter, the goal is to focus on the concept of leadership and the effect it may or may not have on performance by means of a literature study. A study on the literature that is available on the topics of leadership and performance is essential in order to explain and contextualise these topics so that the reader may understand the aim of the research. In order to achieve the goal of this chapter, the following four objectives will be pursued:

- The first objective of this literature review will be to create an understanding of the concept of leadership by providing a historical overview on how it developed. In order to do this, the writings of Burns (1979) and Rost (1991) will be reviewed. These historical views merely set the scene and context for the more current views.
- The second objective will be to provide a number of leadership definitions in order to gage the trend depicted in the literature. In order to provide clarity through the definitions of leadership, the difference between leadership and management will be explained. This is important so that their different meanings and applications in an organisation may be understood. In further efforts to create an understanding of leadership, leadership theories or approaches and the major styles of leadership will be considered. In an attempt to provide relevant sources, the literature review will also cover a contemporary leadership model, i.e. Ken Wilber's Integral Theory of Leadership (Gilbert, 2015), which may be linked to resonant leadership. This section will end off by reviewing literature that spells out the importance of discovering a unique leadership style that encompasses the leader's whole life.
- The third objective of this chapter will be to explore the literature that is available on performance in organisations. Given that there are different role players in an organisation who may contribute to its performance and achievements, ranging from the

top to the lower levels, this review will focus on the overall performance of the organisation in general. This would, for example, entail performance in relation to strategic objectives and targets. This section will provide definitions of performance, the measures that are used to assess performance, adaptive challenges that should be considered within the particular organisational context, as well as ways to improve performance. Here leadership practices towards effective empowerment as well as the expectancy theory that deals with motivation for improved performance will be scrutinised. The third objective of the literature review will end off with a detailed discussion on the importance of teams and how leaders can nurture teamwork and cooperation for improved organisational performance.

- The final objective of this literature review will be to establish from the available literature which leadership style was found to yield the highest level of performance in an organisation. Critique on the gaps in the leader-performance relationship will be presented as part of this objective.

In a nutshell, the goal of this chapter is to provide explanations of and discussions on the variables of leadership and performance from relevant sources of literature so that an understanding of leadership in the context of leadership for performance can become clearer.

2.2 LEADERSHIP: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The first objective of this chapter is pursued by providing a historical overview of leadership.

Thirty-seven years ago, Burns (1979: 1) wrote about “the crisis of leadership” in that people in power were guilty of “mediocrity or irresponsibility”. He believed that leadership was about transformation and that “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1979: 20). Understanding first that leadership is about influencing people towards a mutual purpose was important, specifically before the notion of good leadership and the notion of ethics in leadership could be brought into the equation. Rost (1991: 127) agreed that this would then breed people and organisations “that exude a higher moral purpose”. Burns (1979: 2) was the first author to write about the moral values that need to exist between leaders and followers, and argued that leaders should be “committed” to satisfy the needs, aspirations and values of their followers. Through his writings, Burns (1979) inspired other authors to also study the concept of leadership.

In 1991, Rost (1991: xi) offered a piercing evaluation of most of the writings on leadership at that time. It was maintained that those writings described management rather than leadership and that we should "enter a whole new paradigm of leadership" (Rost, 1991: xii). In addition, it was argued that scholars and practitioners were more concerned with the "peripheries of leadership" ("traits", "personality characteristics", "goal attainment", "effectiveness", "style", and above all "the management of organisations") as well as with the "content of leading" ("the knowledge that leaders must have") instead of focusing on "understanding … leadership as a relationship" (Rost, 1991: 4). According to Rost (1991: 8), another problem with leadership studies was that most writers had not defined the concept of leadership appropriately. In order for those that study or practice leadership to do that, it was important to understand the nature of leadership in order to come up with an accurate definition of the concept (Rost, 1991: 8). When Rost (1991) wrote his book 25 years ago, he had already studied hundreds of other books and articles on leadership. Rost (1991) found then that it was "almost a ritual for the authors of books and articles on leadership to make two statements at the beginning of their works", namely that many that have studied leadership still had no idea as to what it means and also that they summarise leadership theories along the areas of "traits", "behaviourist" and "situational" theories, among others (Rost, 1991: 14). Below (Figure 2.1) is a summary of how Rost (1991) explains the different theories on leadership have evolved over the years.

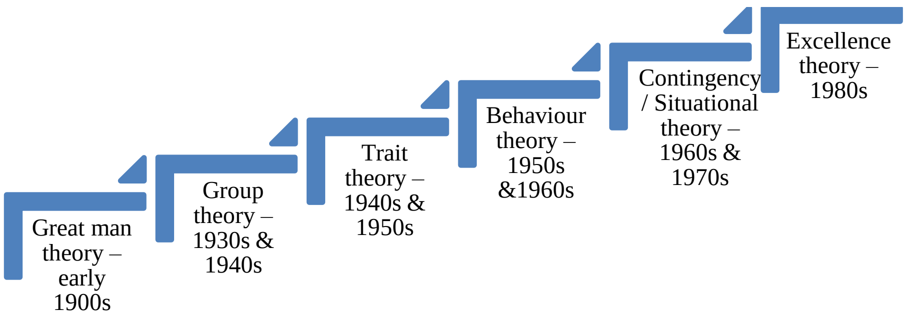


Figure 2.1: Historical overview of leadership.
Source: Rost (1991: 17)

According to Rost (1991), the above is how writers have written on leadership and it might seem as if the one theory stops when the other one starts. However, Rost (1991) maintains that this is not the reality and that leadership is more complex than that. Rost (1991) further believes that these theories may be observed in the behaviour of leaders at any time and that they do not necessarily follow one another. Moreover, he argues that these theories are too focused on management instead of leadership (Rost, 1991: 27).

In the light of this historical overview, it is clear that leadership has been studied widely and that people hold different views on what leadership encompasses. In the next section, the definitions, approaches and styles of leadership are reviewed in some detail.

2.3 LEADERSHIP: DEFINITIONS, THEORIES, APPROACHES AND STYLES

The second objective of this chapter is pursued by providing a brief review of what exactly definitions of leadership emphasised during the 1900s, as presented in Figure 2.2. The reader may find some definitions that are offered useful in understanding the concept of leadership. As part of tracing the development of leadership, theories or approaches of leadership will be discussed and contemporary approaches or models explained. This will be followed by listing and explaining briefly which styles of leadership exist (as can be seen in the behaviour of people).

There are many different definitions of the concept of leadership and "always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with and still the concept is not sufficiently defined" (Bennis as cited in Yukl, 2002: 2). This sentiment is shared by Rost (1991: 37–65) who claims that from the 587 books he read for his research, only 221 contained a definition of leadership. Most of these 221 books came from a Western context. The following is a summary of what was found pertaining to the 221 definitions:

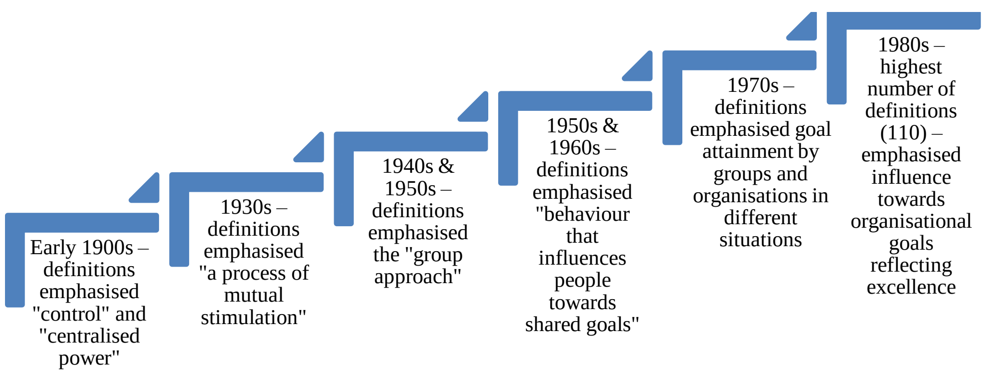


Figure 2.2: Summary of definitions of leadership.
Source: Rost (1991: 37–65)

According to Stogdill, as cited in Yukl (2002: 2), “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”. Rost (1991: 93) concluded that the writers of leadership books and articles from the early 1900s to the 1980s were not confused; instead, they wrote about leadership from their own perspectives. Therefore, it is clear that leadership can mean different things to different individuals, teams and organisations. However, the elements in its definition include “influencing others”, “directing people”, “to motivate and coordinate” and the “art of persuasion”, which are all aimed at goal attainment (Stogdill as cited in Yukl, 2002: 2).

The following definitions of leadership were found to be most relevant to the topic being researched. They have been selected from the literature and are listed below.

2.3.1. Selected definitions

In this section, the goal is to provide different ways of defining the concept of leadership. This will be done in bullet form. In trying to define the concept of leadership, the difference between leadership and management will also be explained.

- According to DuBrin (2010: 3), leadership could be defined as “the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organisational goals”.
- Rost (1991: 94) purports that leadership in basic terms means “good management” but proceeds to mention that “leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (Rost, 1991: 102–177).
- Yukl (2002: 7) defines leadership as “a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives” (Yukl, 2002: 7).
- Another definition says that “leadership is a skill … involved in a process of two-way communication, a continuous feedback. This interaction sustains the working morale and the feeling of personal worth of each member of the team, and is in turn sustained by them … True leadership is characterized not by dominion, but by service” (Cooper as cited in Beeka, 2006: 10).
- Leadership is also perceived to be “an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or a restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members … Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the

motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership …" (Bass as cited in Beeka, 2006: 10).

- Finally, "leadership involves influence, it occurs among people, those people intentionally desire significant changes, and the changes reflect purposes shared by leaders and followers" (Daft as cited in Beeka, 2006: 10).

In endeavouring to understand leadership, besides providing definitions of it, there are often discrepancies in the explanations that are provided for what leadership entails as opposed to what management entails. These concepts are often used interchangeably. In the next section, leadership and management are discussed in an attempt to provide further understanding of leadership.

Leadership and Management

It has been argued that leadership should not be seen in isolation from management, although the roles of a leader and a manager are somewhat different. It is, however, expected that a leader should also have the traits of a manager. Williams (2012: 129) studied management in the public sector and argues that for "managerial leaders" to be successful and effective in reaching their goals and objectives, they should have the "ability" and the "motivation". The Management Consulting Courses website, property of International Design and an Online Distance Learning platform provide free access to content of some of the most popular management courses from quality education sources (e.g. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Columbia University, International Institute of Management, University of California, University of Texas, and Washington University) (International Design, *c.* 2015). Through its Lesson 22: "Leadership and the approaches to leadership", the Management Consulting Course provides a clear explanation of how leadership is different from management. For example, it becomes clear that although a manager may have legitimate authority to make staff work towards the achievement of organisational goals, having that authority does not make the manager a leader. The next story illustrates these differences more clearly:

> Newly appointed to the position of supervisor in a large industrial plant, a manager decided to impress his subordinates with his authority. Striding purposefully onto the plant floor, the manager carefully chose the subject of his well-rehearsed address. Once he had arrived at the workstation manned by the union shop steward, he announced, in words loud enough for most workers to hear, "I want to make one thing perfectly clear: I RUN THIS PLANT!" Unimpressed, the shop steward

> held up his hand. On seeing his signal, all the workers shut off their equipment. Then, in the eerie silence of the large plant, the shop steward challenged the manager: “OK. So, let’s see you run it.” (International Design, *c.* 2015)

Appointed in the position of manager, the manager had the authority, but without followers, he was no leader. Furthermore, whilst a manager administers, maintains, controls, and “does things right”, a leader innovates, develops, inspires, and “does the right thing” (International Design, *c.* 2015). In the above story, the union shop steward was the leader. The fact that a leader should, by definition, have followers is supported by the foreword by P.F. Drucker in Hesselbein, Goldsmith, and Beckhard (1996: xii) in which it is argued that effective leaders know that “the only definition of a leader is someone who has followers”.

For the purposes of this study, it will be assumed that the manager who has leadership skills will also be the leader. Bearing the above-mentioned definitions in mind, theories and approaches to leadership are presented in the next section as part of this chapter’s second objective.

2.3.2. Theories and approaches to understanding leadership

In this section, the goal is to provide a conceptual and theoretical understanding of leadership theories and approaches. In order to provide this, the following topics will be discussed:

- Firstly, an overview will be provided of what is meant by theory and approach as well as what leadership theory entails;
- Secondly, a classification of leadership theories will be provided and the leadership theories in the classification will then be discussed and explained; and
- Finally, as a contemporary leadership approach, Ken Wilber’s Integral Theory of Leadership and how it is linked to resonant leadership will be explained.

Overview of leadership theory

According to the Business Dictionary, a *theory* is defined as “a coherent group of tested general propositions, commonly regarded as correct, that can be used as principles of explanation and prediction for a class of phenomena, for example Einstein's theory of relativity”. In addition, *theory* is explain as “a particular conception or view of something to be done or of the method of doing it; a system of rules or principles, for example conflicting theories of how children best learn to read” (Business Dictionary). The Business Dictionary defines an *approach* as “the method used or steps taken in setting about a task, problem, etc.", for example "his approach to any problem was to prepare an outline". In the light of these definitions and for the purposes of this study, "leadership theory" will be assumed to have the same meaning as "leadership approach".

Robertson (*c.* 2015.) explains leadership theory as "a discipline that focuses on finding out what makes successful leaders excel in what they do". She purports that leadership style "falls under the overall umbrella of leadership theory", which is the primary distinction between the two, and that "leadership style focuses specifically on the traits and behaviours of leaders". Styles of leadership will be discussed later in the chapter. Mentioning it here is merely meant to show that styles differ from theories or approaches.

Every organisation's success depends on having great leaders and for that reason, organisations go to great lengths to find out how the leader operates (Robertson, *c.* 2015). Organisations therefore try to "identify the characteristics and behaviours associated with the best leaders" and as a direct consequence thereof, "many leadership theories have been developed over the years that attempt to explain what makes a leader great" (Robertson, *c.* 2015). According to Robertson (*c.* 2015) organisations believe that if they can "identify the traits that make a successful leader, they can not only identify potential leaders more readily, but also can hone in on those specific skills for improvement".

At first, leadership theories had primarily focused on the leader's specific characteristics and behaviours. With time, "theories began to focus more on a leader's followers and the contextual nature of leadership" (Robertson, *c.* 2015). The early theories, also alluded to in the historical overview of leadership in the beginning of this chapter, such as the "great man theory" and the "trait theory", for example, focused on the inherent qualities with which a leader was born (Robertson, *c.* 2015). As time went on, the focus shifted to a leader's actions rather than their traits. This new focus included the "behaviourist theory", "situational leadership theory", and "contingency theory". In the final stages of leadership development, "transactional theory" and "transformational theory" were developed (Robertson, *c.* 2015). Here, the relationship between the leader and their followers was explored (Robertson, *c.* 2015). Through his studies on leadership, Burns (1979) purports that transactional leadership refers to the relationship between leaders and followers when they "exchange one thing for another" (e.g. rewarding or disciplining the follower based on performance (Bass, 1998: 6) and that transformational leadership goes deeper where the leader strives to "satisfy the higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower" (Burns, 1979: 4). More contemporary leadership theories as well as holistic approaches have also been developed and will be discussed later in this chapter. The classification of leadership theories, particularly the main ones, will be discussed next.

Main leadership theories (classification)

According to DuBrin (2010: 31–165) and Schwella (2008: 39-44), the following are the main leadership theories, which are listed by way of the following diagram (Figure 2.3), followed by brief notes on what each one comprises.

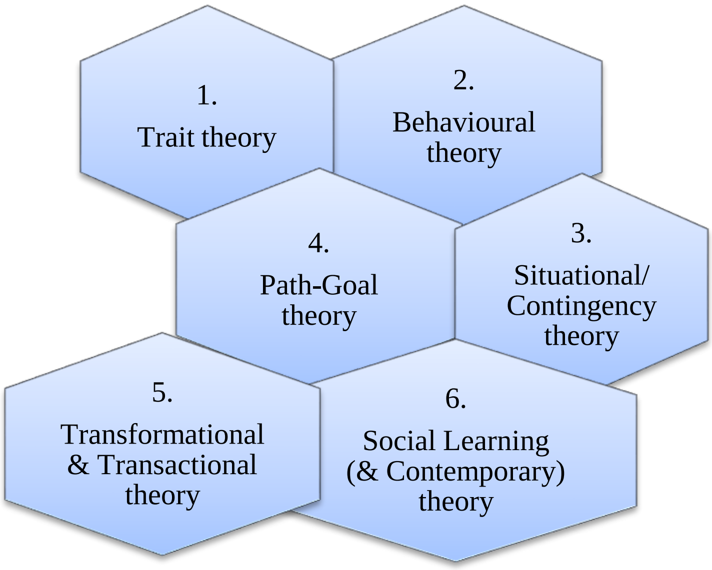


Figure 2.3: Main leadership theories.
Sources: DuBrin (2010) & Schwella (2008)

Trait theory:

This theory assumes that "leaders are born with certain characteristics" linked to their "physical attractiveness and personality" (DuBrin, 2010: 31–165 & Schwella, 2008: 39-44).

Behavioural theory:

This theory assumes that leaders behave in ways to ensure the team does the work functions as a team and gets the job done (focusing on "relationship-related" behaviour or "task-related" behaviour) (DuBrin, 2010: 31–165 & Schwella, 2008: 39-44).

Situational/Contingency theory:

The Situational or Contingency theory assumes that leaders do not focus on relationships or tasks at all times, but depend on the situation (like the "nature of the task", "leader-member relationship", and the "level of position-power" of the leader) (DuBrin, 2010: 31–165 & Schwella, 2008: 39-44).

Path-Goal:

In this theory, it is assumed that the leader will "clarify the path to a goal for a group member so that they receive personal pay-offs" (increase in job satisfaction and performance) (DuBrin, 2010: 31–165 & Schwella, 2008: 39-44).

Transformational and Transactional theory:

Here the leader creates a vision and inspires the total organisation by "persuasive communication to strive towards the vision", "plan concretely" to realise the vision, create strong teams, motivate all towards the vision, and "recycle information and knowledge" to improve performance (DuBrin, 2010: 31–165 & Schwella, 2008: 39-44).

Social Learning (and Contemporary) theory:

Linked to the "recycling step" in the Transformational approach, in the Social Learning theory leaders learn and experiment in order to improve capacity and performance. Leaders should be facilitators for experimentation and learning (Schwella, 2008: 40).

As people learn and experiment, new ideologies and theories are born. The following section explores new contemporary theories of leadership.

Contemporary leadership theories

In Goethals and Sorenso (2006), a number of scholars came together from different disciplines to establish a "general theory of leadership". Burns (as cited in Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 4) felt that "the study of leadership has become fragmented and … even trivialised" whilst others felt that "the endless accumulation of empirical data has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership" (Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 47). People that write about leadership write from their different perspectives and conceptualise it differently. These "differences often reflect how scholars are trained in different disciplines and their own individual biases and perspectives" (Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 54). In their quest to find a general theory of leadership, they examined the "key elements of leadership: power, motivation, leader-follower relations, context and values" (Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 96). It was argued that when employees are with other employees in a group, they tend to perform better and that leaders that use their "personal resources and their persuasiveness" can easily "mobilize groups toward effective ends" (Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 98). A lot of effort was dedicated towards the “leader-follower” relationship, which is important in ensuring equality in groups and to ensure maximum returns for their efforts. Furthermore, lessons learnt through workshops on the “constructionist view in leadership studies” were extrapolated which lead to the assumption that “leadership is intrinsically relational and social in nature, is the result of shared meaning-making, and is rooted in context or place” (Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 188–189). These authors also concluded that people have certain “mental models” of leadership which do not offer a wide understanding of the concept. Also, people rely on a “heroic version compiled from a narrow set of voices” and because of the “dominant mental models”, people are restricted to develop new or alternative models of leadership based on their own experiences and contexts (Goethals & Sorenso, 2006: 200-201). Furthermore, according to Goethals and Sorenso (2006: 200-201) people should have the opportunity to construct alternative models of leadership and reveal aspects that were missed before. With this in mind, literature on contemporary approaches is presented in the following sections in order to illuminate the development and contextualisation of leadership.

As things change over time, people adapt, systems are improved, structures are redesigned, and life in general becomes different. In fact, some things change for the better and some for the worst. This means that what was relevant to life in the year 2000 may not be relevant to life in the year 2016. This will also be true for leadership approaches, theories or models.

Kellis and Ran (2013: 130) propose a new public leadership theory that “combines features of authentic, transformational, and distributed leadership theories”. They argue that leadership that is “networked”, based on “core values”, and makes use of the “transformational” approaches is more effective than “transactional” approaches to leadership (Kellis & Ran, 2013: 130–141). Fernandez (2003: 9–11) has written about a new public sector leadership theory 10 years before Kellis and Ran (2013) and in his paper that was presented at a national conference he spoke about an “integrative framework that incorporates multiple skills, traits, behaviours, leadership styles and situational variables in a single theoretical model to explain leadership effectiveness” (Fernandez, 2003: 9–11).

This background provides the basis for the next section in which the following two leadership approaches/models relevant to this study will be covered, namely Integral Theory of Leadership and Resonant Leadership.

Integral Theory of Leadership and Resonant Leadership

Ken Wilber's Model on the "**Integral Theory**" as explained by Gilbert (2015) might be good for current public leaders to ensure that they become the best leaders that they can be. According to this theory, once a leader knows and loves themselves as human beings in all areas of their lives, it will be easy to learn to know and love their followers (Wilber as cited by Gilbert, 2015). In doing so, the leader will be more capable to effectively leading their followers to a better state of affairs, should that be necessary (Wilber as cited by Gilbert, 2015). Gilbert (2015) argues that the "Integral Theory" endeavours to explain that all the quadrants of the theory are important when trying to understand a human being. See Figure 2.4 for an illustration of this theory.

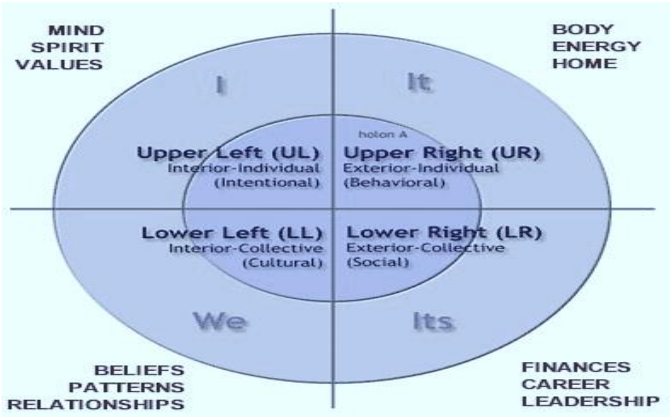


Figure 2.4: The Integral Vision.
Source: Gilbert (2015)

The quadrants from upper left, clock-wise to lower left, represent, firstly, a person's individual, internal consciousness and values; secondly, a person's individual, external behaviour towards their body and home; thirdly, how people see their external, collective social systems; and lastly, how people essentially view the world and their relationships. People evolve and grow from being concerned with the self, then becoming more interested in the views and interests of others, and then later, the views and interests of the bigger world out there become important (Wilber as cited by Gilbert, 2015). The "value in the theory comes from mixing and matching different concepts on the map" and assessing what it can offer, taking into consideration all the "various elements of truth" that are relevant to a person's life. Considering something from one perspective only results in a person "limiting the possibilities for attaining the highest solution" (Wilber as cited by Gilbert, 2015). It is important for a leader to be aware of the different quadrants of the Integral Theory in order to be a balanced person looking after their health, spiritual well-being, relationships, and how those things impact on others. A leader that wants to be respected should, for instance, be able to manage their own health, their finances, their emotions, and their life as a whole; thus, leading by example. Furthermore, leaders should, for example, first know the vision and mission of the organisation before they can demand that their followers know the vision and mission as well.

Resonant Leadership is based on similar principles as the Integral Theory of Leadership. According to Boyatzis and McKee (2005: ix), "resonant leadership can make leaders more effective". Being a resonant leader requires the leader to (1) know the state of the body, mind, heart and spirit, while simultaneously being aware of what is happening in their surroundings (in other words, being mindful); (2) plan to take action when goals are identified as reachable, simultaneously having a sense of being well (in other words having hope); and (3) understand, care for, and assist others in reaching their dreams (in other words, having compassion). Boyatzis and McKee (2005: 201–204) believe that in order for an effective leader to "inspire others and create the resonant relationship that ignite greatness", the leader needs to be the best person they can be, in fact they believe that leaders should be the change they wish to see in the world (Mahatma Ghandi as cited in Boyatzis & McKee, 2005: 201–204). Resonant leaders focus on mind, body, spirit and heart, as depicted in the diagram below from Boyatzis and McKee (2005: 228) (See Figure 2.5), referred to as the "medicine wheel" which the leader uses to assess how well they have achieved a balanced life.

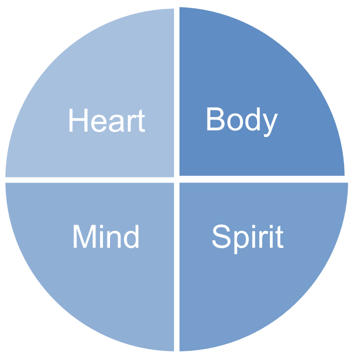


Figure 2.5: Medicine wheel of resonant leadership (holistic balance).
Source: Boyatzis and McKee (2005: 228)

Drucker (2005: 1–12) agrees that in order for people to perform at their best, they should know and manage themselves. Drucker (2005: 1-12) offers advice on how to build a life of excellence and argues that people should know what their strengths are, where they belong, how they work, what their values are, and what they can contribute. According to Drucker (2005: 1) it is "only when you operate from a combination of your strengths and self-knowledge" that it will be possible to "achieve true and lasting excellence". Padi (2015: 1–132) shares that argument and offers seven principles of transforming ordinary men into extraordinary leaders. Padi (2015: 1-132) believes that leadership starts with you as a person and lists the seven principles as follows: (a) "Know who you are", (b) "Know where you dwell emotionally", (c) "Change your thoughts", (d) "Raise your standards", (e) "Change your limiting beliefs", (f) "Have a strategy", and (g) "Forsake the comfort zone". These all lead to the conclusion that it is when you start to improve and develop yourself that you will be able to lead others more effectively.

Defining leadership and providing a discussion on leadership approaches (old and new) have laid the foundation for the next section, which looks at styles of leadership. Explaining the different ways in which a leader interacts with their followers (i.e. styles of leadership) is important as it may yield different results and effects on the behaviour of the leader's followers.

2.3.3. Leadership styles

In this section, the goal is to provide different styles of leadership in order to explain the different ways in which a leader acts and behaves in the leader-follower relationship. The following topics will be discussed in an effort to reach the goal with this section:

- Firstly, a definition of what leadership style is will be provided; and
- Secondly, different styles of leadership will be listed and explained.

Definition

The Business Dictionary defines a *leadership style* as a "leader's ability to direct, manage, motivate and guide groups of people". Mullins (as cited in Beeka, 2006: 3) defines leadership style as "the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out and the way in which the manager typically behaves towards members of the group".

According to Robertson (*c.* 2015), leadership style is shaped after the behaviour of the leader, which is considered in the "behaviourist theory". Robertson (*c.* 2015) argues that "within this category, different patterns of leadership behaviour are observed and then categorized as leadership styles" and that "practicing managers tend to be the most interested in researching this particular theory because with it leaders have the ability to alter their style based on the beliefs, values, preferences and culture of the organization they work for". An organisation that is, for example, interested in how decisions are made may define leaders as either being "autocratic or democratic" whilst another organisation that may have more interest in how leaders handle situations define leaders as being "charismatic, participative, situational, transactional, transformational, quiet or servant-like" (Robertson (*c.* 2015). Schwella (2008: 39) agrees that leadership styles are differentiated according to "whether leaders are task-oriented or people-oriented". Task-oriented leaders focus on the job at hand and have an autocratic leadership style, whilst people-oriented (or relationship-oriented) leaders focus on motivating their teams for improvement and therefore have transformational leadership styles.

As mentioned, the qualities of a leader will determine their leadership style. The next section will cover styles of leadership. Each one is explained briefly.

Main leadership styles (classification)

Figure 2.6 provides a holistic view of the different styles of leadership, based on the studies done by DuBrin (2010: 113–117; 133–140). The different leadership styles will be explained directly after Figure 2.6.

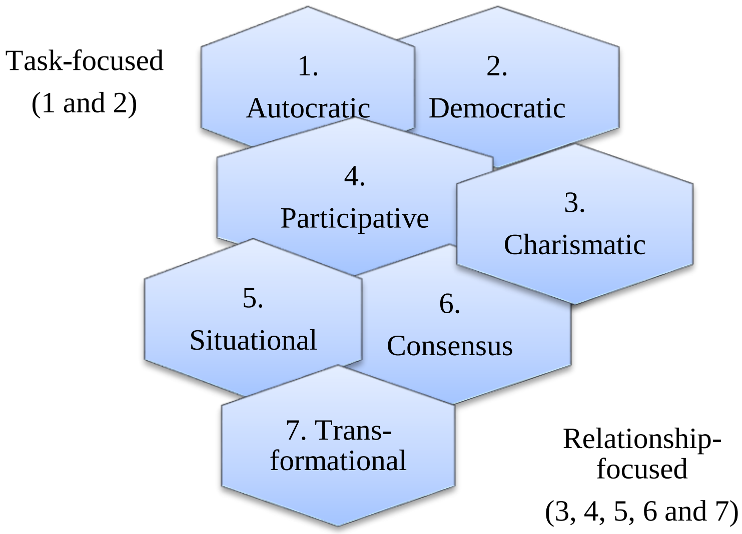


Figure 2.6: Main leadership styles.
Source: DuBrin (2010)

Autocratic style:

The "autocratic leader retains almost all the power" and their leadership style is the complete opposite of the "participative leadership" style (DuBrin, 2010: 113–117; 133–140).

Democratic style:

The "democratic leader confers final authority on the group" and simply collects the group opinion and "takes a vote before making a decision" (DuBrin, 2010: 113–117; 133–140).

Charismatic style:

The "charismatic leader" has the charm and charisma "to convince" people "to follow" them and exerts the power to influence people to reach goals (DuBrin, 2010: 113–117; 133–140).

Participative style:

"Participative leadership" refers to a leadership style according to which "decision-making is shared" between the leader and the group members and they "work together to reach goals" (DuBrin, 2010: 113–117; 133–140).

Situational style:

The "situational leader" makes their behaviour "contingent on situational forces" (member characteristics, internal and external environments, changes, organisational culture, etc.) (DuBrin, 2010: 113–117; 133–140).

Consensus style:

The "consensus leader" encourages the group to discuss issues and base the final decision on "general agreement" which the group members will support (DuBrin, 2010: 113–117; 133–140).

Transformational style:

The "transformational leader" influences people "to look beyond their self-interest", "to embrace change" and commits people to greatness (DuBrin, 2010: 113–117; 133–140).

It is assumed that most leaders do not constantly think about the style of leadership that they possess. Furthermore, they might not even be aware that they portray certain characteristics that would be associated with a particular leadership style. It would make sense that when a leader is in touch with their general skills, capabilities, strengths, weaknesses and style of leadership and/or characteristics of leadership, they would use those to improve their leadership skills. This illustrates the importance of studying different types of leadership styles and knowing what they could bring to an organisation and its employees. For example, in the studies done by Bass (1997: 130–139) on the transformational and transactional leader, it was found that the transformational leader is more effective compared to the transactional leader.

In 2016, Kerry Sandison, Programme Head and Learning Process Facilitator at the Stellenbosch University Business Management School wrote an article in a local newspaper titled "Discover a unique leadership style" in which she holds the view that the leader's style of leadership is a culmination of their whole life (Sandison, 2016: 15). According to Sandison (2016: 15) the leader should do thorough self-evaluation of their values, attitude, assumptions, aspirations, emotions and ideas, amongst other things, and that writing in a journal would give the leader a good idea of their patterns, perceptions, conflicts, incidences and perspectives and to turn every situation into a learning experience.

The aforementioned sources of literature had an important value and addressed the second objective of this chapter. They covered a discussion and review of the most common definitions, theories/approaches and styles of leadership. Given the overall aim of this study, the following section addresses the third objective of this chapter, which intends to review the literature on performance.

2.4 PERFORMANCE: A SELECTED CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

In this section, the goal is to provide a conceptual overview of the relevant definitional and theoretical aspects of performance for this study. In order to achieve this goal, the following topics will be covered:

- Firstly, definitions of the concept of performance will be presented and explained; and then those components or measures of organisational performance that are important in testing, analysing or measuring performance will be considered and elaborated upon;
- Secondly, the importance of considering adaptive challenges and how they could have an impact on performance improvement will also be discussed;
- Thirdly, some ideas for the improvement of performance that are found in the literature will be discussed; and
- Finally, the role of teams in organisational performance is touched on as part of the ideas for the improvement of performance.

In the next section, some definitions of performance related to performance measures will be considered.

2.4.1. Definitions and performance measures

The following paragraphs provide an explanation of the concept of performance by way of a three-way definition taken from an online Business Dictionary. Firstly, the next section will define the concept of performance in general terms; secondly, it will define employee performance; and, thirdly, it will define organisational performance.

According to the Business Dictionary *performance* is defined as "the *accomplishment* of a given task measured against pre-set known *standards* of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. In a contract, performance is deemed to be the fulfilment of an obligation, in a manner that releases the performer from all liabilities under the contract". *Employee performance* is defined as "the job-related activities expected of a worker and how well those activities were executed (Business Dictionary). Many business personnel directors assess the employee performance of each staff member on an annual or quarterly basis in order to help them identify suggested areas for *improvement*". Furthermore, *organisational performance* is defined as "an analysis of a company's performance as compared to *goals* and *objectives* (Business Dictionary). Within corporate organisations, three primary outcomes are analysed, namely *financial* performance, *market* performance and *shareholder* value performance (in some cases *production capacity* performance may also be analysed) (Business Dictionary).

The components or measures of performance, also found in the definitions mentioned above, refer to those variables that are tested when research about performance is conducted. These include, *inter alia*, measures such as goals and objectives, technical skills, competencies, interpersonal skills and vision-setting by leaders. Defining performance in the aforementioned paragraphs provided a foundation for the following paragraphs that will discuss the importance of identifying those measures that will be used to assess the level of performance in an organisation.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, "competencies" is a measure that is used to assess performance and research done by Bhatta (2001: 195–207) contends that public sector departments have moved towards targeting competent senior managers for appointment. Competency refers to "specific behaviours and characteristics of a person that result in effective or superior performance" (Mansfield as cited in Bhatta, 2001: 195). The four aspects of any job that are important according to Mansfield (as cited in Bhatta, 2001: 195), and that are used to measure performance, include (a) "technical expectations", (b) "managing change", (c) "managing different work activities", and (d) "managing working relationships". It is argued that the senior manager's competencies should be related to the organisation's competence in that the senior manager's "behaviour-based competencies" ("how the manager acts") and their "attribute-based competencies" ("what the manager is") should relate to the strategic vision of the organisation (Bhatta, 2001: 195–196). Through Bhatta's (2001: 204) research in the USA, New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands, and the UK, it was concluded that governments show more interest in "using competencies to identify and target leadership behaviours and skills in their public services".

Although it is confirmed by Thach and Thompson (2007: 356) that much research has been conducted on the impact of leadership in driving performance in for-profit organisations, the same cannot be said for small to medium non-profit organisations. Through the research done by Thach and Thompson (2007: 356–375), which focused on the notion of "competencies", it was confirmed that most competency models are related to "competency descriptions" within a particular organisation, in other words linked to a specific organisation's strategy. However, research done by others found that the following areas are regarded as mandatory for effective leadership: (a) "vision and goal setting", (b) "interpersonal skills", (c) self-knowledge", and (d) "technical competence". The research concluded that leadership skills are important to achieving organisational targets (Thach & Thompson, 2007: 356–375).

According to Idris and Ali (2008: 164), who conducted research on the impact of leadership style and best practice on the performance of Malaysian business firms, the only two measures that are important for company performance were "financial soundness" and "profit". For public sector departments this may not be true.

In the public sector the way departments are managed has changed over the years. Leaders have to ensure that organisational goals are met and that evidence is provided on the correct performance indicators and targets. Regular adjustments are made to ensure the department stays on track in terms of their Strategic and Annual Performance Plans. This may be easier said than done as there are a myriad of challenges public sector departments face on a continuous basis. A brief presentation of the literature on organisational challenges will be provided next. This is essential in order to illustrate how these challenges may or may not affect the performance levels in organisations.

2.4.2 Adaptive challenges impacting performance improvement

In this section, the goal is to provide a discussion on the importance of acknowledging adaptive challenges faced by organisations and the impact they may have on performance improvement.

Heifetz and Laurie (2001: 131–141) propose an unconventional and radical approach to leadership, which they apply through "adaptive change", and argue that employees should be challenged with difficult questions, conflict situations and confusion. Employees should not consult their leaders for solutions to these challenges, but should rather come up with solutions on their own, which solutions the writers believe the challenges would stimulate and motivate employees to find. The following table offers the responsibilities of the leader depending on the work situation:

Table 2.1: Leader's responsibility in adaptive situations.

Leader's Responsibilities	**Type of situation**	
	Technical or routine	***Adaptive***
Direction	*Define problems, provide solutions*	*Frame questions and issues*
Protection	*Shield people from outside threats*	*Let people feel the outside pressures*
Orientation	*Make roles and responsibilities clear*	*Challenge current roles*
Managing conflict	*Restore order*	*Expose conflict or let it emerge*
Shaping norms	*Maintaining the norms*	*Challenge unproductive norms*

Source: Heifetz and Laurie (2001: 135)

This approach was used at KPMG (Klynveld, Peat, Marwick and Goerdeler) in the Netherlands in 1994 and as a result of confronting strategic and adaptive challenges, the company identified more than $50 million worth of new business opportunities. By allowing employees to deal with these adaptive issues, the leader allows for mutual learning to take place as both leader and follower learn together what the best way to obtain results is. Context, the culture of the organisation as well as the emotional intelligence of employees may become important under these types of circumstances. Context may lead to different results and outcomes. Performance management as a tool to reward good performance and address bad performance is, for example, managed differently in the public sector than how it is managed in the private sector. Schwella (2008: 31) alludes to this and agrees that when leaders are faced with adaptive problems or issues, they have to use learning with their teams so that they may obtain new competencies in order to deal with those problems or issues. The different challenges faced by public leaders as listed by Schwella (2008: 31) include "globalisation, complex problems, economic inequality, gender inequality, diversity, good governance, capacity, and administrative reform".

Discussing the traits, characteristics and behaviours of leadership approaches, Schwella (2008) maintains that emotional intelligence (EQ) is more important than intelligence quotient (IQ). Leaders should consider "relationship-related" behaviour as well as "task-related behaviour" in order to address issues (Schwella, 2008: 31). According to the literature studies done by Schwella (2008: 48) "public context and the complexities of public action and decisions, as well as an analysis of public leadership approaches …" showed "that the Transformational and Social Learning Approaches to Leadership are most appropriate in dealing with the adaptive challenges faced by public leadership".

Whilst leadership approaches are important there are also other organisational aspects that need to be borne in mind when analysing performance. This is especially true when performance needs to be improved. Some research that has been done on the improvement of performance will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.3 Improving performance

In this section, the goal is to provide a discussion on what research has shown can be used to improve performance. In order to achieve this goal, topics such as empowering practices, productivity and the expectancy theory of motivation will be discussed.

Questions that can be asked when analysing the performance of organisations may include the following: Why do organisations underperform? Why do people underperform? Are they scared, uncertain, unskilled or overloaded? Are they misplaced within the organisational structure? Are instructions, goals, targets and objectives clear? Is it the leader's competencies? Is it the employee's competencies? Is it the leader's style of leadership and how much of the leader's personality emerges through their behaviour towards others? Is it the working environment? Do you replace the person or offer training and coaching? What are the real challenges? Some of the challenges organisations may experience may include a lack of productivity, confidence and motivation. Grobler, Warnick, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2011) define the concept of productivity, for example, as "the relationship between what is put into a piece of work (input) and what is yielded (output)". Can low levels of productivity be attributed to the lack of motivation and confidence? What can be done to raise people's motivation and confidence levels? Can coaching, for example, be used to raise the employee's motivation and confidence levels? According to DuBrin (2010: 302–3015), coaching can be seen as an approach to motivation. It encourages new ways of doing things and increases productivity all together. DuBrin (2010, 302–305) suggested the following coaching techniques that leaders can use:

- *Communicate clear expectations to the employee.*
- *Build relationships and work to improve their interpersonal skills.*
- *Provide feedback on areas that need improvement.*
- *Listen effectively.*
- *Bust the barriers and help to remove obstacles.*
- *Provide emotional support.*
- *Reflect on the content and meaning of what the employee is saying.*
- *Provide advice and guidance gently.*
- *Demonstrate (by example) what the behaviour is that you expect from the employee.*
- *Obtain commitment from the employee that they will do things differently.*
- *Be a cheerleader and applaud good performance.*

On the subject of motivation for improved performance, it is essential that leaders empower their followers and assist them in becoming the best individuals that they can be. DuBrin (2010: 206) came up with the following illustration (Figure 2.7) to explain what leaders can do to empower their employees:

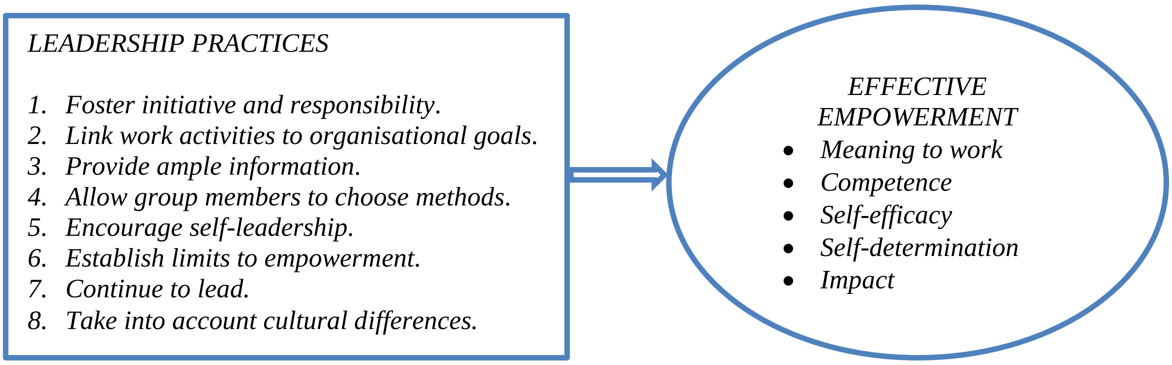


Figure 2.7: Effective Empowering Practices.
Source: DuBrin (2010: 206)

The leader should empower the employee and allow for training and development opportunities, and open communication and constant praising (not criticism), which will lead to the employee and team feeling appreciated. Thus, it is believed that empowering people will raise their levels of confidence as much as it will raise their levels of motivation, productivity and overall performance.

Increase Motivation and Productivity

Shepperd (1993) reasons that low levels of productivity can be ascribed to people losing enthusiasm and, essentially, motivation. The solution for this, Shepperd (1993) suggests can be found in the "expectancy theory". DuBrin (2010) explains that the "expectancy theory" believes that the reward the person expects to get in return depends on the degree of effort the person exerts when performing a task. Figure 2.8 below shows the expectancy theory of motivation. It is clear that there should be a conducive environment and that the person performing the task should be able to do so in order for performance to be effective.

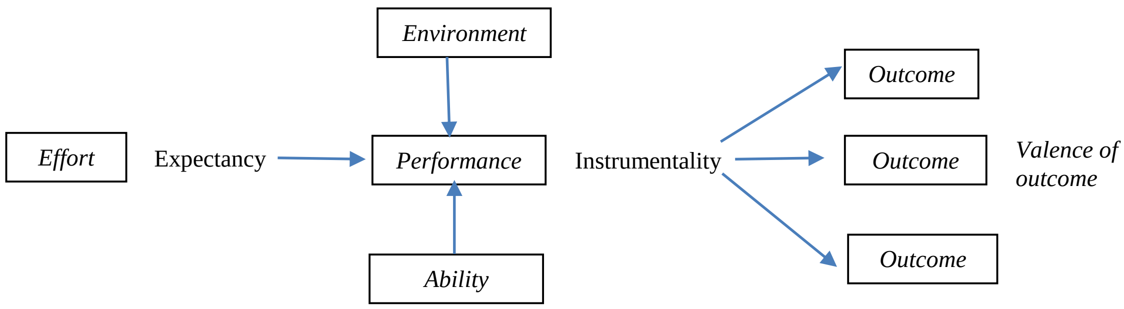


Figure 2.8: Expectancy theory of motivation.
Source: DuBrin (2010: 287)

DuBrin (2010) believes that the expectancy theory "recognizes that when workers are in a positive mood, high valences, instrumentalities, and expectancies are more likely to lead to good performance".

Leaders should therefore do what they can to ensure that they create conducive environments for their followers to perform at their peaks. Similarly, leaders should avoid certain behaviours that may lead to their followers underperforming. Wright (2000: 362–364) argues, for example, that micromanagement is a bad leadership style that should be avoided and suggests the following four strategies to steer clear from bad leadership:

- Be flexible: Leaders should be flexible in how they manage people, especially if it is a diverse group of people. Personality types would need to be borne in mind and for that reason different approaches to management and leadership should be used.

- Establish SMARTER goals: Leaders should set goals that are SMARTER (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely, and Easily Remembered). People can easily manage three to five goals, but the situation can become totally disabling if people have to manage 50 goals, for example.
- Be results-driven: Leaders should be more concerned with the outcomes than with the process followed to reach the outcomes.
- Be a player/coach: Leaders should regard coaching as important as well as being a team player to show team spirit.

It is believed that leaders direct their followers in teams. Teams as units entail participation and accountability. In fact, the very definition of leadership asserts that there is no leadership if the leader does not have followers. It would therefore be ignorant to ignore the importance of teams and the role they play within an organisation. In the next section, the researcher reviews some literature on team performance in an organisation.

2.4.4. Teams and performance

In this section, the goal is to provide a discussion on the importance of teams in an organisation and how important teams are for organisational performance. In order to achieve these aims, high-performing teams and leader roles to nurture teamwork and cooperation will be considered.

High-performing teams

In a study of team role characteristics underlying high and low-performing teams done by Chong (2007), it was found that in high-performing teams participants reported the willingness to become managers and that they could manage their time more effectively whilst working under pressure. They had trust in team members, good communication, and showed commitment to the efforts of the team. Moreover, there was trust between leaders and team members. In low-performing teams, participants revealed a lack of "self-confidence and confidence in their leader", mistrust, a lack of commitment, and poor leadership (Chong, 2007: 212).

For an organisation to enjoy high levels of performance, the members of the teams that make up the organisation should perform excellently. In order to enhance organisational performance, the leader should know how to build high-performing teams within the organisation. High-performance teams have clear focus and vision and members will go the extra mile to ensure the team's goals are met (Chong, 2007: 212).

Harkins (2008: 3–5) listed the following "ten leadership techniques for building high-performing teams":

1) Define a very clear picture of the future – a vision for the team.
2) Be genuine, even if it means lowering your guard.
3) Ask good questions.
4) Talk about things – even the hard things.
5) Follow through on commitments.
6) Let others speak first.
7) Listen.
8) Face up to non-performing players.
9) Have fun, but never at others' expense.
10) Be confident and dependable.

Harkins (2008) argues that high-performance teams usually have a strong leader and that by following the aforementioned techniques other leaders can become strong leaders as well. Jackson (1999), in agreement with Jassawalla and Saschittal (2000), found that focusing on communication, human interaction, learning, information-sharing, the group, and task at hand contribute to the success of a team.

Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio and Lung (2002: 66–96) studied the effects of team leadership and group potency on group performance. They have an interesting stance on team leadership and explain that it entails the "collective influence of members in a team on each other" and that it does not entail the influence of one individual within or external to the team.

With this being said, the researcher has found that since the leader is a member of the team, there are certain roles and actions a leader should execute in order to nurture teamwork, cooperation and performance among teams.

Leader roles and actions that nurture teamwork, cooperation and performance

DuBrin (2010: 258) lists the following nine key roles a leader should play in an organisation:

1) Build trust and inspire teamwork;
2) Coach members towards higher performance levels;
3) Facilitate and support team decisions;
4) Expand the team's capabilities;
5) Create a team identity;
6) Anticipate and influence change;
7) Inspire teams towards higher performance levels;
8) Enable and empower members to accomplish their work; and
9) Encourage members to eliminate low-value work.

In the South African context, for teams to perform well, there has to be certainty in job security and a good performance management system is essential to ensure improvement in performance (Jackson, 1999: 313).

In the research done by Chong (2007: 203) on "team role characteristics underlying high and low performing teams", he listed authors such as Belbin (1981, 1993), Woodcock (1989), Margerison and McCann (1990), Davis et al. (1992), Parker (1990) and Spencer and Pruss (1992) whose research focused on "team roles and how these affected team performance". He also listed Deihl and Stroebe (1987), Gersik (1988), Evenden and Anderson (1992), Furnham et al. (1993), Cohen and Ledford (1994) and Katzenbach (1998) whose research was concerned with "high-performing teams and the objective measurement of their effectiveness". This is indicative of the amount of research studies that have already been done on team performance.

In another study done by Mills and Weeks (2004: 152-162), leadership is shown to have a positive effect on team relationships and the results showed that 57% of the teams were rated as "successful". They have "perceived their work to be part of their organisation's key strategic goals", "team members knew and respected each other", they "have worked together before", and in the end "high-performing teams had stronger team leaderships".

Barker in Hesselbein, Goldsmith, and Beckhard (2008: 1–7) explains that the model used by the "Mondragon Cooperative, located in the Basque region of northern Spain" where the Mondragon model was the ultimate success story and where it was proven that with strong leadership, the correct organisational structure, sound financial and human resources management, training and development, good solid change management principles in place, and commitment from team members, the organisation will be successful in reaching its goals and objectives.

This section addressed the third objective of this chapter. It provided a discussion and review of the definitions of performance, the measures applicable to analysing performance, the importance of considering challenges, improvement of performance, and lastly the role of teams and their importance to organisational performance. As alluded to, this research study will focus on organisational performance and not on individual (employee) performance.

The following section addresses the fourth objective of this chapter, which is to review the literature on leadership for performance, specifically to establish a desired or appropriate leadership style that will improve performance in an organisation.

2.5 LEADERSHIPS FOR PERFORMANCE

In this section, the goal is to provide a theoretical overview of particular leadership styles that may be conducive for the improvement of performance in organisations. In order to achieve this goal, relevant leadership styles will be discussed, followed by a critical evaluation of the missing links in the understanding of the leadership-performance relationship.

Leadership styles relevant to performance

It is argued that there is not necessarily a definite right or wrong way for leaders to lead their followers as there is no best or most effective style of leadership for the public sector. DuBrin (2010: 123) refers to a study that was done on hundreds of executives that revealed that the most successful leaders are leaders that "adopt many different leadership styles". The organisational culture also dictates the appropriate leadership style. DuBrin (2010: 124) argues that "the most effective leader will show versatility and flexibility which will be relevant to the situation he/she finds themselves in".

As the circumstances at an organisation changes, the effective leader adapts. They exert "contingency leadership" (DuBrin, 2010:133–160). With "situational leadership", the leadership style is matched to the competencies of the member on a given task. The goal-path theory of leadership effectiveness determines that the leader/manager chooses the leadership style based on the characteristics of the member and the demands of the task. DuBrin (2010:

132–165) reiterates that the leader has a choice of which leadership style to choose or decide whether the situation needs change. Robbins, Judge, Odendaal and Roodt (2009: 288–300) agree. They categorise the approaches to leadership into “Trait Theories” (transformational and transactional leadership styles), “Behavioural Theories” (leadership grid style), and “Contingency Theories” (Fiedler model, situational leadership theory, and path-goal theory).

In the light of the aforementioned, leadership effectiveness becomes important. DuBrin (2010: 20–21) explains that one can best understand leadership by “examining the leader’s characteristics and traits, behaviour and style, group member characteristics, and the internal and external environment”, and that those will determine how effective the leadership will be.

This is explained further in the below-mentioned framework for understanding leadership. See Figure 2.9 below.

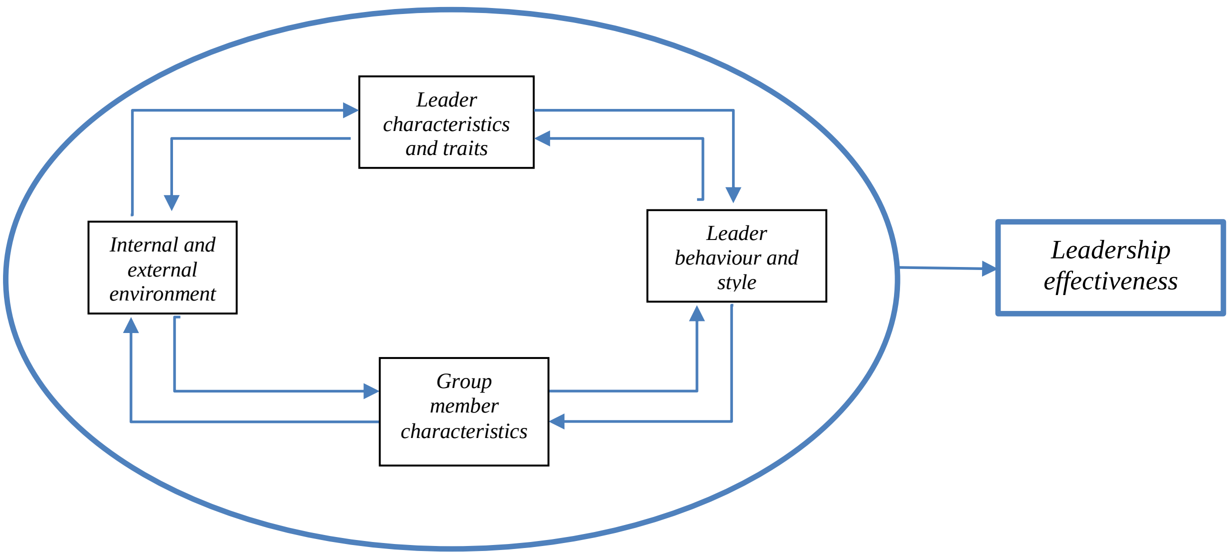


Figure 2.9: A framework for understanding leadership.
Source: DuBrin (2010: 21)

In his article, Thomas (1988: 388–400) evaluated research done by Lieberson and O’Connor’s 1972 “path-breaking study” on the impact that CEOs had on corporate performance as well as other research done in large retail firms in the UK. Through his evaluation, it was found that leadership may or may not have an impact on organisational performance and that further research was required. Further research was done, as described in the next section.

Research done on leadership's impact on performance

Bass (1995: 463–478) published an article on research that concluded that "leadership is effective if followers achieve their goals or meet their needs as a consequence of successful leadership" (Bass, 1995: 464). His research stipulated that followers were motivated to perform better, develop themselves further, and believed in the organisation "as a consequence of belief in the leader" (Bass, 1995: 467). A further conclusion that was made was that "high-level transformational executives could move followers to exceed expectations – to generate extra effort, creativity, and productivity" (Bass, 1995: 468). This was found to be achieved because the supervisor provided continuous feedback to the employee about in which performance areas they excelled and which areas required improvement.

In further research done by Bass (1998: 2), he purports that "Transformational Leadership" consists of components such as "Charisma", "Inspirational Motivation", "Intellectual Stimulation", and "Individualised Consideration", whilst the following are components of "Transactional Leadership": "Contingent Reward" and "Management-by-Exception". Furthermore, Bass (1998:2) adds that when there is no "transaction" taking place there is the component of Laissez-faire Leadership. Bass (1998: 7–8) introduced the "Model of the Full Range of Leadership" where leaders show each of the above-mentioned components to some extent. This is best depicted in Figure 2.10 below:

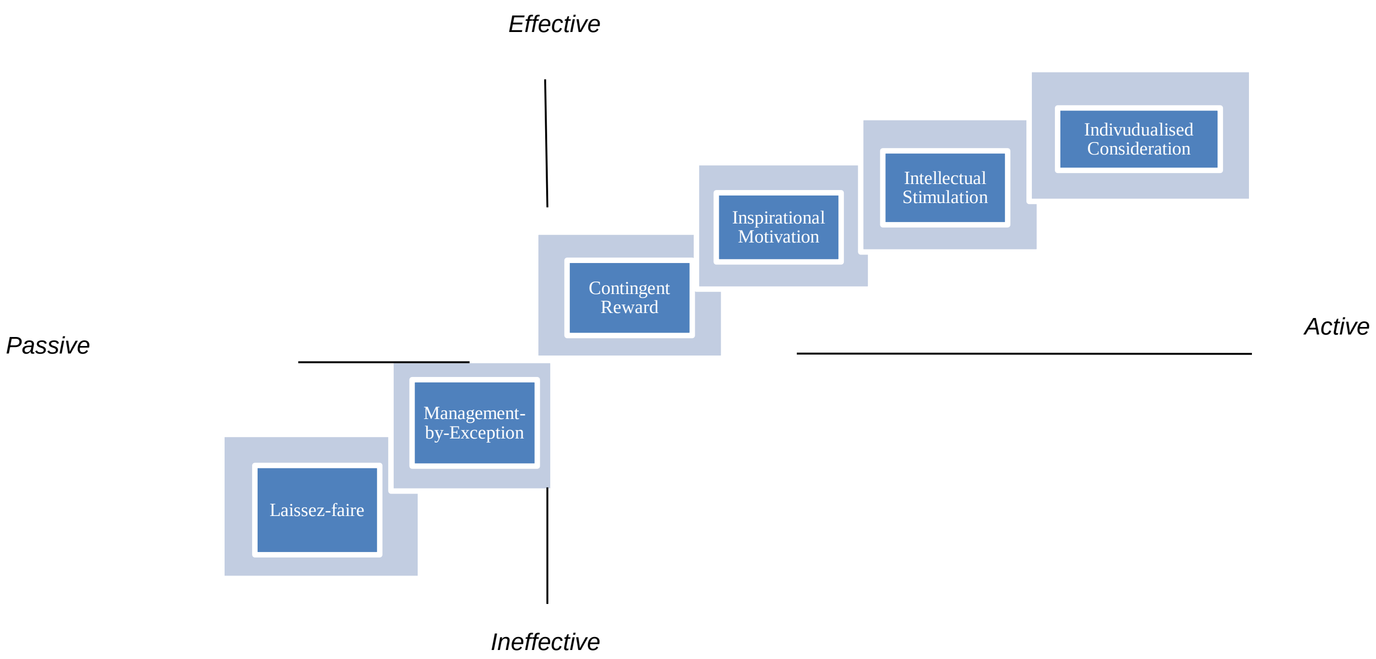


Figure 2.10: Full Range of Leadership.
Source: Bass (1998: 7–8)

The shade around the leadership components depicts the frequency with which a leader displays a particular style of leadership. Through empirical research done by Bass (1998), it was found that when transformational leadership is observed, the employee is active and effective and thus does perform well. With transactional leadership, it was found that the employee is more passive and ineffective and thus does not perform so well. Through this research, it was found that organisations (naturally consisting of teams of employees) perform better when transformational leadership is observed (Bass, 1998: 7–17).

Work done by Shamir, House and Arthur (as cited in Bass, 1998: 26) corroborates these findings and concludes that "transformational leadership moves followers to exceed expectations in performance". Besides this, it was also found that transformational leadership contributes to the decreasing of stress that employees experience in the workplace. Stress is an integral part of the lives of most people. If people do not know how to handle it, it may lead to serious health issues. The attitude and skills of transformational leaders assist employees in handling stress and conflict as well as enhancing cohesion among followers, which all contribute to an increase in performance (Bass, 1998: 26).

A study of the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles on organisational performance in small-scale enterprises in Nigeria concluded that the "intellectual stimulation" and "individual consideration" components of the transformational leadership style yielded positive and insignificant effects on followers and performance. In addition, it found that the "contingent reward" and "management-by-exception" components of the transactional leadership style yielded positive and significant effects on followers and performance. The study concluded that the transactional style of leadership is "more appropriate in inducing performance in small scale enterprises" than the transformational style of leadership. However, the study recommended that as the enterprise grows, develops and matures, it should "strategise to transit to a Transformational leadership style" (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa & Nwankere, 2011: 100–111). On the other hand, according to Idris and Ali (2008:168) who also studied the style of transformational leadership, specifically its impact on the performance of business firms in Malaysia, the transformational leadership style only has a positive impact on performance if it is exercised together with "best practices" in the organisation. According to Webb (as cited in Idris & Ali, 2008: 166) "'best practices' are considered as business methods that provide competitive advantage through improved customer service, better asset utilisation, or reduced costs".

Ojokuku, Adetayo and Sajuyigbe (2012: 202–207) found that charismatic, transactional and bureaucratic styles of leadership had a negative effect on organisational performance, whilst transformational, autocratic and democratic styles of leadership had a positive effect on organisational performance. The results of the study revealed that there is a “strong relationship between leadership style and organisational performance” (Ojokuku et al., 2012: 202–207). According to Williams (2012: 125–136) who did research in a public sector setting, transformational leadership styles fit well in the public sector, although the public sector might not “allow their managers to be transformational in leading their respective agencies” as most of them (the leaders) would remain doing things as prescribed by public sector legislation in order to keep their jobs. Transactional leadership style is, according to Williams (2012: 129), more commonly used in public sector organisations. These leaders have employees that report to them and simply ensure that employees deliver on their roles and responsibilities and in return receive rewards or punishment based on their performance.

The aforementioned literature shows that research studies can yield different results if conducted in different contexts. According to Kotze and Venter (2010: 413), the aim of their study was “to obtain the perceptions of followers and leaders regarding leadership effectiveness within a public sector institution in South Africa”. The South African developed Leadership Behavioural Inventory (LBI) was used as the research assessment instrument. The LBI is “based on transformational and transactional managerial elements needed by leaders to lead successfully within the unique South African context” (Kotze & Venter, 2010: 413). The elements of leadership effectiveness that were tested include the influencing of individuals as well as groups “towards the achievement of goals” and overall “institutional success” (Kotze & Venter, 2010: 414–415). In a nutshell, what the research has found was that the different environments in which the leader operates may determine or motivate them to behave in a particular way. For example, the study found that the level of leadership, be it junior-level, middle-level, senior-level or top-level managers (the sample of the study consisted of middle-level managers), may determine the focus of leadership within the institution. Additionally, the specific characteristics of the public sector institution may determine the “requirements for leadership behaviour and effectiveness” which may be considerably more unique to those in other public sector institutions (Kotze & Venter, 2010: 430).

No irrefutable evidence

The review of literature on the effect of leadership style on organisational performance up to this point did not provide irrefutable evidence of a desired or appropriate leadership style that improves performance in an organisation. This fact may leave some gaps in the understanding of the leader-performance relationship. The literature review up to this point laid the foundation for the next section, which will provide a critical evaluation of the missing links in the understanding of the leadership-performance relationship. The rationale behind this is so that further research could consider doing work on closing the gaps.

Critical evaluation of the missing links

This summary of the critique against the research done on the effect of leadership on organisational performance that are not complete is based on the work done by Jing and Avery (2008: 67–78).

According to Jing and Avery (2008: 68), when effective leadership is studied, the researcher neglects to consider clear distinctions in definitions such as “between leaders and non-leaders’, as well as “effective and ineffective leaders”, and they “overlook the definitions of the levels of leadership”. Jing and Avery (2008: 68) also argue that when the leadership-performance relationship is studied, the context would need to be borne in mind and that “more paradigms need to be considered”. For example, one researcher listed “four dimensions of transformational leadership, three dimensions of transactional leadership, and a non-leadership dimension of laissez-faire leadership”, whilst another researcher “categorises leadership into four paradigms”, and yet another one “prefers six leadership paradigms” (Jing & Avery, 2008: 69). According to Jing and Avery (2008:69), the “classical and organic paradigms” are being ignored and transformational leadership is identified as the most important leadership style to improve organisational performance.

In addition, Jing and Avery (2008: 74) argue that “methodological problems limit most existing studies” and believe that “multiple performance measurement criteria should be used”. Finally, according to Jing and Avery (2008: 74), “in addition to financial measures (i.e. net profits and sales turnover), non-financial measures (i.e. staff satisfaction and customer satisfaction) should be used to provide a more robust picture of organisational performance than previous studies”.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the goal was to focus on leadership and performance by means of a literature study. This was done by means of four objectives. Firstly, literature on the concept of leadership was reviewed by providing a historical overview of how the concept of leadership has developed between the 1900s and 1980s. Secondly, some definitions, theories/approaches and styles of leadership were discussed in order to create an understanding of leadership. This included contemporary models of leadership and the importance to continuously endeavour to develop and enhance the understanding of the specifics around modern-day leadership requirements. Thirdly, literature was reviewed on performance measures, performance challenges, and ideas around the improvement of performance such as motivation and empowerment. This included a review of teamwork and effective leadership which may be beneficial to enhancing organisational performance. Lastly, literature was reviewed on which leadership styles would be most conducive for leaders to guide or inspire the organisation towards improving its performance, which was ended off with a summary of the critique on the missing links when studying the leadership-performance relationship.

It became clear that context was important for research and in the next chapter the work environment where the research for this study was conducted will be discussed. The relevant policies and legislation, mandate, functions and organisational structure of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) will be covered with specific reference to the Branch: Environmental Programmes (EP Branch).

CHAPTER 3

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS: ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES BRANCH – AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, a literature review was provided on the concepts of leadership and performance. The objectives of the literature review were to create understanding and to conceptualise the research variables. The conceptualisation focused mainly on leadership theories and styles relevant to performance. Organisational performance was illuminated and the literature review was concluded with an assessment of which leadership styles may be most conducive for performance improvement, as researched.

In this chapter, the goal is to contextualise the research by focusing briefly on South Africa as a country as well as the public sector and specific institution in which the research was done (the study locus). In order to achieve this goal, the following three objectives will be pursued:

- The first objective of this chapter will be to examine the status quo of the public sector in South Africa with a brief synopsis of the economy and employment in the country (the latter is important in the light of the EP Branch and EPWP projects focusing on the creation of employment opportunities for the poor);
- The second objective will be to provide the institutional background to the study. This will be done by means of an explanation of the policy and legislation to which the Environmental Programmes Branch ascribes; followed by a description of the mandate and functions of the work environment and how they link to government-wide outcomes. Furthermore, the organisational structures depicting the components and posts staff occupy alongside an explanation of the location and geographical dispersion of staff and projects will be provided; and
- The third and final objective will be to describe the leadership at the EP Branch, to provide the organisational challenges identified at the time, and to reflect on how the EP Branch has performed over the past two financial years (2014/15 and 2015/16) under the current

leadership. In further pursuance of the final objective of this chapter, the difference between good and bad leadership will be explained by utilising the work done by Schwella (2013).

At the end of this chapter, the work context should be clear so that the reader could have a better understanding of the case study's data collection and analysis as well as findings, which will be discussed in later chapters.

In the section that follows, the perspective of South Africa as a country will be considered.

3.2 COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE

In this section, the goal is to provide a contextual overview of South Africa as a country in order to create an understanding of the study locus. In order to achieve this goal, the following topics will be covered:

- The status quo of the state and the public sector will be described; and
- A brief synopsis of the economy and employment levels in the country will be provided.

In the discussion that follows, the status quo of the state and public sector in South Africa will be scrutinised.

3.2.1. The state and public sector

As conveyed by Burger (2015) in a presentation at an International Summer School on the topic of Public Value held in Poland during August 2015, South Africa is 115th on the "Fragile State Index" and 3rd in terms of "Inequality". Burger (2015) argues that "climate change" and "sustainable development" are now important catchwords and presented other factors that explain South Africa's "shared dysfunctional context". According to Hartley in Benington and Moore (2011: 171–184), the public sector in a state that is "stable" might not necessarily need innovation and improvement, however, innovation and improvement of public services are necessary in a state where the political, economic, and social environments are continuously changing. In a response to a "changing context", public organisations can either "fine-tune" their services for the improvement of their quality or "alter" them in a radical manner (Hartley in Benington and Moore (2011: 171–184).

Following this logic, Schwella (2008: 26) promotes the idea that for public leaders to deal with "adaptive problems", they need to understand the context in which they need to provide leadership. Once they know and understand the context, they need to find the appropriate leadership strategy and behaviour for dealing with the problem. So leaders have to develop leadership competencies. Schwella (2008: 26) believes that public leadership involves democratic action through a transparent process where all relevant role-players are involved in realising goals and objectives in order to enhance policy-making and service delivery that will ultimately improve the quality of life of the people.

Schwella (2008: 27) reiterates that the organisation (public sector department) should be seen as a system where "everybody's actions and work affect the activities of everybody else". According to Schwella (2008: 29) the public leader works in a general context (social, technological, economic, environmental and political) as well as a specific context (those parts of the general context that affect that government department, i.e. its leaders, suppliers, clients, competitors, etc., directly), and this should therefore be borne in mind by public leaders so that they may make the right leadership choices throughout their interactions with their followers.

Since context is essential and since public leadership operates in an open system, environmental influences should be studied on a continuous basis. Public sector departments are being scrutinised to deliver on their strategic outcomes and they have to provide evidence that they have performed. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) has set guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of departmental programmes and how the M&E function should be institutionalised. Public leaders have to lead with this context as backdrop to ensure that their employees perform at optimal levels and that their employees provide evidence for their performance as well as continuously consider the risks associated with their strategic deliverables and targets.

Given that South Africa has a population of nearly 53 million people, spread over nine provinces governed by different political parties, and different races speaking at least one of 11 official languages, it is inevitable that every member of the public is affected in one way or the other, good or bad, by the services rendered by government departments. Through the delivery of services government departments have to try and address the inequalities of the past on a continuous basis. Programmes are aimed at the eradication of poverty and economic stability, and public leaders are expected to continuously come up with new and innovative ways to improve service delivery efforts and address the social and other problems the country is battling with.

According to Franks (2014: 55), the South African public service consists of more than 1.6 million employees, which is much bigger than that of Brazil, Russia, the UK and the USA. Government finds itself grappling with unaccountability, corruption and a lack of proper service delivery throughout the country. The Public Management Bill 2003 was promulgated to ensure a disciplined and managed Public Administration, but the results are yet to be seen (Franks, 2014: 55)

As part of the endeavours of creating an understanding of the country perspective for the study, the economy and employment levels in South Africa will be considered in the next section. This is important in the light of the EP Branch and EPWP projects that have the mandate to focus on the creation of employment opportunities for poor South Africans.

3.2.2. The economy and employment

During the fourth quarter of 2015, South Africa's unemployment rate declined by 1% to reach 24.5% in the fourth quarter of 2015 as per reports released by Statistics South Africa (Government Communications & Information Services, 2016). Unemployment was at 25.5% in the third quarter of 2015. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) indicated that employment grew by 190 000 people in the fourth quarter, followed by a decline in the number of unemployed persons by 225 000. The results of the QLFS showed that South Africa's working age population was 36.3 million. Sixteen million are employed, 5.2 million are unemployed while 15.1 million are not economically active. Economists say there is nothing to be optimistic about. The National Development Plan (NDP) targets employment at 24 million people. The absorption rate in quarter four is at 44.2% whilst the labour force participation rate was at 58.5%. Despite the increase in employment levels and the subsequent decrease in unemployment levels, 5.2 million people remain unemployed. Of these unemployed people, 65.7% are young people aged 15 to 34 and 57.6% did not complete matric. Meanwhile, the expanded unemployment, which includes those who were available to work but did not look for work, declined by 117 000 to 8.2 million. Economists said the Reserve Bank is in a tough position of conducting monetary policy in an environment of rapidly rising inflation and poor economic growth (Government Communications & Information Services, 2016).

Providing a country perspective with reference to the state, public sector and economic situation in South Africa has laid the foundation for the next section which considers the institutional perspective of the study. This is essential in order to create a better understanding of the findings of the research, which will be provided later in the study.

3.3 INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In this section, the goal is to provide a specific institutional overview of the work environment where the study was conducted. In order to achieve this goal, the following topics will be covered:

- The policy and legislation that the EP Branch at the Department of Environmental Affairs ascribes to will be provided;
- This will be followed by describing the mandate and functions of the EP Branch and which government-wide outcomes they can be linked to; and
- The organisational structures portraying the number of components and posts staff occupy will be shown together with an explanation of the geographical dispersion of staff and locations where projects are found on a South African map.

In the next section, the policy and legislation the EP Branch ascribes to will be considered.

3.3.1. Policy and legislation

The year 2016 marks 20 years since former President Nelson Mandela signed the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution) into law. The overall mandate and core business of the DEA are underpinned by the Constitution and all other relevant legislation and policies applicable to government, including the Batho Pele White Paper (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2015a: 10). Section 24 of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) states the following:

> Everyone has the right
> (a) to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and
> (b) to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that –
> (i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation;
> (ii) promote conservation; and

(iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

To give effect to this section of the Constitution, the policies and legislation that the DEA ascribes to have been enacted in the form of overarching and enabling Integrated Environmental Management legislation. Some of the major acts include the following:

- Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998;
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) 107 of 1998;
- National Environmental Management Amendment Act 46 of 2003;
- National Environmental Management Amendment Act 8 of 2004;
- National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004;
- National Environmental Management Air Quality Act 39 of 2004;
- National Environmental Management Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008;
- National Environmental Management Amendment Act 44 of 2008;
- National Environmental Management Waste Act 59 of 2008.
- National Environmental Management Amendment Act 62 of 2008; and
- National Environmental Management Amendment Act 14 of 2009.

(Department of Environmental Affairs, 2015a: 10–17)

The policies referred to above include the following:

- White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, 1997;
- White Paper on Environmental Management, 1998;
- White Paper for Sustainable Coastal Development in South Africa, 2000;
- White Paper on Integrated Pollution and Waste Management, 2000;
- National Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2011; and
- White Paper on National Climate Change Response, 2011.

(Department of Environmental Affairs, 2015a: 10–17)

The aforementioned acts and policies are applicable to the Department of Environmental Affairs, of which the EP Branch is one of seven branches. The work of the EP Branch is specifically legislated by Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) legislation, described below.

EPWP legislation, the "Ministerial Determination No. 4: Expanded Public Works Programme" as contained in Government Gazette No. 35310 of 4 May 2012, applies to the employees/beneficiaries of Environmental Programmes and established "conditions of employment for employees in Expanded Public Works Programmes" (EPWP). This Ministerial Determination was made in terms of "Section 50 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act" (Republic of South Africa, 2012).

The above acts, policies and legislation only become meaningful when the specific mandate and functions of the EP Branch are explained. The next section will cover this.

3.3.2. Mandate and functions

The Department's Constitutional mandate is further translated in the Department's vision of "A prosperous and equitable society living in harmony with our natural resources", which it has undertaken to achieve through its mission of "Providing leadership in environmental management, conservation and protection towards sustainability for the benefit of SA and the global community" (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2015a).

The DEA has, as is the case with all other government departments, adopted the outcomes-based approach to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) as well as improving organisational performance towards reaching its strategic goals and targets. Table 3.1 below lists the 12 outcomes of government and highlights (in bold text) those outcomes that both the DEA and the EP Branch in particular contribute to.

Table 3.1: Government's 12 outcomes.

GOVERNMENT OUTCOMES	CONTRIBUTION FROM THE DEA
1: "Quality basic education"	Not applicable
2: "A long and healthy life for all South Africans"	Only applicable as far as the environment is concerned
3: "All people in South Africa are and feel safe"	"Combat illegal activities at the border and ports of entry" and "Strengthen capacity in all sectors of anti-corruption work"
4: "Decent employment through inclusive growth"	"Implementation of EPWP" (reflected under the EP Branch)
5: "Skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path"	"Implementation of DEA/Sector Internship /Learnership Programmes including placements"

GOVERNMENT OUTCOMES	CONTRIBUTION FROM THE DEA
6: "An efficient, competitive and responsive economic infrastructure network"	"DoE supported by DMR and DEA in conducting exploratory drilling to establish economically recoverable shale gas reserves, and investigate environmental impacts and mitigation coordination, development and implementation of strategic integrated projects in the National Infrastructure Plan (SIP 19)"
7: "Comprehensive Rural Development"	"Spatial Planning and land use management"
8: "Human settlement"	"Provision of Basic Services as reflected in outcome 9 (new developments and addressing backlogs)"
9: "Responsive, accountable, effective and efficient developmental local government system"	"Increased number of households with refuse removal services & reduced number of households with no access to rubbish disposal"
10: "Protect and enhance our environmental assets and natural resources"	"Implementation of EPWP" (reflected under the EP Branch)
11: "Creating a better South Africa and contributing to a better and safer Africa in a better world"	"Regional and international agreements and engagements"
12: "An efficient, effective and development oriented public service"	"Alignment with DEA plan will be demonstrated"

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs (2015a)

The EP Branch contributes towards Outcome 4, "Decent employment through inclusive growth", which is realised through the implementation of EPWP projects. The desired outcome is to address unemployment for people living in poor communities in order to alleviate poverty whilst simultaneously developing their skills to increase their employability. The EP Branch also contributes towards Outcome 10, "Protect and enhance our environmental assets and natural resources", which is realised through Outcome 4. The EPWP projects strife to ensure a "balance between the social, economic and environmental aspects for sustainable living". There are 14 EPWP projects that are being managed by the EP Branch. They are as follows:

(1) "Working for Water",
(2) "Working on Fire",
(3) "Working for Wetlands",
(4) "Working for Ecosystems",
(5) "Working for Forests",
(6) "Bio-Mass Energy",

(7) "Eco-Furniture Programme",

(8) "Working for Land",

(9) "Working on Waste",

(10). "Working for the Coast",

(11). "Youth Environmental Services",

(12). "People and Parks",

(13). "Greening & Open Spaces",

(14) "Wildlife Economy".

(Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014)

It will become clear where these programmes fit in when the organogram of the EP Branch is discussed. In the next few pages, the organograms of the entire DEA as well as the EP Branch will be presented.

3.3.3. Organisational structures

Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 illustrate the aforementioned organograms in a visual form. The first organogram (Figure 3.1) shows where the EP Branch is located in the Department and that it is one of the following seven (7) branches:

1) Office of the Chief Operating Officer.
2) Legal, Authorisations, Compliance and Enforcement.
3) Oceans and Coasts.
4) Climate Change and Air Quality.
5) Biodiversity and Conservation.
6) Environmental Programmes.
7) Chemicals and Waste Management.

(Department of Environmental Affairs, 2015a)

The EP Branch is the biggest of the seven (7) branches, manages the largest budget, and has staff that are stationed at regional offices in all nine (9) provinces. The other branches are all situated in Pretoria.

Figure 3.2 shows the reporting lines. It shows that the EP Branch comprises of the Directorate: Bio-Security (D: BS), the Chief Directorate: Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes (CD: EPIP), the Chief Directorate: Information and Sector Coordination (CD: IMSC), and the Chief Directorate: Natural Resource Management (CD: NRM). The researcher is stationed at the Directorate: Branch Coordination and Administration, in the Office of the Deputy Director General (ODDG), who is the Head of the branch.

The first seven of the 14 EPWP programmes listed above ("Working for Water", "Working on Fire", "Working for Wetlands", "Working for Ecosystems", "Working for Forests", "Bio-Mass Energy", and "Eco-Furniture Programme") are being managed by the CD: NRM Programmes and the rest ("Working for Land", "Working on Waste", "Working for the Coast", "Youth Environmental Services", "People and Parks", "Greening & Open Spaces", and "Wildlife Economy") by the CD: EPIP. The D: BS regulates alien invasive plant and non-plant species entering and leaving South Africa. The CD: IMSC is responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation, reporting, strategic planning and support for the first two Chief Directorates as well as the D: BS (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014).

In the section that follows the organograms depicted in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, the number of staff attached to the EP Branch and where staff are located, will be provided.

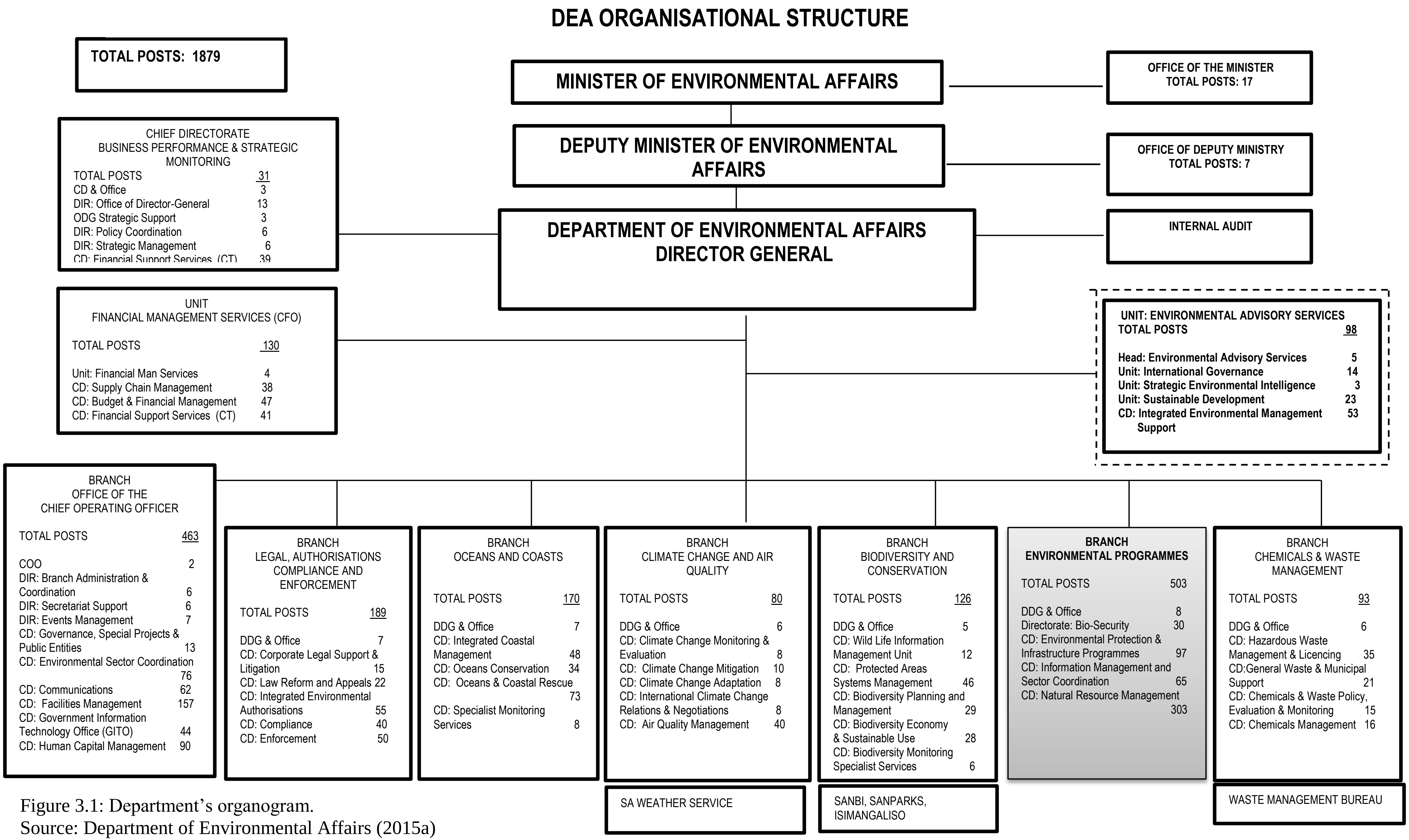


Figure 3.1: Department's organogram.
Source: Department of Environmental Affairs (2015a)

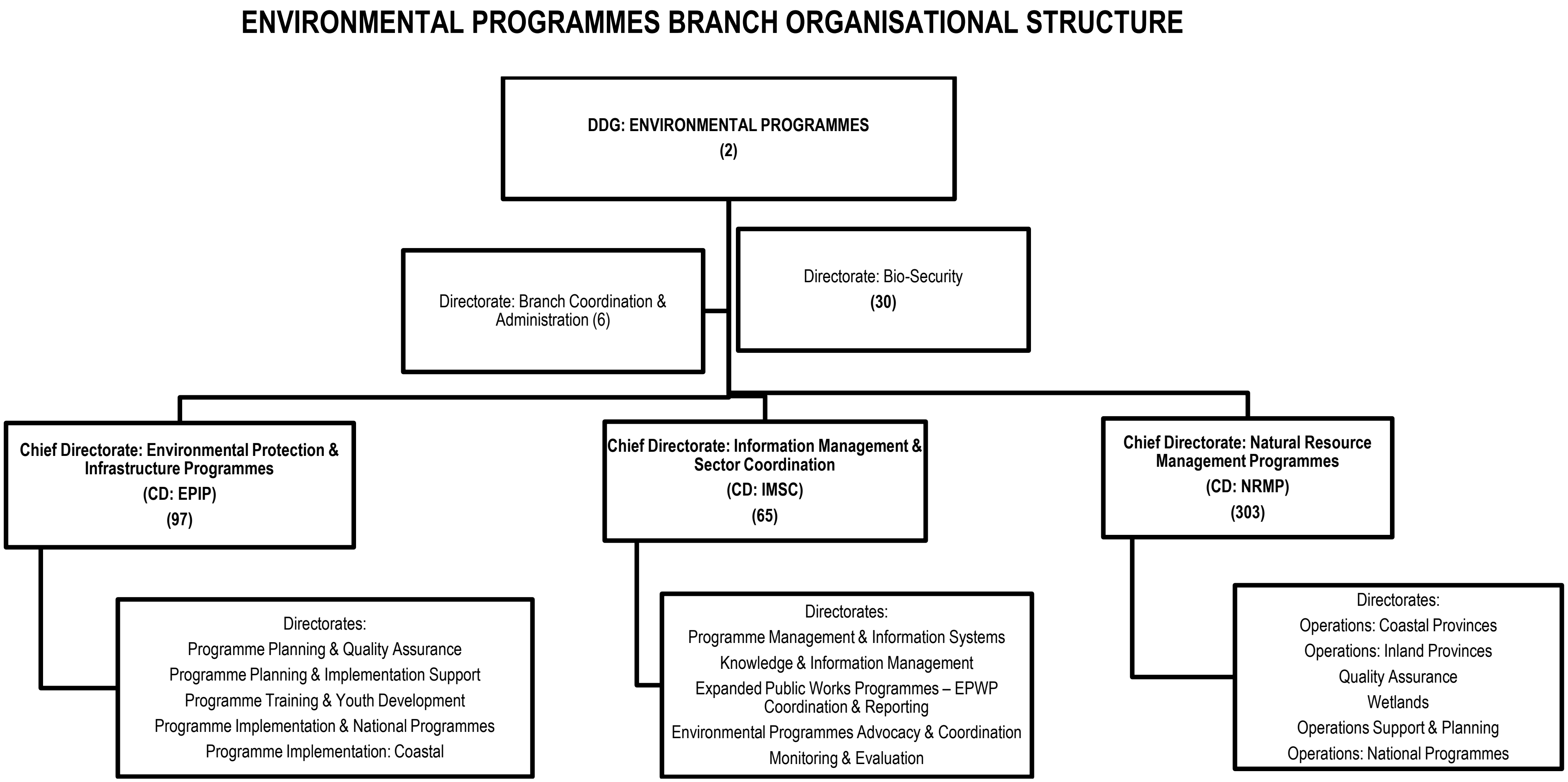


Figure 3.2: EP Branch's organogram.
Source: Willemse (2015)

3.3.4. Geographical dispersion of staff

The Department of Environmental Affairs has 1879 staff members in total. The Accounting Officer is the DG, who is responsible for the overall leadership of the Department. Branches, each headed by a Deputy Director General, report directly to the DG. This study was done at the EP Branch, which has a total of 503 posts spread across the ODDG (8 posts), the CD: EPIP (97 posts), the CD: IMSC (65 posts), the CD: NRM (303 posts), and the D: BS (30 posts) (Willemse, 2015).

The EP Branch has regional offices in all nine (9) provinces. Staff from both the CD: EPIP and the CD: NRM are situated in each province and are stationed mostly in two separate buildings in the province. See Table 3.2 below for the number of staff in each province.

Table 3.2 Number of staff in each province.

No.	Province	Number of staff
1	Free State	22
2	Mpumalanga	24
3	Eastern Cape	25
4	Gauteng	34
5	KwaZulu-Natal	36
6	North-West	39
7	Northern Cape	40
8	Limpopo	46
9	Western Cape	55

There is a total number of 321 staff members placed at regional offices, i.e. 64.2% of the total number of staff attached to the EP Branch.

Source: Willemse (2015)

Regional staff at the EP Branch are responsible for managing the implementation and day-to-day management aspects of the EPWP projects in their respective regions (provinces). These staff complements all report to Directors who report to Chief Directors who in turn report to the DDG. The mentioned projects are spread throughout the nine (9) provinces in South Africa as shown in *Addendum 1*

The rest of the staff complement that are not placed in the provinces are situated at the National Office in Cape Town or at Head Office in Pretoria.

The third and final objective of this chapter will be addressed in the next section. It will provide a brief synopsis of the leadership profile at the EP Branch, the organisational challenges identified at the time, and how the organisation has performed during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years. This will be followed by a brief comparative explanation of good and bad leadership, as considered by Schwella (2013: 65–90).

3.4. LEADERSHIP PROFILE, CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVED PERFORMANCE AT THE EP BRANCH

In 2011, in the South African public sector, the government transformed the racial and gender composition of senior managers so that 72% were Africans, 10% Coloured, 5% Asian and 13% White. Of the approximately 10 000 senior managers, 63% were male and 37% female (Franks, 2014:55). Given all the challenges faced by the government, according to Franks (2014: 55), the situation required "exemplary" and "bold" leadership.

In this section, the goal is to provide a profile, the performance challenges, and the actual performance achieved by the leadership of the EP Branch. In order to achieve this goal, the following topics will be discussed:

- The profiling of leadership at the EP Branch will be done by describing the different levels of leaders that form part of the unit of analysis that will be used during the case study data collection process;
- Moreover, the performance challenges identified during the 2015/16 strategic planning session of the EP Branch will be summarised. This is necessary so that the reader is aware of the issues before the actual case study survey is done; and
- Lastly, the organisational performance of the EP Branch during the 2014/15 and 2015/20 financial years will be illustrated. Again, so that the reader is aware of the actual performance of the organisation, which will be tested in the case study survey questionnaire, discussed in the next chapters.

Next, the leadership of the EP Branch will be profiled.

3.4.1 Profile of leadership at EP Branch

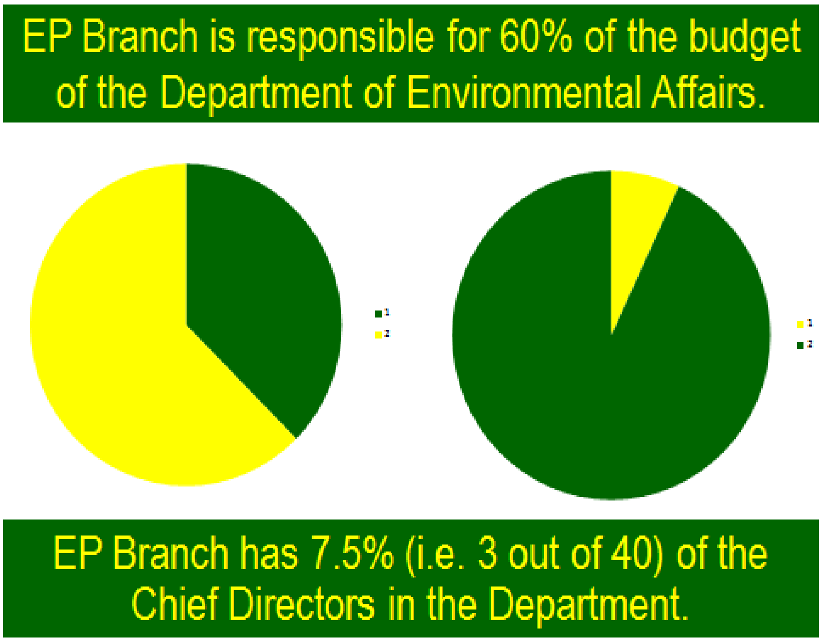
Only managers in the occupational classification of Senior Management Service (SMS) (Levels 13 and above) will be profiled. This profile is based on what is known about the SMS members in the researcher's involvement with their functions as a member of staff of the EP Branch. For the purposes of this study, the leadership at the EP Branch consists of the following levels of leaders:

- One Deputy Director General (Level 15):
    - At the helm of the EP Branch, responsible for providing strategic leadership and overall management services to the Environmental Programmes Branch, there is one Deputy Director General (DDG), who provides direct supervision and leadership to three Chief Directors (CDs). For operational reasons, the DDG provides further supervision and leadership to two directors and their staff members, as shown in the organisational structure of the EP Branch (Figure 3.2).
- Three Chief Directors (Level 14):
    - The CD responsible for managing the identification, planning and implementation of the Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes throughout the country under EPWP using labour methods targeting the unemployed, youth, women, people with disabilities and SMME's, provides direct supervision and leadership to 5 directors and overall leadership to 91 staff members.
    - The CD responsible for providing management, operational oversight and supervision for the optimal functioning and development of the Natural Resource Management Programmes, provides direct supervision and leadership to 6 directors and overall leadership to 296 staff members.
    - The CD responsible for ensuring effective knowledge and information management support services for the branch activities as well as managing the coordination of socio-economic interventions, provides direct supervision and leadership to 5 directors and overall leadership to 59 employees.
- Eighteen Directors (Level 13):
    - There are 18 directors that are responsible for the day to day management functions of the directorates as shown in the organisational structure of the EP Branch (Figure 3.2). Also, for the implementation and project management of the EPWP programmes and regions/provinces as discussed under paragraphs 3.3.2 and 3.3.3. These 18 directors, including the two directors that report directly to the DDG, provide direct supervision and leadership to employees on levels four to twelve.

The numbers of staff members that they lead are included in the numbers mentioned in the above paragraphs.

These levels of leaders are targeted in the case study survey and will form part of the unit of analysis used in the data collection of primary survey data, discussed in the next chapters.

At the EP Branch, compared to the rest of the Department, Figure 3.4 illustrates the organisational demand that is placed on the CDs who make up 7.5% of the CDs in the Department, whilst expected to manage 60% of the Department's entire budget.



Yellow = EP Branch
Green = Rest of Department

Figure 3.3: EP Branch budget and management.
Source: Preston (2016)

It should be accepted that this is an enormous amount of pressure for any public sector leader. Being responsible for national programmes with huge budgets, and at the same time being responsible for providing leadership to a diverse group of employees, may be significantly challenging.

The next section will briefly describe the major operational challenges faced by these senior managers. These challenges may pose threats to the performance of the EP Branch.

3.4.2. Performance challenges at EP Branch

The challenges experienced during the 2015/2016 financial year, which relate mainly to budgets and data management, according to Preston (2016), were presented at a Strategic Planning Session of the EP Branch held during January 2016, in Pretoria, South Africa. These are briefly summarised as follows:

Budget constraints: With over 60 000 workers in the field, budget constraints were likely to require slowing down implementation towards the end of the 2015/16 financial year.
Data management and verification: With the new EPWP data requirements, in terms of which all IDs with data should be verified retrospectively since June 2015, significant delays were caused for all EPWP data. The difficulty in data verification was attributed to the sheer volume of data (over 60 000 workers to collate); project managers struggling with ID certification when not all workers are available; admin challenges, given the numbers, i.e. the sorting and linking of IDs to participants and projects; quality of IDs submitted (illegible, etc.); and deceased participants or those who have left the programme and cannot be traced.

(Preston, 2016)

In the midst of these challenges, it was still expected from the EP Branch, like with any other public sector department, to deliver on its main targets and performance indicators. It should be noted that the National Department of Environmental Affairs, together with all other government departments, ascribes to the commitments made in South Africa's National Development Plan: 2030 (NDP). The NDP envisages that by 2030 the South African economy should have grown exponentially and that there should be nearly no unemployment (National Planning Commission, 2011: 28). In terms of Government's "New Growth Path" 5 million new jobs should be created before 2020. This initiative "seeks to do so by providing a supportive environment for growth and development, while promoting a more labour-absorbing economy" and it is therefore proposed that the cost of living for the poor should be reduced. The NDP suggests that the EPWP be broadened "to cover 2 million fulltime equivalent jobs" by the year 2020. Moreover, it maintains that business and labour should initiate ideas for the reduction of youth unemployment (National Planning Commission, 2011: 54–55).

Public leaders, and especially leaders at the EP Branch, are expected to ensure that the enabling environments are created within their areas of responsibility for employment levels to rise. The EP Branch has an overall responsibility to create job opportunities through the implementation of EPWP projects in the environmental sector (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2015a).

In the next section, the performance achieved during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, relating to Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs and Work Opportunities (WOs), as well as overall performance is reflected on.

3.4.3. Achieved performance at EP Branch

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Minister of Public Works and Minister of Environmental Affairs on the EPWP Phase III (2014-2019) explains that Full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs refer to "one person-year of employment. A one person-year is equivalent to 230 person-days of work. Person-years of employment equals the total number of person-days of employment created for targeted labour during the year divided by 230. For task-related workers, tasks completed should be used as a proxy for 8 hours of work per day" (Moela, 2016). Also, the MoU defines a work opportunity (WO) as "paid work created for an individual on an EPWP project for any period of time. The same person can be employed on different projects and each period of employment will be counted as a job opportunity" (Moela, 2016).

The achieved performance of the EP Branch relating to FTEs and WOs, according to the 2014/15 Annual Report and internal performance reports, is displayed in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 below.

Table 3.3: Performance of main deliverables.

	2014/2015 financial year			2015/2016 financial year		
Performance Indicator	Annual Target	Actual Achieved	% achieved	Annual Target	Actual Achieved	% achieved
No. of FTEs	35'936	33'318	93%	34'824	28'141	81%
No. of WOs	69'158	85'140	123%	66'150	73'381	111%
	Women 55%	Women 53%		Women 55%	Women 54.06%	
	Youth 60%	Youth 70%		Youth 60%	Youth 64.51%	
	People with disabilities 2%	People with disabilities 1.66%		People with disabilities 2%	People with disabilities 3.79%	

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs (2015b) and Moela (2016)

The number of FTE jobs created dropped from 93% in 2014/15 to 81% in 2015/16 and the number of WOs dropped from 123% in 2014/15 to 111% in 2015/16 (still above target).

Table 3.4: Overall performance summary.

		2014/2015 financial year		2015/2016 financial year	
	Legend	# of indicators achieved	% of indicators achieved	# of indicators achieved	% of indicators achieved
	≥ 95%	19	76%	17	71%
	50-94%	5	20%	5	21%
	0-49%	1	4%	2	8%
		Total: 25		Total: 24	

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs (2015b) and Moela (2016)

During the 2014/15 financial year, the EP Branch achieved 19 out of its 25 indicators (76%) and during the 2015/16 financial year, 17 of the 24 indicators (71%). This boils down to a decrease of 5% in the overall performance of the Branch during the two financial years. The reasons provided had mainly to do with projects that started late or evidence of performance that was outstanding. For example, with the EPWP data, where not all data could be verified, performance could not be rated as good performance (Department of Environmental Affairs (2015b) and Moela (2016)).

One of the questions this study aims to answer is whether leadership had anything to do with how the EP Branch had performed. This will be pursued through the collection of primary data. Explaining the difference between good and bad leadership may be important for understanding and answering the questions asked in the collection of primary data. This explanation is provided in the next section.

3.4.4. Good and bad leadership

Rotberg, as cited by Schwella (2013: 66), essentially says that good leadership brings hope, positive change and growth, whilst bad leadership brings despair and stagnation. South Africa's first democratically elected President, the deceased Mr Nelson Mandela, believed that there is a relationship between good governance, the rule of law, and leadership. In the words of Schwella (2013: 67), Mandela implied that "good public leadership respects the values of democracy, the rule of law, and good governance", whilst bad public leadership "disregards these values at the expense of the population".

Perhaps it is apt, at this time, to quote Schwella's (2013: 70) definition of "public leadership", which states that "democratic and effective public leadership is action taken through a dynamic and transparent process involving the leader with relevant others in the inclusive setting and effective realisation of legitimate, legal and socially valuable goals and objectives".

Schwella (2013: 68) strongly disagrees with the notion that a good leader can lead effectively in any setting and argues that public leaders function in a context that is very different from that of a leader in the private sector. In the case of this study, the researcher has conducted an investigation into the possible effect of leadership on organisational performance in a public sector department, which context is important for understanding the design, methodology, and interpretation of the findings of the study.

Leadership can be good or bad. Schwella (2013: 71) differentiates between good and bad leadership as follows:

- *Good* leadership means *effective* leadership, which produces the desired change and results; and
- *Bad* leadership means *ineffective* leadership, which fails to produce the desired change and results.

For the purposes of this study, this differentiation will be the basis of the questions asked in the empirical part of the study discussed in Chapter 5.

This reflection on what good (effective) leadership and bad (ineffective) leadership entail, as well as the reflection of the performance of the EP Branch, together with the preceding sections on context, are important parts of this study. As mentioned previously, this study is interested in establishing if leadership has an influence on performance. With the EP Branch being the case, this influence will be discussed empirically in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.5. CONCLUSION

With this context in mind, this chapter ultimately aimed to portray the environment in which the study was conducted. The status quo in the country, the economy, as well as employment levels were discussed at the start of the chapter. Later on, the institutional perspective was discussed by noting the applicable policies and legislation, the mandate and functions, as well as the organisational structure of the EP Branch. The importance of context for research has been alluded to numerous times in Chapter 2 as well. This chapter continued with the geographical dispersion of staff and projects the EP Branch implements across the nine provinces in South Africa. Additionally, the profile of leadership, the main performance challenges identified, and the performance achieved by the EP Branch during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, were covered.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, will discuss the design of this study and explain the methodology that was used to collect and analyse data. This discussion will provide clarity on primary and secondary data and it will become clear how the data collected in this chapter, Chapter 3, is relevant to the entire study. The manner in which sampling was done will also be explained, followed by an account of the limitations and ethics considered in the research design and methodology as well as methods employed to collect and analyse data.

CHAPTER 4

EXPLORING LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE AT THE EP BRANCH: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the goal was to contextualise the research by briefly focusing on South Africa as a country, the public sector and the specific institution where the research was conducted. Additionally, providing the leadership profile, some performance challenges and the organisational performance of the EP Branch during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years were assessed. In the current chapter, the goal is to discuss the research design and methodology employed to address the research problem. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives will be pursued:

- Firstly, to describe the design selected for the study and the methodology used to collect and analyse the data;
- Secondly, to describe the research variables and provide the validity and reliability requirements of the data;
- Thirdly, to describe the unit of analysis and the manner in which sampling was done;
- Fourthly, to provide an explanation of how the data will be analysed; and
- Finally, to provide the limitations and ethical considerations in the collection and analysis of the data.

Before the above-mentioned objectives can be pursued, the reader should be reminded of the research question and accompanying research objectives. As alluded to in Chapter 1 of this study, they are as follows:

Research Question:

- Does leadership have an effect on the overall organisational performance of the EP Branch?

Research Sub-question,

- What are the challenges and how can the organisation improve its performance?

Research Objectives:

- To understand and describe the characteristics of different leadership approaches and styles;
- To explore the challenges or debilitating factors of performance at the EP Branch,
- To establish the possible effect leadership may have on organisational performance at the EP Branch,
- To suggest how organisational performance could be improved, if necessary; and
- To identify a desired leadership style for improved performance at the EP Branch.

In the light of the above background, the design and methodology selected for the study are described in the next section.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As a first level in identifying the research design for a particular research project, Babbie and Mouton (2015: 75–77) make a distinction between empirical-type questions (for example exploratory, descriptive, and evaluative questions) and non-empirical-type questions (for example conceptual, theoretical, and normative questions). For empirical questions, the researcher would have to collect new data, whilst for non-empirical questions, it would not be required. The **type of question** will give the researcher an idea as to what type of research is to be conducted, which then determines the **approach** to the research, which approach, referred to by Babbie and Mouton (2015) as a "paradigm", is either qualitative or quantitative. Neville (2007:3) from the School of Management at the University of Bradford differentiates between these two approaches (or paradigms) as follows:

- Quantitative: "collecting and analysing numerical data" and "concentrates on measuring scale, range, frequency etc. of the phenomenon"; and
- Qualitative: "examining the less tangible aspects of a research subject, e.g. values, attitudes, perceptions" (Neville, 2007: 3).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the goal of this study is to explore the concept of leadership and its possible effect on organisational performance at the EP Branch. It is an exploratory study that aims to generate knowledge and understanding and, at the same time, aims to test perception and opinion. No assumptions are made on any of the research variables. Lourens (2007: 17) argues that when a research design is of an explorative nature, "aspects of [the] particular topic are investigated by means of a variety of techniques, with no question of a cause-and-effect relationship". This type of research focuses on the discovery of ideas and insights (Lourens, 2007: 17). The research problem in this study has been formulated in terms of a research question, asking if leadership does have an effect on organisational performance at the EP Branch. By asking a research question, this study omits any postulation or hypothesis that leadership does or does not have an effect on performance. Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013: 21) define hypotheses as "scientifically reasonable predictions", often stated as "if-then sentences" of which this study has none.

Based on the above-mentioned, it is thus clear that this study contains an empirical, exploratory question. This question will be addressed by using a qualitative approach (or paradigm).

As a second level of choosing a design and methodology, according to Babbie and Mouton (2015: 76), the type of **data**, be it primary or secondary data, should be considered. Leedy (1985: 133) agrees that the "nature of the data dictates the research methodology that must be employed in the processing of those data". The researcher also needs to consider where the data will be secured from and how the data will be collected and interpreted, therefore, data (also called facts), has a "relationship to both design and methodology" (Leedy, 1985: 85–86).

In this study, the collection of primary and secondary data would be collected from a sample of leaders at the EP Branch. Leedy (1985: 88–89) differentiates between "primary data", the data "that lies closest to the source of the phenomenon" and is collected empirically by the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 76), and "secondary data", the data from a secondary source, albeit what the researcher reads in books, articles or reports, which can be "distorted by channels of communication", also referred to by Babbie and Mouton (2015: 76) as "data that has already existed when you began your research. Leedy (1985: 91) continues to explain that data can be found in only two forms, namely "writings" and "observations", broken up in the following four sub-categories:

(1) written records of past happenings (i.e. literary data or historical data);
(2) observations being described (i.e. descriptive survey data);
(3) observations that can be quantified (i.e. statistical data); and
(4) observations of comparisons (i.e. experimental data).

In this study, primary and secondary data will be collected through observations that can be described as well as written records, both obtainable from within the organisation. At this point, it may be necessary to provide clarity on the research approach/paradigm, design, methodology and methods used to answer the research question of this study, by way of an illustration. The reader is referred to Figure 4.1 below for an illustration of the overall study. Further discussion of the design and methodology will be provided thereafter.

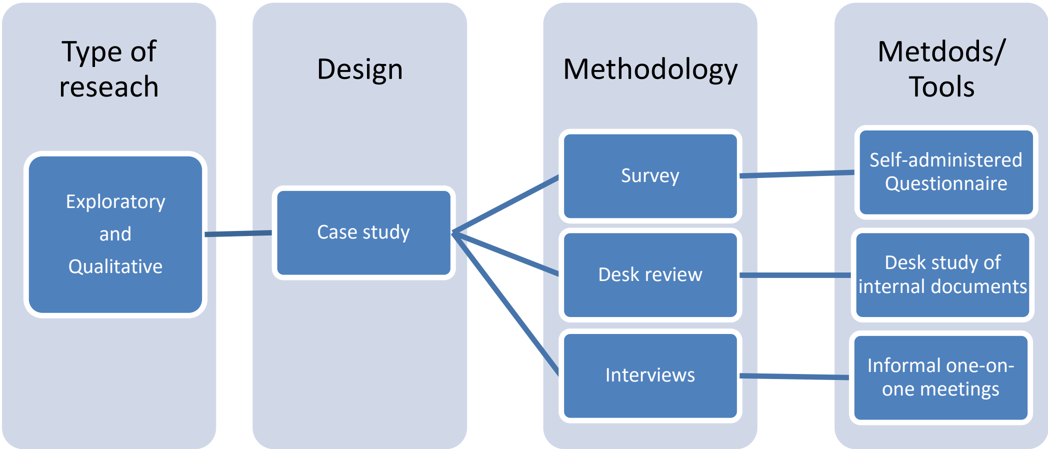


Figure 4.1: Overall study.

The following paragraphs will provide further discussion on Figure 4.1. Parts of Figure 4.1 will be replicated in this discussion. At the end of this discussion, there should be no ambiguity on the design and methodology used in this study.

4.2.1. Case study design

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: xxvi), a research design is "a **plan** or structured framework of how you intend [to conduct] the research process in order to solve the research problem". This is reiterated by Leedy (1985: 96) who states that a research design is "… the **strategy**, the plan, and the structure of conducting a research project" and that the type of design depends on the statement of the problem (Leedy, 1985: 97).

In this study, the researcher was interested in finding answers to the problem of public sector departments that are alleged to not deliver services and public sector leaders who are not accountable and effective. These indictments have been propagandised in the media in many different forms. Through the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), government has put measures in place to ensure that public sector leaders are held accountable and that they do proper reporting on performance targets and indicators.

The researcher chose the Environmental Programmes (EP) Branch as a case and aimed to find answers to the question whether leadership, or the type of leadership, had an effect on the performance of the organisation. This is an empirical question and in order to answer this question, the researcher had to explore and gather evidence from the case. The **plan/strategy** for conducting the research was therefore to construct a case study, which is one of three designs under the qualitative research paradigm:

1. Ethnographic design – "the data of cultural anthropology that is derived from the direct observation of the behaviour in a particular society" (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 279);
2. **Case study design** – "an intensive investigation of a single unit" [a person or an organisation], examining multiple variables. Context is important in case studies, as they take many perspectives into account and try to "understand the influences of multi-level social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours" (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 281); and
3. Life history design – "the full length book account of one person's life in his or her own words" (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 283)

In this study, an investigation was done on multiple variables (leadership, performance, and leadership styles) at an organisation (the EP Branch, a national public sector department), which was also the context (of which the mandate and functions were described in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.3.2). In addition, it took into account the information gathered through perceptions and opinions of people, as well as information gathered through the studying of documents.

In summary, the aforementioned dimensions make this study a case study. The manner in which the different methodologies (survey, desk review, and interviews) under the case study design were applied will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The different methods/tools employed under each methodology will also be discussed. However, focus will be placed on the methodology used for the collection of primary data, in contrast to the methodologies used for the collection of secondary data, the usage of which was covered in Chapter 3 and explained as being necessary for the purposes of providing a contextual background to the study.

4.2.2. Methodology

Babbie and Mouton (2001: xxvi) refer to research methodology as "the methods, techniques and procedures that are employed in the process of implementing the research design and research plan". Neville (2007: 5), from the School of Management at Bradford University, differentiates between methodology and methods as follows: Methodology is the "overall approach and perspective" used in gathering and analysing data and method is the "tools used to collect and analyse the data".

The methodologies used in this study included a survey, a desk review and interviews. Figure 4.2 provides an illustration to explain this.

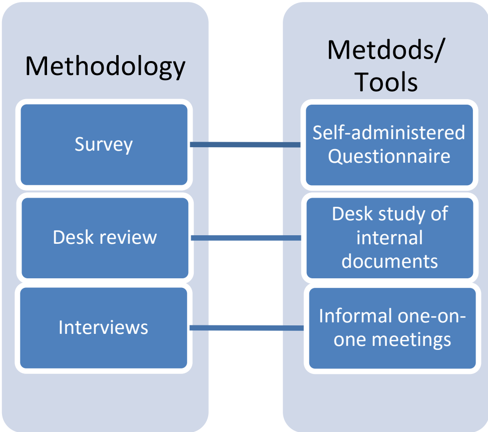


Figure 4.2: Research methodologies and methods/tools.

The first methodology and method used will be discussed first. A discussion on the other methodologies and methods used will follow in the order as they appear in Figure 4.2.

4.2.2.1. Survey

As introduced earlier, with the aim of answering the research question, the design utilised to gather acceptable answers is a case study design, using a descriptive survey methodology. The survey will collect and analyse primary data on leadership and performance from a sample of leaders at the EP Branch. The aim is to gather their opinions, knowledge and perceptions.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2015: 230) "survey research is perhaps the most frequently used research design in the social sciences", which design this researcher also found to be the most appropriate. As explained by Leedy (1985: 133), the word "survey" is associated with "the act of looking over or beyond" that which one can see or observe, while "descriptive means, "from" or "to write", meaning that researchers write about what they observe, making a record, a description, in a narrative form. Furthermore, "other recording of facts resulting from observations occur in the form of tables, charts, [and] graphs" (Leedy, 1985: 134). These are applicable to this study, based on the type of questions asked (close-ended and open-ended questions) and the fact that data analysis will be done qualitatively (words and meanings) as well as quantitatively (graphs, charts, percentages, and averages).

There are many variations of surveys used in social sciences research. For example, Wirth and Perkins (2016: 1–11) refer to a "knowledge survey" as an assessment tool used to enhance student learning. It assists with finding out how much a student knows before and/or after a course. A "perception survey", according to Erickson (2013), is mostly used to find out how people understand or experience their situations or environments. Thus, surveys provide a picture of what "exists, in what amount, and in what context" (Erickson, 2013). Reasons why surveys are conducted include the aim of obtaining "feedback on past/current performance and/or to obtain information for future direction", but also to identify and close gaps, encourage communication among all levels in the organisation, and identify benchmarks (Erickson, 2013).

The survey used in this study has elements of a knowledge survey as well as a perception survey. The senior managers that participated in the study were experts in the field of project management of environmental programmes and people. The survey aimed to gather the knowledge they held on the variables of leadership and leadership styles, as well as aspects of performance at an organisation. Furthermore, the survey was also a perception survey, as it aimed to gather information on the understanding and perceptions senior managers held on the research variables, in other words, their expert, informed opinions and ideas.

Under survey research, the methods or tools used to gather data are usually questionnaires, interviews, tape recordings, or a checklist or inventory as explained by Leedy (1985: 134). In this study, under the survey methodology, the method used was a questionnaire. This will be discussed next.

The method: the questionnaire

The questionnaire was used as a method or tool in the survey methodology to "probe below the surface" (Leedy, 1985: 135), by asking senior managers questions on leadership and performance at the EP Branch. Through this method, the researcher aimed to obtain honest, confidential and anonymous opinions from senior managers who were professional experts and knowledgeable practitioners in the field of environmental programmes. There were time limitations and owing to senior managers stationed in different provinces, it made administrative sense to employ a self-administered questionnaire, as opposed to conducting interviews to collect the primary data.

A semi-structured questionnaire with closed- and open-ended questions was developed and aimed at asking top and senior management members at the EP Branch what they knew about the concept of leadership, what challenges to good performance they had observed, whether they believed that leadership had an effect on performance, how they believed the organisation's performance could be improved, and which leadership styles they thought were demonstrated at the EP Branch. A semi-structured questionnaire with closed- and open-ended questions was presented to these managers. A URL from the Stellenbosch University's survey website was sent via an e-mail wizard to each of the participants. This questionnaire was self-administered. The respondents had to click on the website link to access the questionnaire and provide answers to the questions. This method was chosen because, as confirmed by Babbie and Mouton (2015: 258), it was less costly, more speedy, anonymity would be ensured, it would be more "effective for sensitive issues" and there would be a "lack of interviewer bias", as opposed to, for example, other methods like interviews in focus groups, which would not have all the aforementioned advantages. See *Addendum 2* for an example of the online questionnaire that was completed by the respondents. The top part of *Addendum 2* was translated into a letter that accompanied the questionnaire via email. This letter ensured the respondents' anonymity and explained the nature and purpose of the study.

The online survey questionnaire was also a convenient tool in that the need for paper usage or opening a spreadsheet as an attachment were circumvented. Furthermore, respondents could complete the questionnaire in their own time and the fact that their anonymity was ensured encouraged them to provide honest answers to sensitive questions.

A three-week period was provided for respondents to complete the questionnaire. After weeks one and two, e-mail reminders were sent out and at the end of the three-week period, 19 responses out of the sample of 22 participants were received. This translated into a response rate of 86 percent. A screenshot of the completion rate is provided in *Addendum 3*.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2015: 261), a response rate of 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting, while response rates of 60 and 70 percent are good and very good, respectively. Thus, the response rate of 86 percent obtained in this study can be regarded as excellent. The 14 percent of the participants (3 of the 22) that did not complete the questionnaire can be seen as a "normal attritional loss" in a questionnaire study (Leedy, 1985: 162), as researchers accept the fact that there is always a possibility of some people not returning the questionnaire anyway. It would be important to keep this fact in mind during the data analysis phase.

4.2.2.2. Desk review

A desktop review methodology was used to gather information (secondary data) on the organisation's strategic targets and performance indicators from its strategic plans and other internal documents. In addition, it was also used to gather information on the organisation's performance from its annual reports and internal performance reports during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years.

The method: desk study of internal documents

The researcher gathered the documents and studied them with the aim of gathering evidence of the organisation's strategic targets and performance indicators. Some information on the leadership profile of the EP Branch was also gathered through studying these internal documents. The annual report of 2014/15 was studied and compared to internal performance reports based on 2015/16 targets. The performance of the organisation as achieved during the two financial years was then compared and captured in tabular form. Refer to Tables 3.3 and 3.4 in Chapter 3. The information gathered through this method was used to provide a contextual background to the case study.

4.2.2.3. Interviews

The third methodology under the case study design was the interview. Interviews can be used by the researcher asking predetermined questions in order to obtain answers from the interviewee. In this case, the researcher opted for informal, impromptu discussions as and when the opportunity presented itself.

The method: informal one-on-one meetings

Through one-on-one informal interviews with key staff at the Office of the DDG, more secondary data was collected on the performance challenges of the EP Branch as well as the dispersion of staff throughout the nine provinces of the country. The data gathered through this method was discussed in Chapter 3, under headings 3.3 and 3.4, also with the aim of providing more context to the study.

As indicated, secondary data was gathered and captured in Chapter 3 in order to provide clarity on the context of the study. Furthermore, primary data was gathered for the empirical part of the study and will be subject to certain requirements. In the next section, the research variables and validity as well as reliability requirements for the data will be discussed.

4.3 VARIABLES, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The research question presented in this study was based on two variables, namely leadership and performance. Leadership was treated as the independent variable and performance as the dependent variable. The survey questions were thus designed with this independency and dependency aspects in mind. The performance variable was dependent on the leadership variable and the effect that leadership would have on performance, if any, was tested in the study.

The success of any research, and specifically the tools used to conduct the research, is dependent on whether it is reliable and valid. Leedy (1985: 24) explains **validity** as the "effectiveness of the measuring instrument" and whether the type of instrument does measure what it is "presumed to measure". Also, if it is "free from biases" (internal validity) or whether the "conclusions drawn from a sample" could be "generalised to other cases" (external validity) (Leedy, 1985: 25). According to Erickson (2013), confirmed by Neville (2007: 26), validity also requires that every question should "relate directly and statistically" to the research variables. In other words, "the right questions are being asked to obtain meaningful usable responses" to answer the research question, in this case, whether leadership has an effect on performance.

Erickson (2013), confirmed by Neville (2007: 26), argues that **reliability** is when "results obtained will be the same if [the study is] repeated with the same people the following day, the answers to questions are of the same quality no matter where they are asked, and that several questions measure a single concept".

As alluded to above, the researcher had considered these aspects during the construction of the questionnaire and how it was administered to the participants. The questionnaire, therefore, had validity, as the type of questions would accurately obtain the knowledge and perceptions held by participants. It also met the requirements of reliability, as it could be used in a different setting, administered by someone else, and still it would obtain the same information.

With regard to the descriptive survey, data collected through this survey may be easily distorted through biases and the researcher should "safeguard the data from the influence of bias" (Leedy, 1985: 161). The aspect of bias will be discussed next.

Bias

"Bias" is defined as "any influence, or condition … which … causes distortion … of the data from those which may have been obtained under the conditions of pure chance; furthermore, bias is any influence which may have disturbed the randomness by which the choice of a sample population has been selected" (Leedy, 1985: 161). With regard to this study, the data collected from the research participants was described and discussed as observed and both the sample and population were the same. In other words, there was no bias in the sampling used, as sampling was not done for the population. Refer to section 4.4 on sampling.

However, bias could have crept in if the responses to the questionnaire, for example, were not representative of the population. In this case, it was not, as the response rate was 86%. Only 3 of the 22 participants did not complete the questionnaire. This excellent response rate was realised through the researcher's constant follow-up and numerous reminders that were sent to the sample population. In the next chapter, the researcher will illuminate the specific levels of the senior managers that have responded to the questionnaire (whether they were on level 13, 14 or 15) and by so doing prove that the responses were indeed representative of the research population.

Moreover, **reflexivity** would have needed to be considered, especially during the phase in which data is presented and analysed. Reflexivity refers to the perception that a researcher's thoughts and ideas tend to be biased because of the researcher's own perceptions and value system. Mauthner and Doucet (2003: 413–431), supported by Macbeth (2001: 35–68), argue that the researcher should be "reflexive" in "social science research" and that there should be "widespread recognition that the interpretation of data is a reflexive exercise through which the meanings are made rather than found". In this study, the researcher was aware of possible biases during the creation of the questionnaire, the way in which the responses would be analysed, and the way in which the findings would be written up. The researcher's personality and affiliation to the Office of the DDG of the EP Branch, as well as the fact that he was cautious about asking hypersensitive questions, might have had an effect on the research process. However, the integrity of the researcher prompted him to be true to the research process by being honest and truthful in the interpretation of the findings of the study. The findings of the study will be presented in the next chapter.

As suggested earlier, eliminating bias in sampling is important. The manner in which sampling was done will accordingly be explained in the next section.

4.4 SAMPLING AND THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Sampling is important as its purpose is "to select a set of elements from a population in such a way that descriptions of those elements (statistics) accurately portray the parameters of the total population for which the elements are selected (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 175). The sample of this study consisted of a total of 22 senior managers comprising Directors, Chief Directors and a Deputy Director-General, some of whom are stationed in Cape Town and some in Pretoria. The sample was the same as the population, which consisted of 22 participants.

Neville (2007:30) suggests that if the population has a population of 50 or less, sampling may not be necessary. In other words, data should be gathered from the entire population. In the case of this study, sampling was not done, as the population comprised 22 senior managers and the entire population was therefore used in the data collection process. Should the population have been larger, purposive sampling would have made sense for the case study and participants would have been selected based on the knowledge and expert positions they hold in the organisation. Purposive sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher deliberately selects a representative group based on his or her own judgement. It is fast, and the results are more representative of the target population than most other sampling methods (Patton, 1990).

The elements that will be studied in this research project, called the **units of analysis** (UOA), will be investigated by considering the sample of 22 senior managers. Furthermore, the Annual Report, Internal Performance Report, Strategic Plan, and key staff in the office of the DDG (also part of the 22 senior managers) will also form part of the UOA.

Once all of the data is collected through the UOA, it should be analysed methodically. A brief overview on how the data was analysed follows next. The full presentation and discussion on primary data will be provided in Chapter 5.

4.5 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DATA ANALYSIS

According to Durrheim (1999: 47), the purpose of data analysis is to "transform the data into an answer to the original research question" or to "express the data in a manner that is mentally digestible". Data is analysed in two forms: firstly, quantitative data is analysed by means of statistical analysis where the data is "transformed into numbers, percentages, tables, and diagrammatic presentation", and, secondly, qualitative data is "analysed through the identification of themes in the data, and thereafter the relationship of the themes, the process known as coding" (Durrheim, 1999: 47).

Primary data: As mentioned, a survey questionnaire was used to collect primary data on leadership and performance at the EP Branch. It was an online questionnaire, the link of which was emailed to senior managers. The data analysis process started when the coded reports from the online survey questionnaire were generated. These reports were migrated from Stellenbosch University's survey website into a statistical programme called Statistica 13. The latter was used to input data and output averages, graphs and charts. The questionnaire consisted of quantitative-type and qualitative-type questions. Different methods were used to analyse and discuss them. With the quantitative-type (close-ended) questions, the computer software programme generated the graphs and charts and the researcher interpreted them for possible answers. With the qualitative-type (open-ended) questions, the researcher read them carefully and used coding and summaries to describe what the responses alluded to.

Secondary data: With regard to the literature via the desktop study, and the data collected through informal interviews with key staff (secondary data), the content was reviewed, recorded, and summarised manually to find possible answers to the performance variable and to provide context to the organisation used in the case study, namely the EP Branch.

In Chapter 5, the data analysis process will be discussed in more detail. The next section will consider the limitations and ethical aspects considered in the collection and analysis of the data.

4.6 LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Babbie and Mouton (2015: 526) are of the opinion that the shortcomings and failures of any research should always be revealed to the reader. For this reason, the following **limitations** regarding the collection of data in this study are listed below:

- Time delays caused by capturing an Excel-produced questionnaire into the Stellenbosch University's survey website, having to learn how to design the survey with the aim of ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and ensuring the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument;
- Negotiation relating to the participation of senior managers in a period of three weeks and the fact that space and time had to be considered. This meant that not all possible questions could be asked or other levels of leadership be included in the sample. Only senior managers were targeted and not junior or middle management;
- The survey placed more focus on leadership styles conducive to good performance and not so much on leadership approaches;
- Only organisational performance was studied and not individual employee performance.

Besides these limitations, according to Babbie and Mouton (2015: 520 – 526), the **ethical issues** to be considered in social research are also of significant importance. Ethics is defined as "conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group" and "is typically associated with morality as both [ethics and morality] deal with matters of right and wrong" (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 520). The participation in surveys should thus be entirely voluntary and no harm should come to the participants for divulging personal perceptions or information that some may disagree with. Furthermore, the participant's interest should be protected and their identity and responses should not be revealed. This means that anonymity and confidentiality should be ensured (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 523). Ethics should also be considered in the analysis and reporting of data. This boils down to the researcher having to be upfront on how data was analysed and to uphold "objectivity and integrity" through the interpretation and reporting of the findings of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 526). Therefore, the **ethical considerations** of this study are described below.

The design and methodology that were used in the study, particularly with the collection of data, required that consent be obtained from the research participants. The DDG: Environmental Programmes approved the request to use the Environmental Programmes Branch as a case study for the research. He also approved the request to interact with senior managers with the collection of data. Consent forms had been completed by all participants and anonymity and confidentiality were promised from the outset. The latter was then also the reason why an online survey was chosen in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Although some personal information such as age, race and rank was requested, none of the respondents had to provide their names or any information that could be used to identify them. Moreover, it was a voluntary process and the safety of the respondents was not compromised in any way. The nature of the study was explained in the letter that accompanied the URL sent to them via email. Stellenbosch University's Ethics Committee had considered all these aspects and documents pertaining to the study during the application for ethical clearance. Following this, the application for ethical clearance was approved with stipulations that confidentiality should be protected.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research design and methodology for data collection, the variables, sampling, as well as the data analysis process were discussed. The design and methodology for any research project should be accurate. If not, addressing the research problem would be a futile exercise. The aspects of bias and reflexivity were also discussed in this chapter. The chapter concluded with some limitations and ethical aspects that were considered in the data collection and data analysis processes.

The next chapter will focus on the presentation and interpretation of the results of the primary data collected through the survey questionnaire.

CHAPTER 5

A SURVEY ON LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE IN THE EP BRANCH OF THE DEA: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the goal was to outline the development, selection and application of a research design and methodology for the study. The focus was on the collection of primary data, which was done through a survey questionnaire. Furthermore, the research variables, importance of sampling, as well as the data analysis process were discussed. The chapter was concluded with a discussion on the limitations and ethical aspects that were considered in the research process. In this chapter, the goal is to present and discuss the findings of the primary data collected through the survey questionnaire and simultaneously describe how the primary data relates to the secondary data collected through the desktop review of internal documents and informal meetings held with key staff at the EP Branch. The chapter will also reflect on the literature review provided in Chapter 2. In order to achieve these goals, the following objectives will be pursued:

- Firstly, to present the primary data collected as per the research objectives of the study. This presentation will be structured in the same way the survey questionnaire was structured. The questionnaire was divided into three sections, namely leadership, organisational performance, and leadership for performance. The latter will focus on specific leadership styles conducive to performance at the EP Branch;
- Secondly, to interpret and discuss the findings of the primary data and how they relate to the secondary data collected and presented in Chapter 3. The presentation and discussion of the findings will be done simultaneously. Moreover, the discussion will include references to the literature review covered in Chapter 2; and
- Finally, to provide an overall summary of the findings (a synthesis) and to indicate what it means for this study.

Before the data collected through the survey questionnaire will be presented and discussed, it may be useful to explain what the data analysis process entailed. This explanation will be in addition to the paragraph on data analysis provided in the previous chapter. The reader is reminded that the analysis of data as described in this chapter was done for the primary data collected through the survey questionnaire. The secondary data collected through the desk review and informal meetings, as explained in the previous chapter, was used to provide context, which was discussed in Chapter 3. An explanation of the methods used during the primary data analysis process is thus provided in the next section.

5.2 EXPLAINING THE METHODS USED DURING DATA ANALYSIS

Collecting primary data is a characteristic of the descriptive survey and should therefore be "organised and presented systematically so that valid and accurate conclusions may be drawn from [it]" (Leedy, 1985: 134). Babbie and Mouton (2015: 412) argue that even though a researcher has sometimes used qualitative methods of collecting data, the researcher would often need to use a quantitative method for **analysing** the collected data (as was the case with this study). In that case, the researcher would need to code the responses for interpretation by a computer. Coding categories to be used can be derived from the research purpose (Babbie & Mouton, 2015: 413) and edge-coding (when you write your codes, i.e. variable names or numbers, in the margins or open spaces in the questionnaire) could then be used.

In this study, the coding was done in an Excel spreadsheet when the questionnaire was manually constructed, but later on, when the questionnaire was loaded onto the university's survey website to create an online questionnaire, coding was done automatically by the computer software. The methods used for analysing responses to the different types of questions (qualitative and quantitative) were different.

Closed-ended questions (quantitative): With the closed-ended questions, the computer programme that was used to generate charts and graphs from is called Statistica 13. The researcher studied the different graphs and charts generated, combined some of them, and explained what the graphs and charts, as well as the percentages, meant for answering the research question.

Open-ended questions (qualitative): Responses to the open-ended questions were read through a few times. For coding, themes within the responses were highlighted, duplicate themes were combined, and categories were created. The categories found, as well as those themes that did not fall within a category, became the headings under those discussions. Summaries were then made of all the responses to the each questionnaire question.

The analysis of all primary data was concluded by considering information from the literature review and organisational context, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. In the next section, the primary data will be presented and discussed.

5.3 PRESENTING AND DISCUSSING PRIMARY DATA

As introduced, data will be presented and discussed simultaneously. This presentation and discussion will be done in the same order in which the survey questionnaire was structured. Questions were grouped in terms of relevance and the survey questionnaire was structured as follows:

Section 1: Leadership.

Section 2: Organisational performance.

Section 3: Leadership for performance.

Presenting and discussing the findings of the primary data and how they relate to the secondary data, as well as to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, will address the first two objectives of this chapter. In the next section, data on leadership is accordingly presented and discussed

5.3.1 Section 1: Leadership

This section considered the concept of leadership. The rationale behind the questions asked in this section was to test whether senior managers had knowledge and understood the concept of leadership. Also, it was investigated whether senior managers thought that leadership at the EP Branch was good (effective) or bad (ineffective). This "leadership" would include all respondents that completed the questionnaire, both supervisees and supervisors. The researcher provided the following definition of leadership according to DuBrin (2010: 3): leadership is defined as "the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organisational goals" and asked the respondents not to confuse the concept of "leadership" with the concept of "management". Respondents had to look at certain statements and had to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. All 19 of them (100%) agreed with the statement that it is important for any person in a position of power or authority in an organisation to understand the concept of leadership. See Figure 5.1 for percentages.

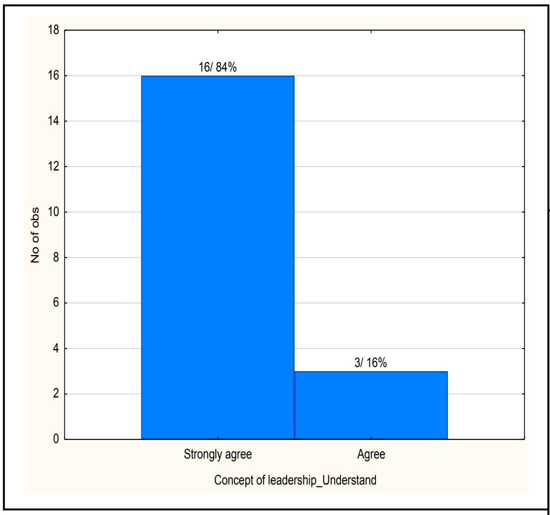


Figure 5.1: Importance of understanding.

When stated that leaders at the EP Branch did **understand** the concept of leadership, 42% of the respondents agreed, 32% were neutral and 26% did not agree. See Figure 5.2.

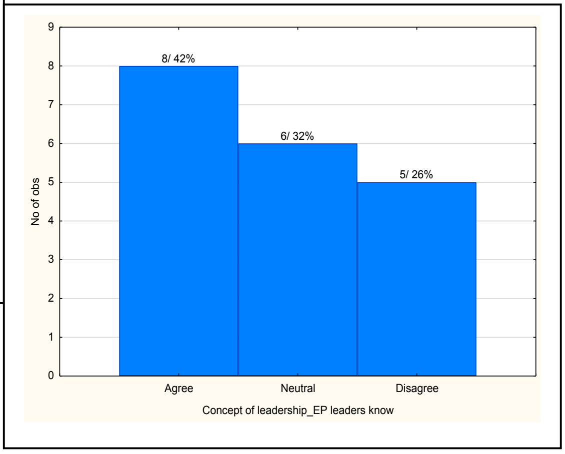


Figure 5.2: EP leaders understanding.

In response to other statements, senior managers responded as follows:

- 100% of them agreed that the success of an organisation depends on the type of leaders the organisation has.
- 100% of them agreed that leaders should know and care for themselves as human beings in all areas of their lives.
- 100% of them agreed that leaders should know and care for their followers as well.
- 100% of them agreed that a leader that knows and cares for themselves and their followers will be more capable of effectively leading their followers to a better state of affairs.
- 100% of them agreed that leadership starts with the individual leader as a person, and that it is important for employees that want to perform at their best to know and manage themselves.

When asked their opinion on whether leadership does have an **effect** on how an organisation performs, respondents answered differently. See Figure 5.3 for an illustration of how they responded to this question.

Eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents agreed, but 16% (3 out of the 19 respondents) strongly disagreed with the statement.

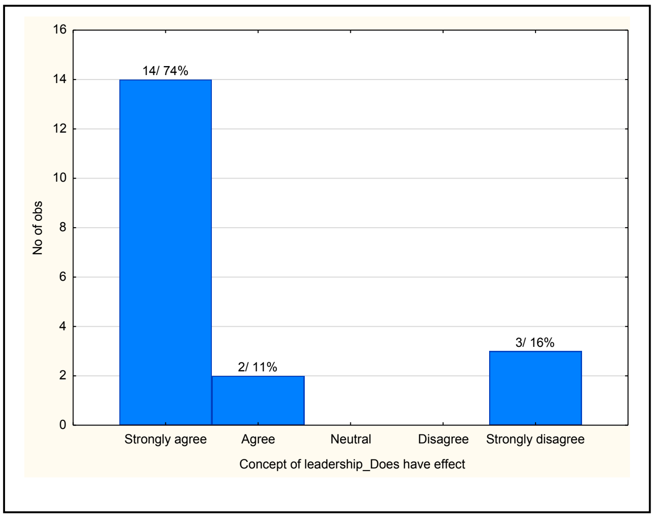


Figure 5.3: Does leadership have an effect?

In a different question later on in the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they thought that, besides leadership, there were **other factors** that would affect performance at the organisation.

The following answers were given:

- Having good *processes and systems* contribute to consistent performance.
- A caring *culture*, built on good work ethics, leads to good performance.
- Great *teams* that are highly motivated and *staff development opportunities* improve the employee's ability to perform well.
- An effective *organisational structure* with proper *goal setting and planning* can also lead to good performance.
- *Operational limitations* and a *lack of management* support and resources may also affect organisational performance.

These responses show that there are a number of opinions held by the respondents on what else besides leadership may affect performance at the EP Branch. Although these have been voiced, 100% of the respondents share a common belief that leadership can be good (effective) or bad (ineffective), of which 95% believe that good leadership causes an increase in performance and 89% believe that bad leadership causes a decrease in performance. Responding to the question whether **leadership at the EP Branch** specifically was **good or bad**, respondents had different viewpoints. See Figure 5.4 for an illustration of how senior managers responded.

Here, it is noteworthy that the majority of the responses was neutral (47%), 16% more than the 31% (6 out of 19) of the respondents that agreed. "Neutral" in this case could mean that respondents did not agree nor did they disagree. It is also noteworthy that 21% of the respondents disagreed entirely with the statement that leadership at the EP Branch was good (effective).

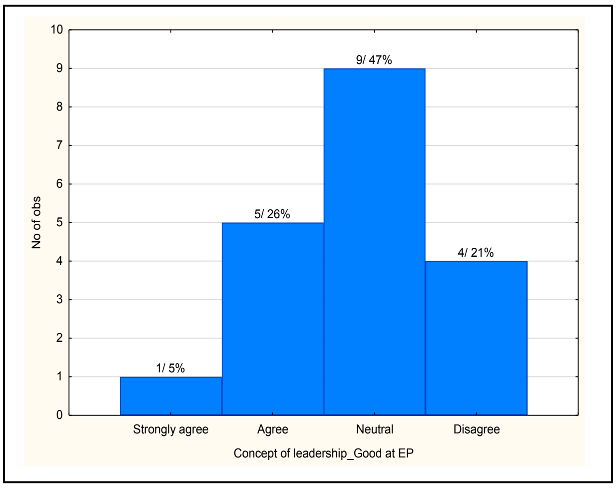


Figure 5.4: EP Branch leadership good or bad?

In a follow-up question, asking the respondents to provide their honest opinion on whether leadership at the EP Branch was effective or ineffective, the responses confirmed that 6 out of the 19 (now amounting to 32%) regarded leadership at the EP Branch as being effective. However, 53% was of the opinion that leadership was ineffective, clarifying the responses of "neutral" in a previous question as mentioned above. Figure 5.5 depicts these responses in a graph.

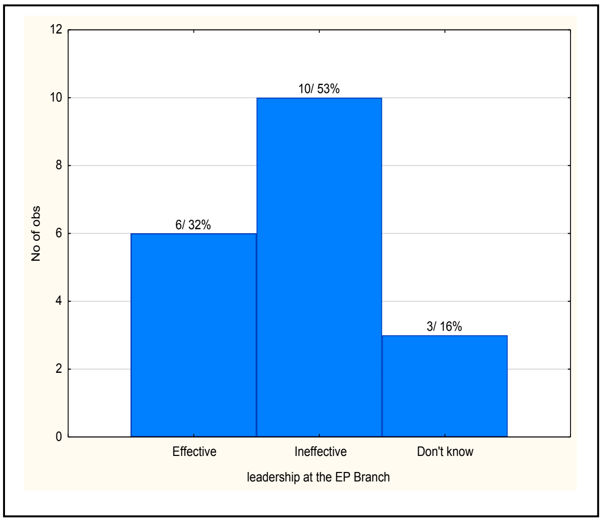


Figure 5.5: Leadership at EP Branch.

Here, it is now only 16% of the respondents that selected the "don't know" option, as opposed to the 21% as mentioned in the previous graph (Figure 5.4 above). This could mean that respondents had a chance to think about the question somewhat more.

Respondents were asked to reflect on the key elements of leadership (power, motivation, leader-follower relations, context and values) as listed by Goethals and Sorenso (2006: 96), as considered in Chapter 2, section 2.3.2, and had to explain what they regarded as good (effective) and bad (ineffective) leadership.

Their responses are listed in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Leadership described.

Good leadership described	Bad leadership described
Power: Leaders should not abuse their power. *Motivation and empowerment:* Leaders should motivate and empower staff, provide them with equal opportunities, and make them feel valued. *Leader-follower relations:* Leaders should lead by example and ensure effective communication between leaders and followers. Leaders should have high emotional intelligence, be humble, yet self-assured, ethical, fair and humane. They should have empathy with staff regarding the challenges they (staff) experience. Leaders should have integrity and be fair, supportive and appreciative of extra effort. *Context:* Leaders should command the context within which an organisation evolves and operates comprehensively and have a thorough insight into the field. *Values:* Leaders should live and embrace organisational values, be principled, objective, and decisive and take actions. *Teams*: Leaders should be able to guide and inspire individuals/teams to achieve goals. They should understand individual's strengths, power of teamwork and being open to inputs of staff. *Goal, vision, direction:* Leaders should understand the goals of the organisation and take everyone towards the attainment of such goals. Strategic alignment with the changing needs of all stakeholders (internal and external). *Decision-making*: Leaders should be able to make decisions that bring about efficiencies in the governance processes and apply consistency in approach and decisions.	*Power:* Leaders' abuse of power is very bad for any organisation. Leadership is not power. Bad leadership also occurs when leaders are defensive when challenges occur and arrogant when towards to criticism. *Motivation and empowering*: A lack of these in leaders can stifle growth. *Leader-follower relations:* Bad/ineffective leadership is where everyone works in silos, with no consultation, no communication with the followers, and no compassion. A lack of balance, unrealistic expectations from staff, and micromanaging staff further signify bad leadership. *Context:* Leaders do not consider the context of decision-making. Their approach is in the box and performance-focused, missing the bigger picture. *Values:* Leaders are arrogant and insecure, underhanded and petty, fear and are resistant to change, and selfish. *Teams:* Leaders work oblivious of their teams' talents and feelings. They do not recognise the team effort(s) and show a lack of trust in their teams. *Goals*: Leaders have no vision and are demoralising, directionless and victimising individuals, members of the group or team. *Decision-making:* Leaders are reluctant to take decisions and apply top-down individualistic decision-making without consultation. They have a hidden agenda when making decisions and are inconsistent in problem-solving.

Based on their responses about whether they thought leadership was good or bad, 6 out of 19 (32%) said it was good/effective, 10 out of 19 (53%) said it was bad/ineffective, and 3 out of 19 (32%) said they did not know, meaning that they were not sure if leadership was good or bad. The reasons why respondents described leadership as "good" or "bad" are listed below (See Table 5.2). Those who chose "don't know", also provided reasons.

Table 5.2: Reasons for good, bad, and don't know responses.

Reasons why "good"	**Reasons why "bad"**	**Reasons why "don't know"**
It is *people-centred*. Set objectives are *communicated*, including successes and failures. Always available to *account* for their actions and not take positions of blaming the systems. *Work gets done*, with all the challenges. Issues are from the disorganisation *outside*. There is integrity, passion and *visionary* commitment. The branch's performance is indicative of its leadership and the *national and international exposure* are other indicators of its success.	*Values and culture*: There is a culture and values vacuum, filled by too many personal agendas – perhaps because the culture and values are now driven by bureaucracy. *Change management:* Resistance to change is evident in major areas of EP leadership. *Decision-making:* There is a lack of decisions relating to strategic matters, an inability to rise above narrow personal interest, and a tendency to centralise operations. *Work-life balance:* Leaders lack balance in their life and do not lead by example. *Vision, goal:* There is no shared/common goal for branch business. We seem to be reactionary. *Lack of implementation*: It is ineffective but not completely ineffective. There are no consequences for those from the top. *Fairness*: There is support for other components over others and the initiatives are not supported equally.	Leadership does not take *decision* – forever consultations. Communication of *decisions* taken is not done transparently. Some managers are good leaders, but some are not. There is, however, good strategic vision from the DDG. It is full of everything. Its performance is *different* at certain levels.

Perhaps it is important to mention here that the profile of the leadership of the EP Branch as briefly touched on in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1, has also been tested with the questionnaire. It may be important to have a look at this in the next section so that the reader may have an idea of the knowledge, expertise, and demographical information of the EP Branch's leadership. This might also assist the reader in putting the responses to the questions in the aforementioned tables into perspective.

Profile of leadership at the EP Branch through the questionnaire:

Of the 22 individuals targeted, 19 individuals completed the questionnaire, bringing the response rate to 86%. Of the 19 individuals, the categories of post levels are illustrated in Figure 5.6 below.

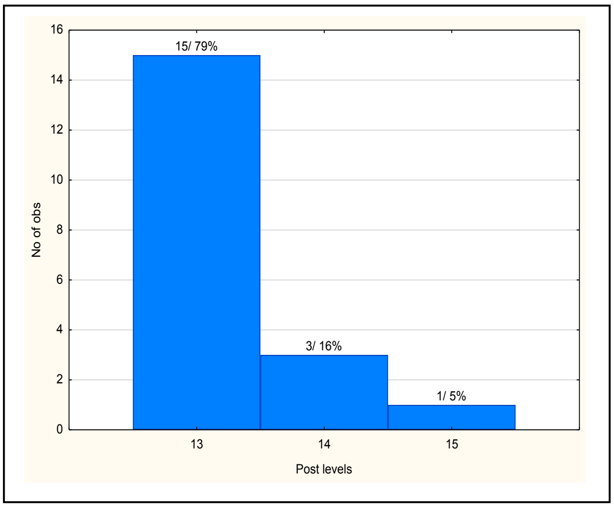


Figure 5.6: Post levels.

It was important to highlight this. However, compared to the leadership profile as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1, this was not an area of concern as it was only three members of the level 13 posts that did not participate in the survey. This amounts to 17% of level 13 individuals that did not participate and 83% that did participate. It is therefore safe to say that the sample was representative and whatever the three non-responding individuals would have said, would not have made a huge difference to what the majority would have had to say.

Other information is found in Table 5.3 below. The majorities are highlighted for the purpose of accentuating and noting. The years working and the years' experience as a leader give a good indication of the amount of knowledge and expertise the respondents should have among each other. These statistics therefore add an additional perspective to the profile of leadership at the EP Branch.

Table 5.3: General information on respondents.

Post levels	Gender	Race	Age	Years working	Experience as leader
79% on level 13	32% Female	***68% Africans***	21% between 31–40 years	***32% between 1–10 years***	11% between 1–5 years
16% on level 14	***68% Male***	5% Coloured	***58% between 41–50 years***	58% between 11–20 years	***63% between 6–10 years***
5% on level 15		5% Indian	21% between 51–65 years	5% between 21–30 years	16% between 11–20 years
		21% White		5% between 31–40 years	11% between 21–30years

Respondents had to provide information on leadership training attended and formal qualifications obtained. This was useful as competent leaders in the public sector should be well trained and qualified to enable them to deal with their job demands. See Figures 5.7 and 5.8 for a representation of leadership training and formal qualifications obtained by the EP Branch leaders.

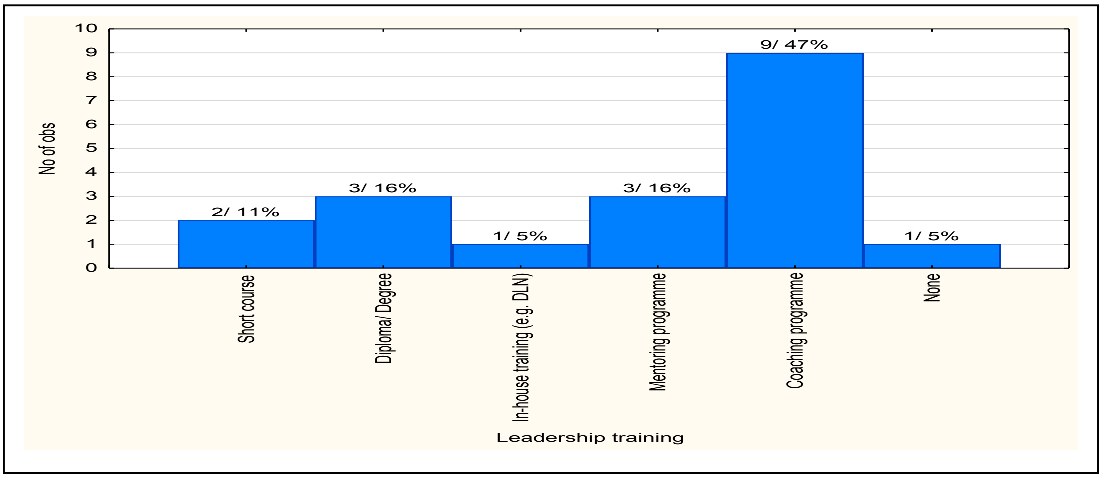


Figure 5.7: Leadership training.

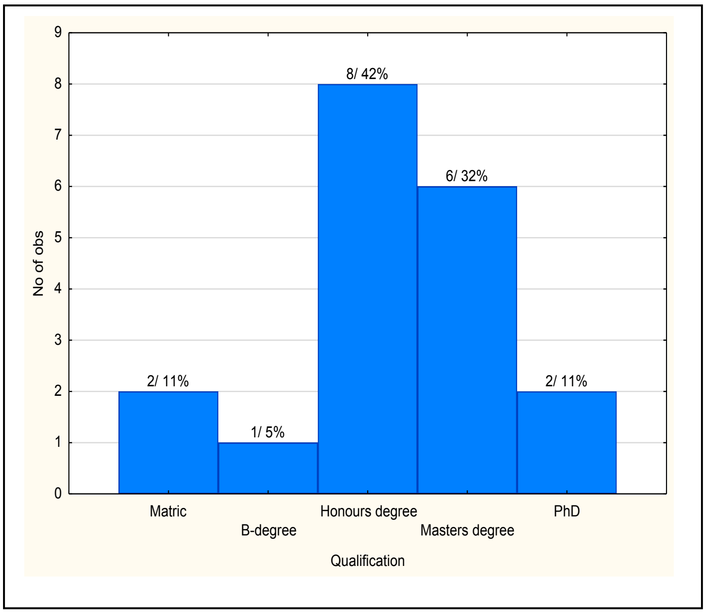


Figure 5.8: Leaders' formal qualifications.

Figure 5.7 shows that almost all of the respondents (18 out of 19) had undergone some kind of leadership training sometime in their lives. The majority (47%) participated in coaching programmes, while the same number of respondents (both 16%) had either completed a mentoring programme or formal diploma/degree programme in leadership. It is noted that one respondent had not attended any leadership training yet.

Figure 5.8 shows that 89% of the respondents have a post-matric (grade 12) qualification, of which 42% (8 out of 19) hold an honours degree, 32% (6 out of the 19) hold master's degrees, and 11% (2 out of the 19) hold doctorate degrees (PhDs). The profile of leadership at the EP Branch seems significantly well trained and qualified and with the amount of work experience and experience in leadership positions, this group of leaders should be regarded as satisfactorily competent. Competency is explained in the next section that will present and discuss data on organisational performance.

5.3.2 Section 2: Organisational performance

This was section 2 in the questionnaire. It considered organisational performance and how respondents thought the EP Branch has performed. The rationale behind the questions in this section was to gather the perceptions of the respondents on organisational performance, including performance challenges, ways to assess performance, how to improve performance, and also to test what the respondents felt had an influence on performance at the EP Branch.

The following definition of organisational performance was provided to respondents, after which they were asked to look at certain statements and indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The definition of organisational performance used in this study is as follows: "… an analysis of a company's performance as compared to goals and objectives" (Business dictionary as mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.4.1).

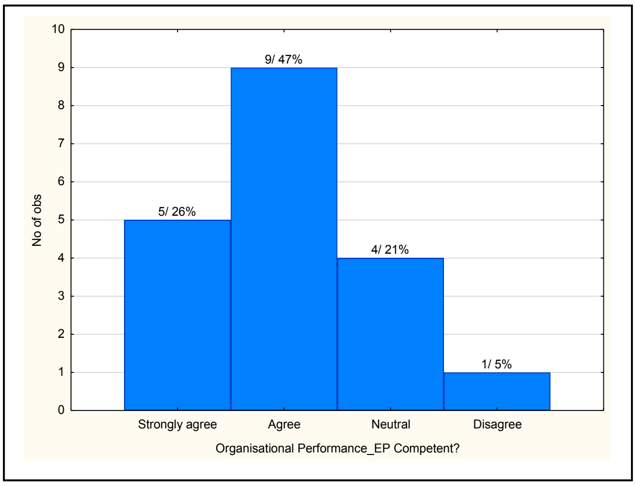


Figure 5.9: EP managers are competent?

Explaining competency as "specific behaviours and characteristics of a person that result in effective or superior performance" (Mansfield as cited in Bhatta, 2001: 195), respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree that senior managers at the EP Branch (which would include themselves) were competent or not. Figure 5.9 shows how they responded.

Of the 19 respondents, 14 (73%) agreed, 4 (21%) were neutral, and 1 (5%) disagreed with the statement. "Neutral" meant that they did not agree, nor did they disagree with the statement. It is difficult to gauge someone's competency on face value, and it could be the reason why some of them remained "neutral".

Figures 5.10 and 5.11 illustrate that although respondents were confident in their competency, 79% of them agreed that the challenges faced by the EP Branch make it difficult to reach organisational goals and objectives.

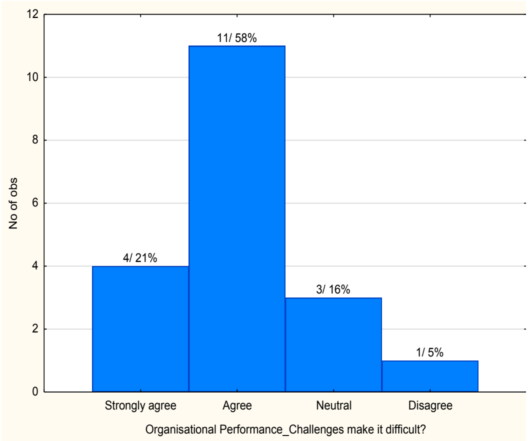


Figure 5.10: Challenges make performance difficult?

This being said, 58% of the respondents agreed with the statement that despite these challenges, the EP Branch still performs well as shown in Figure 5.11. Figure 5.11 also shows that 37% remained neutral and 5% did not agree with the statement.

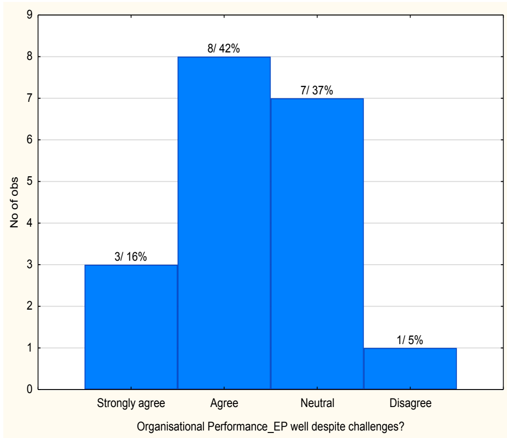


Figure 5.11: Performance well despite challenges?

When asked to consider a list of 17 **challenges (**Globalisation; Budget constraints; Complex problems; Economic inequality; Gender inequality; Diversity; Good governance; Human capacity; Administrative reform; Data management and verification; Setting of proper/measurable performance targets and indicators; Gathering of evidence of performance; EPWP requirements; Ineffective leadership; Strategic Planning and Reporting; Environmental factors; and Poor project management), some of which public sector departments face on a regular basis, and some selected from EP Branch challenges as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.2, respondents had to choose and rank five challenges (they could also choose "none of the above") they believed the EP Branch was facing, according to their importance, where 1 was "most important" and 5 was "least important". Table 5.4 depicts the number of times certain challenges were selected as "most important" (and ranked as "1"). The table also shows the number of times those "most important" challenges were ranked second and third.

Table 5.4: First, second and third ranking of challenges.

<table>
<tr><th>No.</th><th>Challenge</th><th>Number of times ranked first</th><th>Number of times ranked second</th><th>Number of times ranked third</th><th>Total of selections as per this list</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>Budget constraints</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>13</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>Ineffective leadership</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Strategic planning and reporting</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>Data management and verification</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.</td><td>Poor project management</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td rowspan="2">4</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>Administrative reform</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td>Human capacity</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td rowspan="2">3</td></tr>
<tr><td>8.</td><td>Complex problems</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>9.</td><td>Diversity</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td rowspan="2">1</td></tr>
<tr><td>10.</td><td>EPWP requirements</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
</table>

This table essentially says that “Budget constraints”, followed by “Ineffective leadership”, and “Strategic planning and reporting”, as well as “Data management and verification” were the challenges the respondents ranked as the most important ones faced by the EP Branch.

Other challenges not listed in the above table have not been selected as “1” (most important). However, in the following table (Table 5.5), the top three challenges that received the most selections from 1 through 5 are listed.

Table 5.5: Total number of times challenges were selected.

<table>
<tr><th>No.</th><th>Challenge</th><th>Total number of times selected and ranked</th><th>Placed on this table</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>Budget constraints</td><td>13</td><td>First</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>Data management and verification</td><td>12</td><td>Second</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Ineffective leadership</td><td>10</td><td rowspan="2">Third</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>Strategic planning and reporting</td><td>10</td></tr>
</table>

Fundamentally, this table shows that “Budget constraints”, followed by “Data management and verification”, as well as “Ineffective leadership” and “Strategic planning and reporting” were the challenges that were selected most out of all the 17 challenges listed, although not necessarily ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd. Budget constraints was also identified as a challenge when the organisational context was described in Chapter 3, section 3.4.2. No new challenges were added to the list provided in the questionnaire.

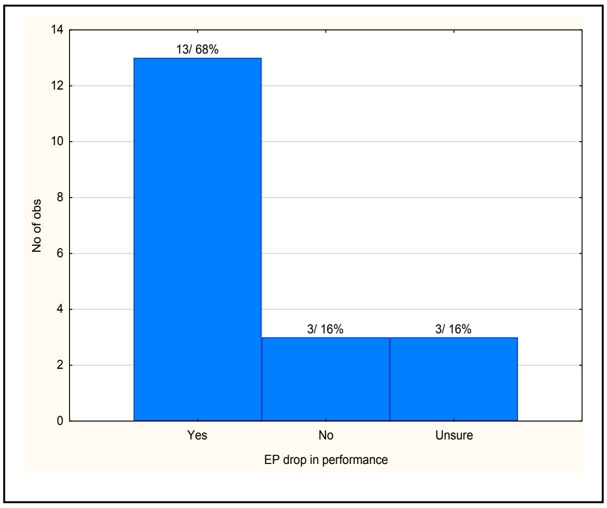


Figure 5.12: Leadership and drop in performance

When asked about the drop in overall performance of the EP Branch based on the 2014/15 and 2015/16 performance reports (See Chapter 3, section 3.4.3 for the drop in performance), respondents had to provide their opinion on whether they though that leadership at the EP Branch had anything to do with this drop in performance.

According to Figure 5.12, there were 13 out of the 19 respondents (68%) that indicated that the drop in performance was influenced by the leadership at the EP Branch. Of the six remaining, three said “no” and three remained “unsure”. As a follow-up question, respondents were again asked whether this **drop in performance** was because of good (effective) or bad (ineffective) leadership. They had to base their responses on the previous question. Figure 5.13 illustrates how they have responded.

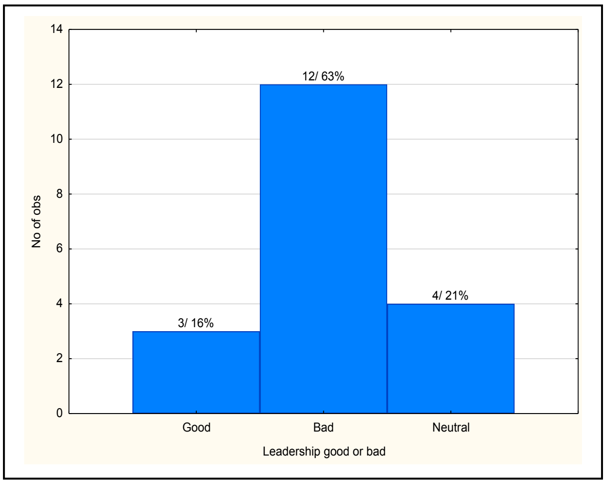


Figure 5.13: Was leadership good or bad during the performance period?

Twelve of the 19 (63%) felt that leadership at the EP Branch was ineffective for performance during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, three (16%) felt it was effective, and 4 (21%) remained neutral. It should be noted that because of their seniority and positions at the EP Branch, leadership here includes all of the respondents as well. Again, in this instance, “neutral” means that respondents did not feel that leadership was effective, nor did they feel that it was ineffective.

Respondents were given a list of 10 options organisations can use to **measure** or **assess** organisational performance. These "yardsticks" included: Financial stability; Achieving strategic goals and objectives; Percentage of staff turnover; Clean audits; Technical skills; Level of interpersonal skills; Vision and goal setting; Competencies of leader; Ability to manage change; and Level of self-knowledge among leaders. They had to choose and rank five of these performance measures (they could also choose "none of the above") which the EP Branch should use to assess its performance, where 1 was "most important" and 5 was "least important".

Table 5.6 depicts the number of times certain performance measures were selected as "most important" (and ranked as "1"). The table also shows the number of times those "most important" performance measures were ranked second and third.

Table 5.6: First, second and third ranking of performance measures.

<table>
<tr><th>No.</th><th>Performance measures</th><th>Number of times ranked first</th><th>Number of times ranked second</th><th>Number of times ranked third</th><th>Total of selections as per this list</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>Achieving strategic goals and objectives</td><td>7</td><td>5</td><td>0</td><td>12</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>Vision and goal setting</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Competencies of leader</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td rowspan="2">7</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>Ability to manage change</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.</td><td>Financial stability</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>Level of interpersonal skills</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr>
</table>

In essence, this table says that "Achieving strategic goals and objectives", followed by "Vision and goal setting", "Competencies of leader", and "Ability to manage change" were the measures the respondents ranked as the most important ones the EP Branch could use to assess its performance.

Other performance measures not listed in the above table have not been selected as "1" (most important). However, in the following table (Table 5.7) the top three performance measures that received the most selections from 1 through 5 are listed.

Table 5.7: Total number of times performance measures were selected.

No.	Performance measures	Total number of times selected and ranked	Placed on this table
1.	Achieving strategic goals and objectives	16	First
2.	Ability to manage change	16	
3.	Vision and goal setting	12	Second
4.	Level of self-knowledge among leaders	9	Third

This table essentially says that "Achieving strategic goals and objectives", and "Ability to manage change", followed by "Vision and goal setting", as well as "Level of self-knowledge among leaders", were the performance measures that were selected most out of all the 10 measures listed, although not necessarily ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd.

Next, the respondents were given a list of 12 options (Better/effective communication; Coaching; Staff empowerment; Motivation; Create conducive environments [includes offices, personnel and budgets]; Avoid micromanagement; Build trust and inspire teamwork; Better planning and goal setting; Focus on leadership and not on management; The correct [an efficient] organisational structure; Inspire with departmental values and culture; and Create high-performing teams) organisations can use to **improve** performance. They had to choose and rank five options from 1 to 5, where 1 was "most important" and 5 was "least important" (they could also choose "none of the above"). The following table (Table 5.8) depicts the number of times certain options for performance improvement were selected as "most important" (and ranked as "1"). The table also shows the number of times those "most important" performance improvements were ranked second and third.

Table 5.8: First, second and third ranking of performance improvements.

No.	Performance improvements	Number of times ranked first	Number of times ranked second	Number of times ranked third	Total of selections as per this list
1.	Better/effective communication	6	0	2	8
2.	Focus on leadership and not on management	4	1	2	7
3.	Staff empowerment	1	5	1	
4.	Motivation	3	0	2	5
5.	Coaching	2	1	2	
6.	Better planning and goal setting	3	1	0	4

This table essentially says that "Better/effective communication", followed by "Focus on leadership and not management" and "Staff empowerment", and "Motivation" and "Coaching" were the ideas the respondents ranked as the most important ones the EP Branch could use to **improve** performance.

Other performance measures not listed in the above table have not been selected as "1" (most important). However, in the following table (Table 5.9), the top three performance improvement ideas that received the most selections from 1 through 5 are listed.

Table 5.9: Total number of times performance improvements were selected.

No.	Performance improvements	Total number of times selected and ranked	Placed on this table
1.	Build trust and inspire teamwork	15	First
2.	Staff empowerment	12	Second
3.	Better/effective communication	10	Third
4.	Focus on leadership and not on management	10	

This table essentially says that "Build trust and inspire teamwork", and "Staff empowerment", followed by "Better/effective communication", as well as "Focus on leadership and not on management", were the performance improvements that were selected most out of all the 12 improvements, although not necessarily ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd.

In order to improve performance, besides the organisation-wide options mentioned above, respondents were asked what the one thing was their supervisors could personally do differently to ensure the improvement of performance at the EP Branch and also what the one thing was they themselves could do differently. Table 5.10 contains their responses.

Table 5.10: Personal changes towards improving performance.

Supervisor to do differently	**Yourself to do differently**
Decision-making: Be more decisive, open-minded, trusting and objective. *Change management*: Institutionalise changes and governance systems to improve performance; *Vision and goals:* Focus less on clean audits and more on outcomes. *Structure*: Change the structure of the EP branch and realign some IMSC	*Decision-making*: Take firmer decisions. *Leadership*: Teach people responsible leadership; be patient; strive towards transformational leadership. *Balance*: Balance being task and people orientated. *Communication, motivation and empowerment:* Have more one-on-one engagements; motivate workers to work better;

Supervisor to do differently	Yourself to do differently
functions. *Communication, motivation and empowerment:* Recognise diversity and talent; communicate timely and honestly; motivate workers; avoid micromanagement; make time for supervisee; follow protocol; value people's input.	recognise good work; provide all required resources; take care of people; say "no" to extra work; provide clarity and empowerment to staff. *Vision and goals:* Be accountable for directorate goals and targets; consult when setting goals.

In an effort to learn about the personal experiences senior managers had at the EP Branch, they were asked certain questions. Their responses are depicted in Table 5.11.

Here, most respondents (47%) were aware of their participation at strategic planning sessions being acknowledged. However, the 37% of the respondents that did not know whether their participation was acknowledged, is concerning. Also, when it comes to decision-making, 58% felt that their decisions were not respected. Departmental values and culture were being promoted, which can be seen in the "yes" responses that staff are being motivated and empowered, measures are put in place to improve personal relations and non-performance is being addressed.

Table 5.11: Personal experiences.

No.	Yes	No	Unsure
1. Participation acknowledged?	***9 / 47%***	3 / 16%	7 / 37%
2. Decisions respected?	5 / 26%	***11 / 58%***	3 / 16%
3. Values and culture promoted?	***17 / 89%***	1 / 5%	1 / 5%
4. Motivate and empower staff?	***15 / 79%***	4 / 21%	-
5. Initiate change management processes?	***13 / 68%***	5 / 26%	1 / 5%
6. Improve personal relations?	***15 / 79%***	4 / 21%	-
7. Addressing non-performance?	***15 / 79%***	4 / 21%	-

Respondents gave the following reasons why addressing non-performance would be important:

- *Improvement:* improving the situation for better results.
- *Empowerment:* it is part of staff development and empowerment and it creates a benchmark for others to compare their work against.
- *Motivate:* it motivates individuals to achieve targets and it encourages good performance.
- *Goal achievement:* it ensures that the vision, mission, values and objective of the department are achieved; it eradicates the challenges that are posed by same; and it is important for the identification of problem areas.
- *Exit:* non-performance means a staff member is not a good fit and needs to be gotten rid of and it can be used to eliminate lazy people.

These responses mainly indicated the improvement or betterment of a situation, except for the last comment, which was somewhat radical. In the context of the South African public sector, "eliminating lazy people" is a process which would require managers to first prove that they have put plans in place to assist the employee to make progress before such a drastic action will be accepted by the employee or the employee's union representative. The list of options, mentioned under section 2 above, according to which organisations can improve performance, should also be considered first, especially if the organisation claims to be "relationship focused" in the way their leaders lead their followers. This will be discussed in the next section, where data on leadership for performance is presented and discussed.

5.3.3 Section 3: Leadership for performance

This was section 3 in the questionnaire. This section considered specific leadership styles that are conducive to high levels of performance in an organisation. The rationale behind the type of questions in this section was that the researcher could establish which leadership styles are predominantly found at the EP Branch. Furthermore, the rationale included establishing which styles the respondents found to be most conducive to the improvement in performance. Respondents were given the following definition of leadership style:

- Mullins (as cited in Beeka, 2006: 3) defines leadership style as "the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out and the way in which the manager typically behaves towards members of the group".

In addition, respondents were provided with definitions of the following major leadership styles:

- Autocratic style: The "autocratic leader retains almost all the power" and their leadership style is the complete opposite of the "participative leadership" style;
- Democratic style: The "democratic leader confers final authority on the group" and simply collects the group opinion and "takes a vote before making a decision";
- Charismatic style: The "charismatic leader" has the charm and charisma "to convince" people "to follow" them and exerts the power to influence people to reach goals;
- Participative style: The "participative leader" shares decision-making with group members and the leader and group members "work together to reach goals";

- Situational style: The "situational leader" makes their behaviour "contingent on situational forces" (e.g. member characteristics, internal and external environments, changes, organisational culture.);
- Consensus style: The "consensus leader" encourages the group to discuss issues and base the final decision on "general agreement" which the group members will support;
- Transformational style: The "transformational leader" influences people "to look beyond their self-interest" and "to embrace change". They commit people to greatness:
- Transactional style: The transactional leader "transacts" (or negotiates) with the follower by exchanging reward for task completion.

Respondents had to consider the definitions of the different leadership styles and choose which one their supervisors demonstrate and which one they themselves demonstrate. They had to choose one option, and if uncertain, the closest one. See Figures 5.14 and 5.15 for the ones selected by the respondents.

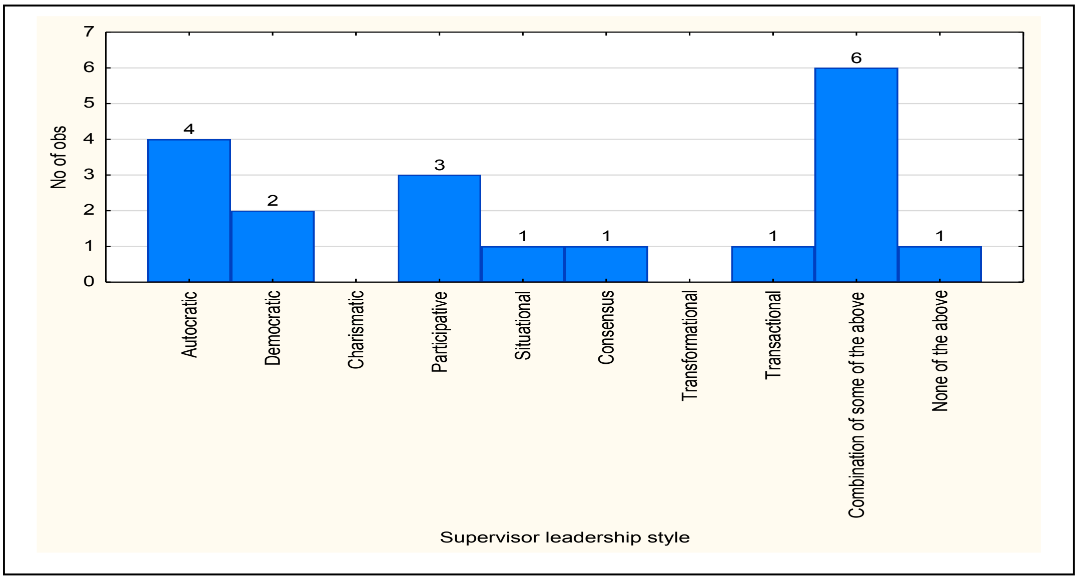


Figure 5.14: Supervisor's leadership style.

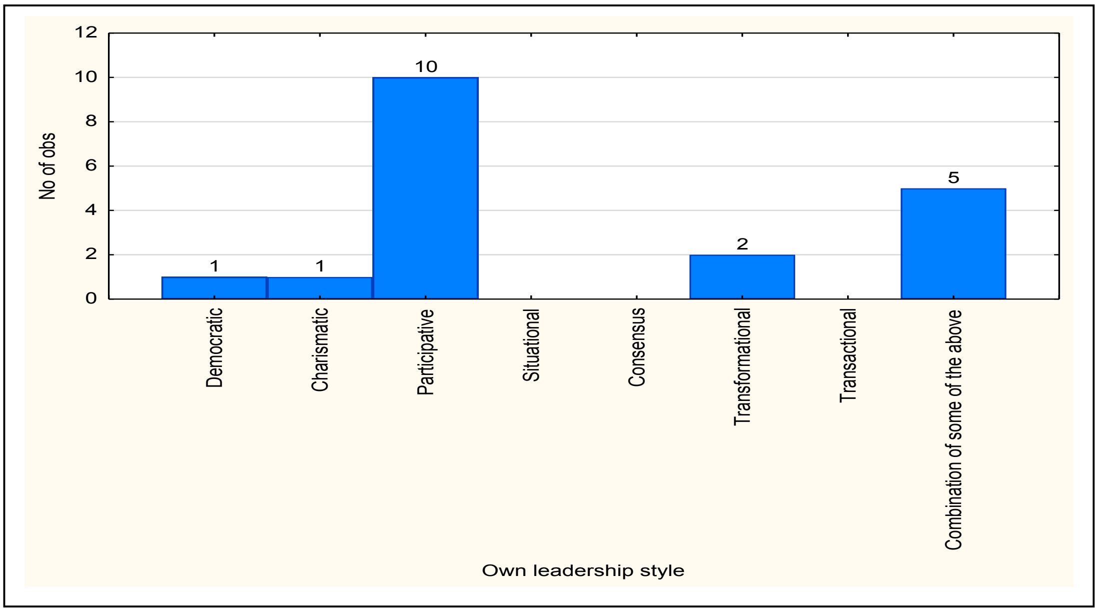


Figure 5.15: Respondent's own leadership style.

According to Figure 5.14, six of their supervisors demonstrated mainly a combination of the different leadership styles, followed by four that demonstrate the autocratic leadership style and three that demonstrate the participative leadership style. According to the respondents, none of their supervisors demonstrated the charismatic or transformational style and only one supervisor demonstrated none of the listed styles of leadership. Figure 5.15 shows that 10 of the respondents felt that they had a participative style, followed by a combination of the different styles, demonstrated by five respondents, and two felt that they had the transformational leadership style.

Through the interpretation of these responses, it seems like the respondents are more critical of their supervisors' leadership styles than of their own. Selecting the "autocratic" style of leadership implies that their supervisors do not share power. Furthermore, selecting "none of the above" for their supervisor may seem as if the supervisor does not demonstrate a particular leadership style at all. Alternatively, the respondent simply does not recognise any leadership style in the supervisor or else, it could mean that the particular leader demonstrates one of the styles the respondent listed as a response to question 45 in the questionnaire. This question (45 in the questionnaire) asked respondents to list other leadership styles not listed by Figure 5.14. The main leadership styles **observed** besides the ones listed included ethical leadership, disengaged leadership, and toxic leadership. This could be a possible area in which the researcher could focus further attention in the future.

When asked if participants focus more on relationship building or on task performance when interacting with their staff, 53% selected relationship building and 47% indicated that they were more task focused. See Figure 5.16 for an illustration of their responses.

According to Schwella (2008: 39), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3.3, when a leader is more task focused, they tend to demonstrate the autocratic and democratic styles of leadership. Relationship-focused leaders tend to demonstrate the charismatic, participative, situational, consensus and transformational styles of leadership. This is therefore in line with the selection of leadership styles made by the respondents, although there is just a difference of one between task-focused leaders (9 out of 19) and relationship-focused leaders (10 out of 19). Furthermore, it is also confirmed by question 31 in the questionnaire where 79% of the respondents indicated that they do work on the improvement of interpersonal relations within their units.

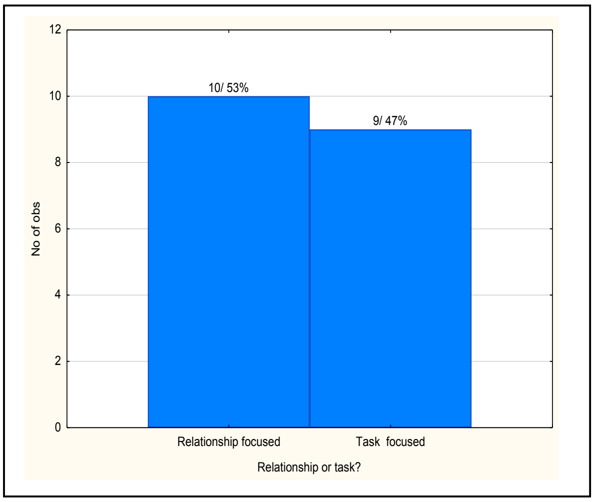


Figure 5.16: Relationship or task focused.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with statements that senior and top management members of the EP Branch are sufficiently knowledgeable on the leadership styles leaders have (31% agreed, 16% disagreed, and 53% were neutral) and that leaders are consciously working towards improving their leadership skills (42% agreed, 16% disagreed, and 42% were neutral).

When asked whether they perceived the leadership style of their supervisor as conducive to good performance at the EP Branch, and whether their own leadership styles were conducive to good organisational performance at the EP Branch, they responded as illustrated in Figures 5.17 and 5.18 below. These graphs show that most of the respondents were of the opinion that both theirs and their supervisor's style of leadership were **conducive to good (effective) performance** at the EP Branch. Of their supervisor's leadership style, 83% agreed that it was conducive, 11% disagreed and 26% remained neutral. Of their own leadership style, 90.5% of the respondents agreed that their styles were conducive to good (effective) performance, while 10.5% remained neutral.

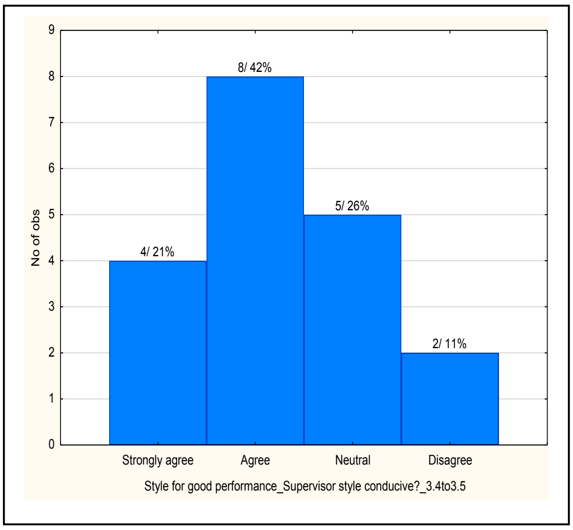


Figure 5.17: Supervisor's style conducive?

With reference to Figures 5.14 and 5.15 above, illustrating the perceptions of the influence of leadership on performance at the EP Branch over the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, it is noted that respondents felt that their leadership had something to do with the drop in organisational performance.

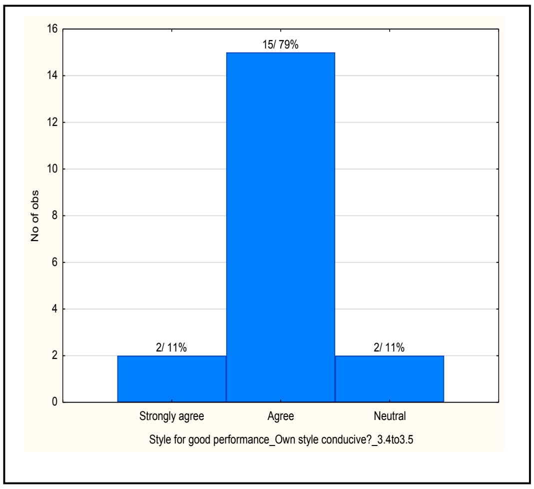


Figure 5.18: Own style conducive?

This is significant as it shows that they do take ownership of the performance of the organisation, but, in turn, they are also aware of their leadership styles and how conducive these styles are, or how are not, conducive to good (effective) performance at the EP Branch.

Working in a **context** where senior managers have to lead staff members, implementing agents, and contractors to Environmental Programmes such as Working for Water, Working for the Coast, Working on Fire, Working on Waste, and other "Working-for" programmes, the questionnaire results showed that the majority of the respondents felt that the staff members, implementing agents, and/or contractors reporting to them meet their individual goals (69% agreed) and that the needs of staff members, implementing agents, and/or contractors are generally met (74% agreed). This may be a sign of good (effective) leadership. This finding is supported by a study done by Bass (1995: 463–478), which found that "leadership is effective if followers achieve their goals or meet their needs as a consequence of successful leadership". However, this good (effective) leadership may only occur between the leader and the lower, grassroots-level employees and external service providers. This question is perhaps one that the researcher should consider asking those stakeholders too. Hence, this could be another area for future research.

The context and environment in which a leader operates are important aspects in determining the style of leadership the leader demonstrates (69% of the respondents agreed with this statement; 31% were neutral). Whether the context/environment in which the EP Branch operates is conducive to high levels of performance, in turn, was not so clear-cut. Respondents were divided on this question (5% strongly agreed, 37% agreed, 37% were neutral, 16% disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed).

As discussed in Chapter 2, in studies done by Jackson (1999), Goethals and Sorenso (2006), Schwella (2008), Jing and Avery (2008), Kotze and Venter (2010), and Williams (2012), context for a public sector leader is very important. In those studies, it was confirmed that context may lead to different results and outcomes and that context should always be considered when studies on leadership are conducted.

The next section will provide an overall summary of the findings (a synthesis) and indicate what this means for the study. This will address the third and final objective of this chapter.

5.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (A SYNTHESIS)

The findings of the data presented and discussed in this chapter, linked to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the secondary data as well as context of the case discussed in Chapter 3, are synthesised in the following paragraphs. As indicated in the beginning of this study, it was envisaged that the findings of the study would, firstly, contribute to a better understanding of the concept of leadership and leadership styles. Secondly, it was suggested that the findings would confirm if leadership does have an effect on the performance of the organisation. Thirdly, it was noted that the findings would provide an understanding of the importance of good organisational performance. Lastly, it was stated that the findings would confirm if there is a particular leadership style that is conducive to good performance at the EP Branch. These will be discussed at the hand of the research objectives, as introduced in Chapter 1 of this study.

Objective 1: To understand and describe the characteristics of different leadership approaches and styles:

There are many "neutral" responses from research participants. This could mean that the respondents were either not certain or they were not confident enough to make a particular determination. The primary data provided a good profile of leadership at the EP Branch and it was confirmed that leaders are well trained and educated. Leaders also have a good basic understanding of leadership and leadership styles. In a study done by Van Niekerk (2014: 84), the findings show that the quality of public sector leadership is mostly perceived as poor. This was assumed to be based on what the respondents have "seen, heard or read in the media" or in their interactions with government departments (Van Niekerk, 2014: 84). This perception is not necessarily true for this study, in which it was confirmed that the leaders at the EP Branch are well trained and educated. It may not be fair to assume that the quality of public sector leadership is poor based on people's ill-informed perceptions. The questionnaire did not ask specific questions on leadership approaches and focused more on leadership styles (the behaviours demonstrated by leaders in dealing with their followers). However, through some questions based on the integral theory of leadership as well as resonant leadership, participants confirmed that they do agree with the holistic approach to leadership where heart, body, mind, and spirit are important dimensions of the leader in how they interact with their followers. The main leadership styles demonstrated by the EP Branch are participative leadership and a combination of different leadership styles. Participative leadership refers to shared decision-making and goal sharing among team members, also sometimes referred to as democratic leadership (Matshekga, 2009: 29). A combination of different leadership styles, in turn, means that there are more than one leadership style that is demonstrated by EP leaders. In other words, some of them demonstrate a combination of autocratic, democratic, charismatic, participative, situational, consensus, transformational, and transactional styles of leadership.

Objective 2: To explore the challenges or debilitating factors of performance at the EP Branch:

The study confirms that challenges faced by an organisation may influence the capacity of the organisation to perform. Budget constraints, ineffective leadership, strategic planning and reporting, and data management and verification are the main challenges faced by the EP Branch. From all the adaptive challenges listed by Schwella (2008:31), globalisation was the only one that was not selected by any of the respondents, although studies showed that it is an adaptive problem with which public sector departments have to deal (Schwella, 2008: 31).

Objective 3: To establish the possible effect leadership may have on organisational performance at the EP Branch:

The study confirms that leadership may have an effect on how well the organisation performs. Respondents felt that the drop in performance at the EP Branch during 2014/15 and 2015/16 was influenced by its leadership. Ojokuku et al. (2012: 202–207) confirms that there is a "strong relationship between leadership style and organisational performance". The findings of the study confirm that effective leadership increases performance and ineffective leadership decreases performance at an organisation. At the EP Branch, respondents felt that leadership was ineffective (53% of the respondents felt leadership was ineffective during the two years of reporting). The question that springs to mind is the following: "Will performance increase in future reporting years and will leadership be responsible for this increase?" The contrary would also be a possibility.

Objective 4: To suggest how organisational performance could be improved, if necessary:
The study suggests that achieving strategic goals and objectives, vision and goal setting, and the competencies of leaders are the main measures an organisation can use to assess its performance. Incompetent leaders may not know how to strategise and plan and this may influence how well the organisation performs. Furthermore, the study confirms that in order to improve the performance levels of an organisation, the focus should be on better/effective communication, on leadership and not on management, and on staff empowerment. "Inspire with departmental values and culture" was not selected by any respondent as an option to improve performance at the EP Branch. This could mean that respondents ran out of space to select choices. In other words, there were more important options to choose from and this one was not important, or it was simply not important enough, to be regarded as something that could improve performance at EP. However, this may not be true as even "None of the above" was chosen as an option. Responses to question 28 confirm that values and culture already played a role at the EP Branch, as leaders do promote the departmental values and culture at the organisation. Other factors that may have an effect on performance, besides leadership, include the processes and systems, culture, teams, organisational structure, staff development opportunities, goal setting and planning, and operations/management at the EP Branch. This shows that leadership is not the only aspect that can influence how the organisation performs. The study also confirms that there are certain things the supervisor, as well as supervisee, can do differently in order to improve performance at the organisation. This means that leaders must continuously strive to improve their leadership skills. This finding is supported by Thach and Thompson (2007: 356–375) who found that "leadership skills are important to achieving organisational targets".

Objective 5: To identify a desired leadership style for improved performance at the EP Branch:
The following leadership styles (discussed above under objective 1) were perceived to be conducive for good organisational performance and were demonstrated by both groups of leaders (supervisors as well as supervisees): Participative leadership as well as a combination of leadership styles. Thus, the study found that participative leadership is conducive to good performance. However, the study also found that a combination of different leadership styles is also conducive to performance at the EP Branch. According to a study by Matshekga (2009: 1–75), the participative leadership style does not have direct links to performance. However, Matshekga (2009: 58) explains that the study had a small sample size and the questionnaire response rate was too low for the results to be of any significance. The findings in that study therefore contradicts what most literature reveals, which is that there is a link between leadership style and performance (Matshekga, 2009: 57). Many other researchers have found

that transformational leadership was most conducive to organisational performance (Jing & Avery, 2008: 69). This was not true for this study. Furthermore, the researcher in this study also found that context is important, as it can determine which leadership style is demonstrated. In a study by Sandison (2016: 15), it was suggested that leaders should “discover a unique leadership style …” which should be a “culmination of the person’s whole life”. In research done by DuBrin (2010: 123), the most successful leaders are leaders that “adopt many different leadership styles”, as it shows versatility and flexibility.

It would be important to consider whether the above findings ultimately answer the research question. In a nutshell, it can be confirmed that the study does show that leadership has an effect on organisational performance at the EP Branch. However, the challenges make it difficult for the organisation to perform well. Furthermore, the study shows that the context in which leadership is performed does play a significant role, so much so that the context determines the style of leadership and that the findings and outcomes would have been different if the study was conducted in a different context. Some styles of leadership are conducive to performance and others are not. Participative leadership as well as a combination of different styles of leadership emerged more strongly than other specific leadership styles at the EP Branch. The organisation can indeed improve its performance by applying certain improvement options, but generally it was found that it is leadership that influences the overall performance of the organisation.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter covered the presentation and discussion of the primary data collected by the survey questionnaire. The data was presented per section as structured in the questionnaire. This structure also reflected the overall objectives of the study. The sections that were discussed were leadership, organisational performance, and leadership for performance. The presentation and discussion of the data also included an interwoven reflection on the literature review covered in Chapter 2. The chapter was concluded by a summary of the findings (a synthesis) and a reflection on what this means for this study.

The next chapter will present a summary of the chapters covered in this study, as well as a conclusion on the findings. Recommendations will be made based on the findings and for future research purposes.

CHAPTER 6

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE AT THE EP BRANCH OF DEA: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the goal was to present and discuss the primary data gathered through a survey questionnaire and to provide a summary of findings from the study. In this chapter, the goal is to provide summaries of earlier chapters and concluding the study. Recommendations will be made based on the findings of the study and also for possible future research projects. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives will be pursued:

- Firstly, to reflect on the chapters covered in this study by considering the objectives of each chapter and summarising how they were pursued;
- Secondly, to conclude the study by considering the conclusions of each chapter and to show how these conclusions respond to the original research question; and
- Finally, to make recommendations based on the specific research problem by way of an action list, as well as make recommendations for possible future research projects.

6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

As indicated, this section will reflect on the chapters covered in this study by considering the objectives of each chapter and to summarise how they were pursued.

The study started off with a background and introduction to the topic of leadership and performance in Chapter 1. The goal of the study was outlined and the research question, research objectives and ethics were affirmed.

In Chapter 2, the study provided a literature review on the concept of leadership and its influence on performance. This was essential in order to explain and contextualise the topic so that the reader could understand the aim of the research. It created an understanding of the concept of leadership by providing a historical overview on how leadership developed. Also, it provided a number of leadership definitions, theories and styles. The literature review covered contemporary leadership theories like the Integral Theory of leadership and resonant leadership. Furthermore, Chapter 2 explored literature on performance in organisations, specifically the overall performance of the organisation in relation to strategic objectives and targets. This section provided definitions of performance, the measures that are used to assess performance, adaptive challenges that had to be considered within the particular organisational context, as well as ways to improve performance. The literature review finally aimed to establish which leadership style was found to yield the highest level of performance in an organisation.

The goal in Chapter 3 was to contextualise the research by focusing on South Africa as a country, the public sector, as well as the specific institution in which the research was conducted. It provided a brief synopsis of the economy and employment in the country. In addition, the chapter provided an explanation of the policy framework in which the Environmental Programmes Branch of the Department of Environmental Affairs operates, followed by a description of its mandate and functions. Chapter 3 concluded with a description of the leadership at the Branch, the challenges it was grappling with at the time, and the organisational performance during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years.

The study had to explain the design and methodologies employed to address the research problem. This was done in Chapter 4. The research design and methodologies selected for the collection and analysis of data were explained in detail. The validity and reliability of the data were covered and the way sampling was done was also explained in Chapter 4. Finally, the limitations and ethical considerations in the collection and analysis of the data concluded the chapter.

Chapter 5 presented and discussed the findings of the primary data collected through a survey questionnaire. It simultaneously described how the primary data related to the secondary data collected through the desktop review of documents and interviews with key personnel. Moreover, the chapter reflected on the literature review provided in Chapter 2 and how it related to this study. The presentation and discussion of the findings were done simultaneously. The chapter concluded with a summary (a synthesis) of the findings, which was structured in the same order in which the survey questionnaire was constructed.

The synthesis of the findings of the primary data collection process will be expanded on in the next section, which will provide a complete summary of the entire study. The next section is in pursuance of the second objective of this chapter.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS OF STUDY

As indicated, this section will conclude the study by looking at the conclusions of each chapter and showing how these conclusions respond to the original research question.

As specified at the start of this study, the public sector leader would almost always have challenges, especially because such a leader operates in an environment that undergoes some kind of change on a continuous basis. Consequently, this will almost always have some effect on how the people that they lead perform their duties and responsibilities. The study looked at the effect leadership has on the performance of the Environmental Programmes Branch of the Department of Environmental Affairs, why it was the case, what could be learnt from it, and how the learning could be used and built back into the organisational system to improve its quality and performance.

Literature on the concept of leadership was reviewed by providing a historical overview of how the concept of leadership has developed between the 1900s and 1980s. Definitions, theories/approaches and styles of leadership were discussed in order to create an understanding of leadership. This included contemporary models of leadership and the importance to continuously endeavour to develop and enhance the understanding of the specifics around modern-day leadership requirements. Literature on performance measures, performance challenges, and ideas around the improvement of performance, such as motivation and empowerment, were also reviewed. The definition of leadership that was held above the other definitions, for the purposes of this study was, according to DuBrin (2010: 3), “the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organisational goals”. The theories and approaches to leadership that were covered by the literature review included the Trait theory, Behavioural theory, Situational/Contingency theory, Path-Goal theory, Transformational and Transactional theory, and the Social Learning (and Contemporary) theory. Furthermore, leadership styles were defined as a “leader's ability to direct, manage, motivate and guide groups of people” (Mullins as cited in Beeka, 2006: 3) and the following styles of leadership were covered in the literature review: Autocratic style, Democratic style, Charismatic style, Participative style, Situational style, Consensus style, and the Transformational style.

When organisational performance was discussed, the study referred to it as the achievement of organisational goals and objectives at a public sector department. Schwella (2008: 31) argued that leaders at public sector departments face adaptive problems such as “globalisation, complex problems, economic inequality, gender inequality, diversity, good governance, capacity, and administrative reform". These were presented to research participants as the main challenges being faced by public sector departments. Research participants came up with other challenges like budget constraints, data management and verification, ineffective leadership, and strategic planning and reporting. Motivation and empowerment were portrayed as important factors to improve performance. Other factors identified through the study included better/effective communication, focus on leadership and not management, coaching, and build trust and inspire teamwork. The very definition of leadership asserts that there is no leadership if the leader does not have followers. It would therefore be ignorant to ignore the importance of teams and the role they play within an organisation. Harkins (2008) argues that high-performance teams usually have a strong leader. It was argued that there is not necessarily a definite right or wrong way for leaders to lead their followers, as there is no best or most effective style of leadership for the public sector. DuBrin (2010: 123) refers to a study that was done on executives that revealed that the most successful leaders are leaders that "adopt many different leadership styles". Therefore, the review of literature on the effect of leadership style on organisational performance did not provide irrefutable evidence of a desired or appropriate leadership style that improves performance in an organisation. However, the styles of leadership that were identified by the research participants included the participative leadership style and a combination of different leadership styles. These, the research respondents confirmed, would be the most conducive styles of leadership to ensure the improvement of performance at the EP Branch.

The research design and methodology for data collection that was used was a case study design. The case that was studied was the Environmental Programmes Branch of the Department of Environmental Affairs (EP Branch). The relevant policies and legislation, mandate, functions and organisational structure of the EP Branch provided a contextual background to the study. The status quo in South Africa, the economy, as well as employment levels assisted in providing context. Additionally, the profile of leadership, the main performance challenges identified, and the performance achieved by the EP Branch during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years were similarly important in creating an understanding of the environment in which the research was conducted.

The methodologies used in the case study included a survey, a desk review and interviews. In the survey, a questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 22 participants at the EP Branch. In the desk review, internal documents were studied and in the interviews, and one-on-one meetings were held with key personnel. The desk review and interviews were used to collect secondary data in order to provide context for the study. No sampling was done. Data analysis was done through the computer software used by Stellenbosch University, for primary data, and for secondary data, manual coding and interpretation was done by the researcher.

Data for the survey questionnaire was presented and discussed simultaneously. The data was presented per section, as structured in the questionnaire. This structure also reflected the overall objectives of the study. The sections that were discussed were leadership, organisational performance, and leadership for performance. The presentation and discussion of the data also included an interwoven reflection on the literature review and secondary data collected for context.

The findings of the study did show that leadership has an effect on organisational performance at the EP Branch. However, organisational challenges would need to be borne in mind as the challenges may make it difficult for the organisation to perform well. Furthermore, the study shows that the context in which leadership is performed does play a significant role, so much so that the context determines the style of leadership and that the findings and outcomes would have been different if the study was conducted in a different context. The leadership styles that are most conducive for performance at the EP Branch, as found by the study, are the participative leadership style and a combination of different styles.

The third and final objective of this chapter is addressed in the next section.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated, this section will make recommendations based on the specific research problem by way of an action list, as well as for possible future research projects.

Action list

NO.	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS
1.	*Better decision-making*	Be more decisive; Be open to new approaches; Decentralise decision-making; Institutionalise changes and governance systems to improve performance.
2.	*Clear vision and goals*	Be accountable to the achievement of directorate goals; Improve consultation and collective goal setting; Do better planning.
3.	*Efficient organisational structure*	Amend the organisational structure of the EP Branch to ensure synergy and maximum performance; Improve processes and systems.
4.	*Effective communication*	Communicate timely, openly and honestly; Listen emphatically and attentively. Have more one-on-one engagements with supervisees.
5.	*Motivated and empowered teams*	Attend to competencies of leaders; Motivate team members and acknowledge good work; Make time for supervisees; Recognise and manage diversity and talent between team members; Provide the necessary resources; Take care of the people who are meant to do the work; Create a conducive work environment in which staff perform their duties; Say "no" to extra, unnecessary work; Find more time for others; Continue to provide clarity and empowerment to staff; Be available to support and guide at all times; Encourage coaching of leaders; Build trust and inspire teamwork; Address non-performance among staff.
6.	*Effective leadership*	Avoid micromanagement; Learn about responsible leadership and listening; Perhaps exercise more patience with the level of incompetence in units; Strive towards transformational leadership; Influence where you can; Find balance between being task and people orientated; Embrace change; Address challenges like budget constraints, ineffective leadership, strategic planning and reporting, and data management and verification; Encourage self-knowledge among leaders; Strive continuously to improve leadership skills.

This action list is based on the responses from the survey participants. The leaders of the organisation may decide which of these recommended actions they would accept and if they do, they may decide how they would prefer to implement the accepted actions in the organisation.

The following is a summary that depicts possible research projects based on the empirical findings and limitations of this study.

Possible future research projects

1. Future studies could focus on contemporary leadership approaches and styles, with specific reference to ethical leadership; disengaged (laissez-faire) leadership; and toxic leadership. These leadership approaches and styles were identified by the survey participants. Other styles that were identified in the literature review included the Integral Theory and resonant leadership where heart, mind, body, and spirit are considered.
2. In testing the influence of leadership on organisational performance, all organisational levels (from the lowest, grass-roots levels to the highest, senior management levels) should be involved in the empirical studies. Implementing agents and contractors should also be involved. All those stakeholders may have a different opinion about how leadership may affect organisational performance.
3. It may also be interesting to focus future research projects on employee performance. Employee performance at public sector departments are managed through an employee performance management system and department-specific policies. The research should include such systems and policies.
4. An alternative qualitative research design and methodology could be used in future studies of leadership, the influence of leadership on performance, or performance alone. At any rate, involving all levels of staff in different regions or provinces will indeed require a different research design and methodology.
5. Changing the context, environment, and timing of the study may lead to different results and outcomes. Future research projects could therefore involve a different public sector department. Alternatively, a comparative study of leadership at two or more different public sector departments, where leadership is investigated at the beginning of a financial year and again at the end of the financial year, perhaps even over a period of two or more financial years, could be conducted.

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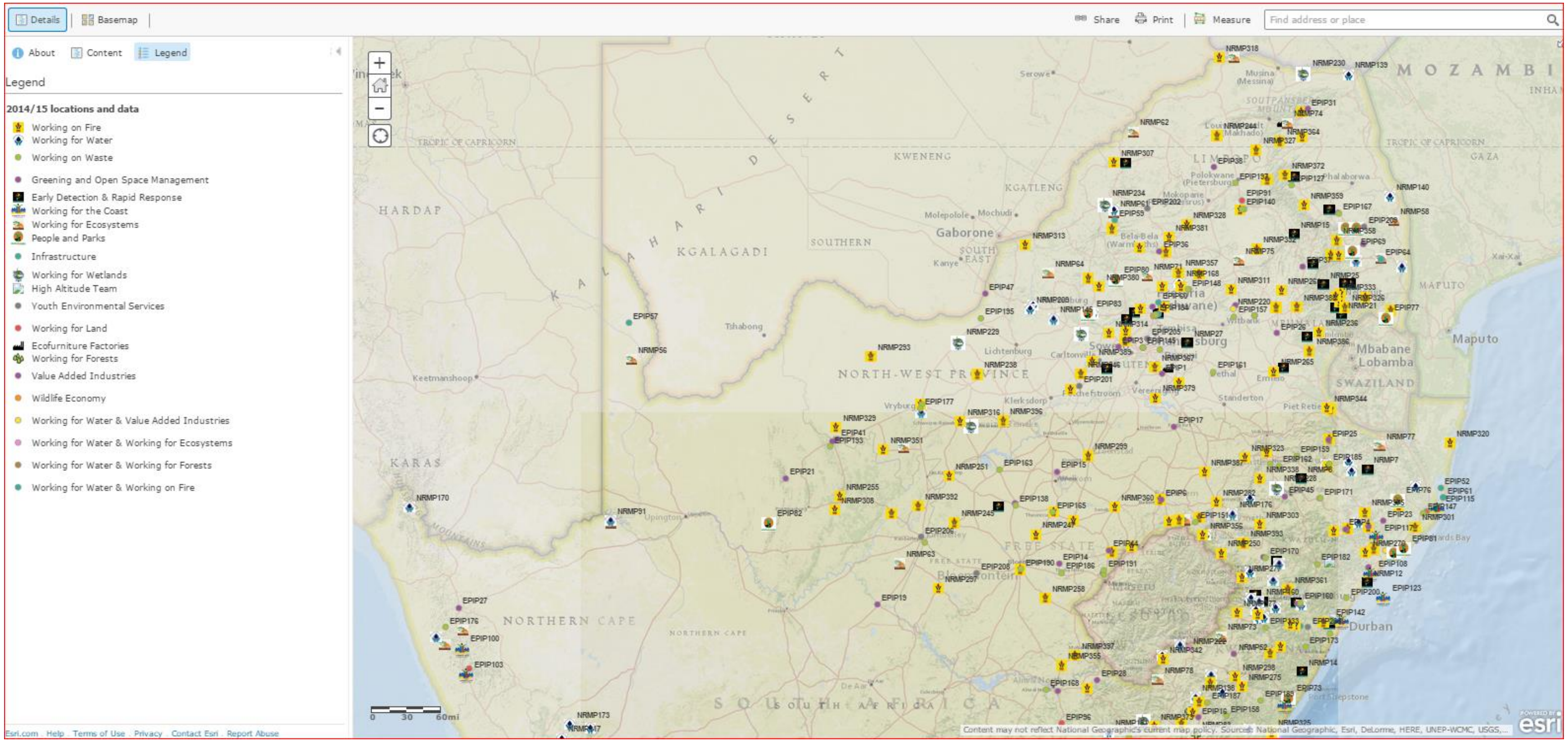
Appendices

Addendum 1: National map of Environmental Programmes in South Africa



Source: Preston (2015)

Addendum 2: The Questionnaire

Dear Senior Manager

As you know I am doing my Master's degree in Public Administration at Stellenbosch University. I have completed my course work in 2015 and now need to submit a thesis. My thesis topic is "Leadership and performance: A South African public sector case study". As explained at our meeting in April 2016, all I ask is a few minutes of your time. You and the entire EP Branch could benefit from this study in that the findings could offer some knowledge of the effect of leadership on performance, if any, and may provide recommendations on how to improve performance at the EP Branch. What I would like to ask you is to give me your honest responses to the questions on the enclosed questionnaire. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to answer the questions. As agreed to in the consent forms you had signed in July 2015, your participation will be strictly confidential and anonymous. The data will therefore be used for research purposes only. You can access the questionnaire by clicking on the URL provided. The link will take you to the Stellenbosch University's survey website. Kindly submit your completed questionnaire before Friday, 10 June 2016. Very sincerely yours, Raymond Scott

LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE

Please answer the questions as thoroughly as possible.

SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP

Section 1 looks at the concept of leadership and whether you think it is good or bad. According to DuBrin (2010: 3), leadership is defined as "the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organisational goals". "Leadership" should not be confused with "Management".

Look at the following statements and indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
1. It is important for any person in a position of power or authority in an organisation to understand the concept of leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Leaders at the EP Branch do understand the concept of leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The success of an organisation depends on the type of leaders the organisation has.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Leaders should know and care for themselves as human beings in all areas of their lives *(according to the Integral & Resonant leadership approaches)*.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Leaders should know and care for their followers (the people that they lead) as well	1	2	3	4	5
6. A leader that knows and cares for themselves and their followers will be more capable to effectively lead their followers to a better state of affairs.	1	2	3	4	5
7. As leadership starts with you as a person, it is important for employees that want to perform at their best to know and manage themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Leadership does have an effect on how an organisation performs.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Leadership can be good (effective) or bad (ineffective).	1	2	3	4	5
10. Leadership at the EP Branch is good (effective).	1	2	3	4	5
11. Good (effective) leadership increases organisational performance.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Bad (ineffective) leadership decreases organisational performance.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Think of the key elements of leadership, i.e. power, motivation, leader-follower relations, context and values, and in no more than two short sentences/ phrases, describe what you think **good** (effective) leadership is.

1. ____

2. ____

14. Again, think of the key elements of leadership, i.e. power, motivation, leader-follower relations, context and values, and in no more than two short sentences/ phrases, describe what you think **bad** (ineffective) leadership is.

1. ____

2. ____

15. In your honest opinion, is leadership at the EP Branch effective or ineffective? "Don't know" means that you are not sure whether leadership at the EP Branch is effective or ineffective.

Effective	**Ineffective**	**Don't know**
1	2	3

16. Give one short reason for your answer to the previous question, here:

1. ____

SECTION 2: ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Section 2 looks at organisational performance and how you think the EP Branch performs.

An online dictionary defines organisational performance as "an analysis of a company's performance as compared to goals and objectives"

Look at the following statements and indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
17. Public sector departments have moved towards targeting competent senior managers for appointment. *(Note: Competency refers to "specific behaviours and characteristics of a person that result in effective or superior performance")*	1	2	3	4	5
18. Senior managers at the EP Branch are competent.	1	2	3	4	5
19. The challenges faced by the EP Branch make it difficult for the organisation to reach its goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Despite these challenges, the EP Branch performs well as it achieves all its goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5

21. Below is a list of **challenges,** some of which public sector departments face on a regular basis (see list 1-18). Choose and rank five (5) challenges faced by the EP Branch according to their importance (1=most important - 5=least important).	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

1.Globalisation; 2.Budget constraints; 3.Complex problems; 4.Economic inequality; 5.Gender inequality; 6.Diversity; 7.Good governance; 8.Human capacity; 9.Administrative reform; 10.Data management and verification; 11.Setting of proper/measurable performance targets & indicators; 12.Gathering of evidence of performance; 13.EPWP requirements; 14.Ineffective leadership; 15.Strategic Planning & Reporting; 16.Environmental factors; 17.Poor project management; 18.None of the above

	Yes	No	Unsure		
22. According to performance reports, the overall performance of the EP Branch during the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years, has dropped. In your opinion, did leadership at the EP Branch have anything to do with this drop in performance?	1	2	3		
	Good	**Bad**	**Neutral**		
23. Based on your response to the previous question, tick the appropriate box as to whether you think leadership was good (effective) or bad (ineffective), or whether your opinion is neutral.	1	2	3		
24. Below is a list of options organisations can use to **measure** or assess its performance (see list 1-11). Choose and rank five (5) options according to their importance (1=most important - 5=least important). --- 1.Financial stability; 2.Achieving strategic goals & objectives; 3.Percentage of staff turnover; 4.Clean audits; 5.Technical skills; 6.Level of interpersonal skills; 7.Vision and goal setting; 8.Competencies of leader; 9.Ability to manage change; 10.Level of self-knowledge among leaders; 11.None of the above	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
25. Below is a list of options organisations can use to **improve** performance (see list 1-13). Choose and rank five (5) options according to their importance (1=most important - 5=least important).	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

1.Better/Effective communication; 2.Coaching; 3.Staff empowerment; 4.Motivation; 5.Create conducive environments (includes offices, personnel & budgets); 6.Avoid micromanagement; 7.Build trust and inspire teamwork; 8.Better planning and goal setting; 9.Focus on leadership and not on management; 10.The correct (an efficient) organisational structure; 11.Inspire with departmental values & culture; 12.Create high-performing teams; 13.None of the above

Please answer the following questions by selecting the appropriate response based on your personal experience.	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**
26. Is your participation at strategic planning sessions and meetings of the EP Branch being acknowledged?	1	2	3
27. As a senior manager, you have the authority (power) to make decisions. Do you feel that your decisions are being accepted/respected at the EP Branch?	1	2	3
28. Do you and/or your leader promote the values and culture of the organisation?	1	2	3
29. Do you and/or your leader engage in continuous motivation and empowerment practices within your unit?	1	2	3
30. Do you and/or your leader initiate change managing processes for all changes that take place in your unit?	1	2	3
31. Do you and/or your leader strife to improve interpersonal relations within your unit?	1	2	3

32. As a leader, you may have to discipline non-performing members of your team from time to time. Is non-performance being addressed in your unit?

1	2	3

33. Give one reason why addressing non-performance would be important.

1. ____

SECTION 3: LEADERSHIP FOR PERFORMANCE

Section 3 looks at specific leadership styles that are conducive to high levels of performance.

Mullins (as cited in Beeka, 2006: 3) defines leadership style as "the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out and the way in which the manager typically behaves towards members of the group".

Major leadership styles:

Autocratic style: The "autocratic leader retains almost all the power" and their leadership style is the complete opposite of the "participative leadership" style; Democratic style: The "democratic leader confers final authority on the group" and simply collects the group opinion and "takes a vote before making a decision"; Charismatic style: The "charismatic leader" has the charm and charisma "to convince" people "to follow" them and exerts the power to influence people to reach goals; Participative style: The "participative leader" shares decision-making with group members and the leader and group members "work together to reach goals"; Situational style: The "situational leader" makes their behaviour "contingent on situational forces" (member characteristics, internal and external environments, changes, organisational culture, etc.); Consensus style: The "consensus leader" encourages the group to discuss issues and base the final decision on "general agreement" which the group members will support; Transformational style: The "transformational leader" influences people "to look beyond their self-interest", "to embrace change" and commits people to greatness: Transactional style: The transactional leader "transacts" (or negotiates) with the follower by exchanging reward for task completion.

	Autocratic	Democratic	Charismatic	Participative	Situational
	1	2	3	4	5

	Consensus	Trans-formational	Transactional	None of the above	Combination of some of the above
34. What type of leadership style does your supervisor demonstrate? (Choose only one; if unsure, choose the closest one).	6	7	8	9	10

	Autocratic	Democratic	Charismatic	Participative	Situational
35. What type of leadership style do you believe you yourself demonstrate? (Choose only one; if unsure, choose the closest one).	1	2	3	4	5
	Consensus	Transfor-mational	Transactional	None of the above	Combination of some of the above
	6	7	8	9	10

	Relationship focused	Task focused
36. In your interactions with your staff, are you more focused on (1) relationship-building or are you more (2) task-focused?	1	2

Look at the following statements and indicate if you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
37. Among the senior and top management members of the EP Branch, there is sufficient knowledge on the leadership styles leaders have.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Leaders at the EP Branch are consciously working towards improving their leadership skills.	1	2	3	4	5

39. The leadership style of your supervisor is conducive for good performance at the EP Branch.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Your own leadership style is conducive for good performance at the EP Branch.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Staff members, implementing agents, and/or contractors reporting to you do achieve their individual goals.	1	2	3	4	5
42. The needs of staff members, implementing agents, and/or contractors reporting to you are generally met.	1	2	3	4	5
43. The context and environment in which you as a leader operate (being the EP Branch and its partners/stakeholders) determine your leadership style (how you lead/ behave towards your followers).	1	2	3	4	5
44. The above-mentioned context and environment in which you as a leader operate are conducive to high levels of performance.	1	2	3	4	5

45. Besides the above-mentioned eight (8) leadership styles, which other leadership style(s) have you observed in the organisation? Write N/A if none was observed. ____

	Yes	**No**	**N/A**
46. Do you think that the observed leadership style(s) (refer to your answer to the previous question) is conducive for good performance?	1	2	3

47. Please mention one thing your supervisor can do differently to ensure the improvement of performance at the EP Branch. ____

48. Please mention one thing you yourself can do differently to ensure the improvement of performance at the EP Branch. ______________________________

49. If you have ever thought that leadership has no effect on organisational performance, please tell us what else do you think may cause the organisation to perform well (or not well), besides leadership. Please limit your response to three things only. *(Note: Think of processes, organisational culture, teams, external factors, budgets, etc.)*	1. ______________________ 2. ______________________ 3. ______________________

Some general information required for statistical and demographical purposes only.

50. Your post level		**51. Your gender:**		**52. Your race:**		**53. Your age:**	
	13	1=Female	1	1=African	1	1=20-30yrs	1
	14	2=Male	2	2=Coloured	2	2=31-40yrs	2
	15			3=Indian	3	3=41-50yrs	3
				4=White	4	4=51-65yrs	4

54. Years of service at DEA?

1= 01-10yrs	1

55. Years of experience in a leadership position

1= 01-05yrs	1

56. Most important leadership training attended

Short course	In-house training (e.g. DLN)	Diploma/ Degree	Mentoring programme	Coaching programme	None

57. Your highest qualifications:

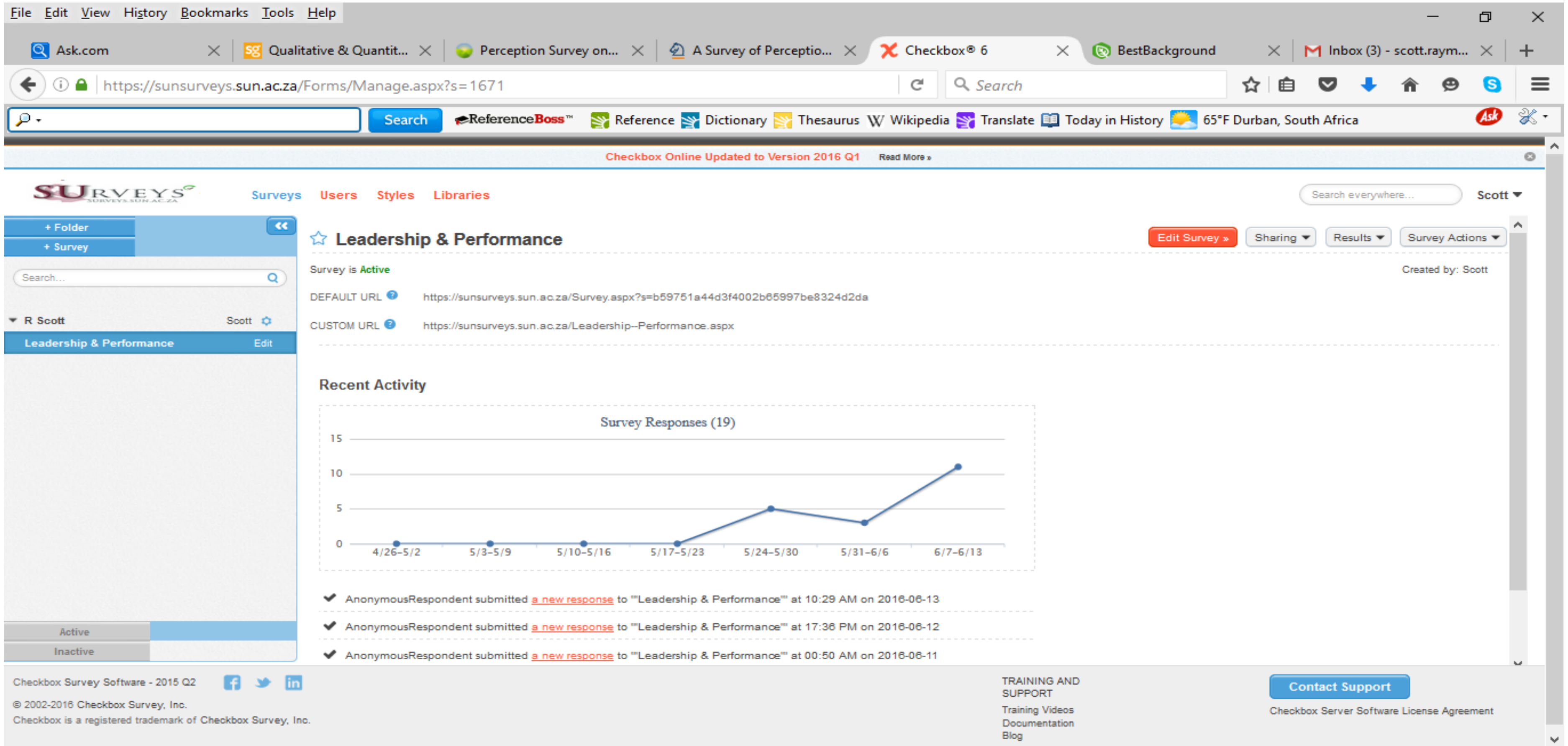
2=11-20yrs	2	2=06-10yrs	2	Matric	B-degree	Honours degree	Master’s degree	PhD
3=21-30yrs	3	3=11-20yrs	3					
4=31-40yrs	4	4=21-30yrs	4					
5= > 41yrs	5	5= > 31yrs	5					

Thank you for taking the time in providing answers to the above questions.

Your support is much appreciated.

THANK YOU! ENKOSI! DANKIE!

Addendum 3: Survey completion rate



Source: Stellenbosch University survey website, Checkbox
Questionnaire URL: https://sunsurveys.sun.ac.za/Leadership--Performance.aspx